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## LOYALTY AND RENEWAL

*As editor, dear readers, I am always on the look out for what might introduce a number of Boletín Eclesiástico. Sometimes a resumé seems appropriate. At other times a comment on the partial contents of an issue strikes me as more apt both to stimulate and please you. In this issue I am attempting something a bit different. Knowing the risk of being branded "doctrinaire" I shall take it and try to philosophize (perhaps more whimsically than daringly) on two factors of the present state of the Church and what I think should be our use of these factors, our stance and determination if we are to move forward on firm ground.*

*First of all let us admit we belong to a renewed Church. The Church's renewal is a new work of the Holy Spirit brought about in time by Vatican II and numberless subsequent events. Locally, this spirit of renewal has caused and will perdure beyond the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines held in Manila earlier this year. Renewal has involved drastic changes in liturgical practice and language, in basic Christian attitudes, in our ways of looking at ourselves and others and in the discovery of "frontiers," lines of challenge and possibilities of new ventures. Renewal has been helped by all, clerical or lay, religious or secular, who have allowed themselves to be enlivened by its impact.*

*Renewal has known obdurate obstacles, impasses and hardened blocs as well. Superficial devotionism and silly sentimentality still hold sway in place of that steady sacramentality and*

*that sound catechesis based on God's Word the Church has always recommended. The Church has most willingly renewed her sacramental and homiletic life by ceaseless post-Conciliar attempts at updating and intelligibility. Thank God he has allowed our enemies (whatever they call themselves and whatever shallow and obvious errors they propagate) to laugh to scorn many forms of saccharine, insincere and unneeded "piety." Here is an area where renewal both awaits and foments true reform.*

*On its more positive side Renewal has meant the constant and increasingly personalized building up of communities. These basic Christian groups are formed by people who know and love God in a personal but shared way and who take the trouble to know and love one another by name, in joys and in sorrows. This process of renewed community life is freeing us from a pseudo-traditional sense of the amorphous, anonymous mass of believers in which hardly anyone knew or was known, loved or was loved by anyone else save his closest relatives and neighbors. The progress from name-tags to real spiritual intimacy still goes on, in some places slowly, in others at whirlwind pace. But wherever renewal is reality there is a new dynamic, a new personalism and true growth in the depths of the Spirit.*

*At the outset many of us believed such things must be bombastic. We had to make a lot of noise to make ourselves heard. I was amused as I browsed the other day in our Ecclesiastical Faculties Library to find Thomas Bokenkotter's paperback A Concise History of the Catholic Church which appeared as an image book in 1979 concluding with a thirty fourth chapter entitled "The Sound and Fury of Renewal." It reminded me of how I had invited a North American Quaker scholar in Salamanca to a Spanish Pentecostal Meeting warning him (used as he was to worship by and in silence) of the loud thunder, bright lightning and ominous "fireworks" attributed to the Holy Spirit, to which he must be ready to expose himself in such a group. I suppose all renewal must be noisy or at least make loud sounds, the more coherent the better.*

*Silence, I believe, is to be found on the other side of the coin. We belong not only to a renewed Church. We belong as well to a loyal Church. It is one and the same Church, subject albeit to non-essential change, which preserves down the ages the deposit of the*

*faith once delivered to the Saints. And this Church finds both its unity and its basic loyalty as it kneels before the Throne of Peter. We shall always be loyal to Our Holy Father the Pope, not just when he blesses our efforts at renewal, but also when he reminds us (as he must) of the rock from which we are hewn. Here the silence of tradition finds a soft but clear, strong and telling voice. Not much need be said or be said, in turn, about what is said. But a thorough acceptance is loyalty both deep within and in any outward manifestation we come to regard as fitting.*

*We live, then, as Catholics of today, in a healthy tension of openness and resolve. We open ourselves in the present to be ready for the future. We keep hold on a resolute tradition to remain loyal to what is true and good. And here we must be careful of and with our own options. Of course we want to be open. Of course we want to be courageous, even when it involves risk. We want to try the untried, to scale the new mountain. But when we submit our options to prayer something changes. We no longer opt for choice for the sake of choice, so as to confuse freedom with caprice. We opt to discern the will of God, to correspond with it as best as we can and to lend our wills (and all our selves) to its fulfillment. This is not because we have lost the sense of contrast which comes from renewal, it is because we have found a sense of direction which comes from loyalty. The sights along the sidelines remain colorful, even attractive, but the haven of our goal is now straight ahead. And our gait can be balanced.*

*To arrive at our journey's end we must be willing to cast off the no longer needed baggage of outworn, useless wraps. We must be willing to face and cross frontiers in all their challenges. But our step must be firm and our stride directed. And so, being both renewed and loyal, we can and will proceed with hope.*

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.



*words for today*

## **HOLY FATHER'S MESSAGE FOR WORLD MISSION DAY\***

*Every Christian Community is Missionary*

**Dearest Brothers and Sisters!**

"God is love," the Apostle John tells us (1 Jn 4:8): love that calls and love that sends. We know in fact, that it is from the "source of love" that is God the Father, that the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit spring. And that this, on the very day of Pentecost — the Solemnity on which I address to you *this message for "World Mission Day"* — was given to the Apostles: thanks to the outpouring of the Spirit of love the Church officially appeared to the world and began the mission of proclaiming and communicating to men and women the salvation that God offers them in his Son, calling them to share in his life and to love one another.

The mission, entrusted by Christ to his Church, of evangelizing God's love for human beings — for *each* individual man and woman — and their love for God and among themselves, is still so far from being completed, that it can even be considered as only just begun. This knowledge moved me to address to every member

\*On Pentecost Sunday the Holy Father signed the text of his message for this year's celebration of World Mission Day. Although individual dioceses may change the date of the observance, it is usually celebrated on the third Sunday of October, which falls on 20 October this year. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 May 1991.

of the Church a special appeal with the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, and now I turn to them again to ask that they consider that appeal as a *renewed call to a renewed mission*, and as motivation for more prompt pastoral action and more enlightened catechesis.

## 1. Consecrated and sent for the Mission

All of us, members of the Church, moved by the same Spirit, are consecrated, albeit in different ways, to be sent: by virtue of Baptism the Church's own mission is entrusted to us. We are called and we are obliged to evangelize, and this fontal mission, which is the same for all Christians, must become our daily "care," our constant and ever present concern.

How moving and encouraging it is to imagine the communities of early Christians, as they opened out to the world, which for the first time they looked on with new eyes: with the eyes of those who have come to understand that God's love is to be expressed in the service for the good of our brothers and sisters. The memory of their experience moves me to repeat once again the main thought of the recent Encyclical: "For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*" (n. 2). Yes, missionary activity offers us an extraordinary opportunity to rejuvenate and render more beautiful the Bride of Christ and, at the same time, it enables us to experience a faith that renews and strengthens our Christian life, precisely because it is given.

However, the faith which renews life and the mission that strengthens faith cannot remain as hidden treasures or as an exclusive experience of isolated Christians. Nothing is further from the mission than a Christian closed in on himself: if his faith is solid, it is sure to grow and must open out towards the mission.

The first place where this word pair, *faith-mission* should develop is in the *family-community*. At a time when everything seems to concur towards breaking up this primary cell of society, we must seek to make it become, or become once again, the first community of faith, not only in regard to the acquisition of the

faith but also to its growth, its sharing and therefore, the mission. The time has come for parents, couples, to see as an essential task of their condition and vocation the work of evangelizing their children and that of evangelizing each other so that it becomes really possible for every member of the family, under all circumstances — especially during the trials of suffering, sickness and old age — to receive the Good News. This is an irreplaceable form of education to the mission and of a natural formation of missionary vocations, which nearly always is fostered in the family.

Another place, of equal importance, is the *parish community* or the *basic Christian community*, which, through the service of pastors and animators must provide the faithful with food for their faith and must go out in search of the lost and the outsiders, and thus carry out the mission. No Christian community is faithful to its duty unless it is missionary: either it is a *missionary community* or it is not even a *Christian community*, because these are simply two dimensions of the same reality, which is brought about by Baptism and by the other Sacraments. Today, more than ever, now that the mission, also understood specifically as the first announcement of the Gospel to non-Christians, is knocking at the doors of Christian communities of centuries-old evangelization, and is becoming more and more a “mission among ourselves,” this commitment takes on the greatest urgency in every community.

Most encouraging, in the face of the new demands of mission today, are also those *movements and ecclesial groups* that the Lord causes to spring up in the Church, so that her missionary service may be more generous, punctual and efficacious.

## 2. How to co-operate with the Church's missionary activity

If all the Church's members are consecrated for the mission, then they are all responsible for carrying Christ to the world through their own personal efforts. Participation in this right/duty, is called “missionary co-operation” and this necessarily stems from holiness of life: only one who is grafted onto Christ like the branches to the vine (cf. *Jn* 15:5) can produce much fruit. The Christian who lives out his faith and observes the commandment of love, widens the confines of his activity to embrace all men and women through the same *spiritual cooperation*, consisting of prayer,

sacrifice and witness, that made it possible for Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus to be proclaimed co-patroness of the Missions, although she was never actually sent on mission.

Prayer must accompany the path and work of missionaries, so that the announcement of the Word may be made fruitful by divine grace. *Sacrifice*, accepted with faith and borne with Christ, has a salvific value. Because the sacrifice of missionaries needs to be shared and sustained by that of the faithful, everyone who suffers in mind or body can become a missionary, if he or she offers that suffering with Jesus to the Father. The *witness of a Christian life-style*, is a silent but efficacious way of preaching God's word. The men and women of today, who seem indifferent to the search for the Absolute, really feel a deep need for it and they are attracted and moved by holy people who reveal the Absolute by their example.

Spiritual co-operation with missionary activity must tend above all to *promoting missionary vocations*. That is why I turn once again to the young men and women of our times, to invite them to say "yes" if the Lord calls them to follow him with a *missionary vocation*. No other decision is as radical or courageous as this: to leave everything so as to dedicate oneself to the service of those brothers and sisters who have not received the priceless gift of faith in Christ.

*World Mission Day* unites all the Church's children not only in prayer, but also in commitment to solidarity and sharing of aid and material goods for the mission *ad gentes*. This commitment corresponds to the state of need in which so many people and populations of the earth find themselves. They are our brothers and sisters, in need of everything, who live mainly in those countries identified with the south of the world and which coincide with the mission lands. Pastors and missionaries therefore, need immense resources, not only for the work of evangelization — which is certainly the primary work and is also onerous — but also to provide the many material and moral necessities through that work of human promotion which always accompanies every mission.

May the celebration of World Mission Day be a providential stimulus to activate both charitable structures and the effective

practice of charity on the part of individual Christians and their communities: it "is an important date in the life of the Church, because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, *in* the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world" (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 81).

### 3. The animation of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies

In the work of missionary animation and co-operation, which involves all the Church's children, I wish to reaffirm the proper and specific responsibility that falls to the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, as I also stressed in the aforesaid Encyclical (cf. n. 84).

All four of these Societies — Propagation of the Faith, St. Peter Apostle, Holy Childhood and the Missionary Union — have in common the purpose of promoting a missionary spirit in the hearts of the People of God. They are a reminder of the universal Church within the local Churches.

In particular I wish to mention the Missionary Union, which is celebrating the 75th anniversary of its foundation. It does a praiseworthy job of stimulating priests, men and women religious and leaders of Christian communities, so that the missionary ideal is realized in suitable forms of pastoral and missionary catechesis.

The Pontifical Mission Aid Societies must be the first to put into practice that which I already stressed in the Encyclical: "Particular Churches should therefore make the promotion of the missions a key element in the normal pastoral activity of parishes, associations and groups, especially youth groups" (n. 83). The Missionary Societies must be the protagonists in this important mandate, in animation, in missionary formation and in the organization of charity for helping the missions.

But, after having drawn attention to the purpose of these Societies, as well as the permanent commitment for the missions, I cannot end this message without addressing the missionaries — priests, men and women religious and lay missionaries spread throughout the world — with a personal and affectionate word of gratitude and encouragement, that they may persevere with trust in their evangelizing activity, even and when its actuation may and does call for the greatest sacrifices, including that of life itself.

Dearest missionaries! My thoughts and my affection, together with the gratitude of the whole Church, accompany you always. You are not only the living hope of the Church, as witnesses and crafters of her universal mission as it is carried out; but you are also a credible and visible sign of that love of God that has called, consecrated and sent us all, but which has given a special mandate to you: the unique gift of a mission *ad gentes*. You carry Christ to the world; and in his name, as his Vicar, I bless you and hold you in my heart. And blessing you, I also bless all those who with love and generosity share in your apostolate of evangelization and promotion of integral human development.

May Mary the Queen of the Apostles, guide and assist the steps of you missionaries and of all those who in any way cooperate with the universal mission of the Church.

From the Vatican, 19 May — solemnity of Pentecost — in the year 1991, the thirteenth of my Pontificate.

† JOHN PAUL II

## THE PRIEST ACTS AS A STEWARD OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD\*

1. *May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us*" (Ps 32 [33]:22).

Dear Sons who are about to receive priestly ordination, these words of today's liturgy invite you to call upon the divine assistance. Your loved ones, the entire assembly of God's People in St. Peter's Basilica and the whole Church to the ends of the earth will be praying with these words as well.

"May your kindness be upon us."

2. *The Church, which lives constantly in the mystery of the Triune God*, in today's liturgy exalts this mystery in a particular way.

This is the divine mystery *par excellence* and it is profoundly interior: in this mystery the intimate life of God is revealed.

*God, who dwells in unapproachable light* (cf. 1 Tm 6:16), is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; at the same time God penetrates and embraces everything.

When Christ sends the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, he, the *Redeemer of the*

\*On Trinity Sunday, 26 May 1991, the Holy Father ordained sixty-one deacons to the priesthood. The celebration took place in St. Peter's Basilica and was attended by relatives and friends of the ordinands from many parts of the world. Before performing the rite of ordination, the Pope delivered this homily in Italian to the ordinands and all present. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 3 June 1991.

world, reveals the Triune God as he who gives himself to human beings, nourishes them and quenches their thirst with the gift of himself which is the water in baptism, the sacrament in which the element of water symbolizes and realizes in man the unspeakable gift of Trinitarian life.

Such a response is given by God in the prayer of the psalmist: "May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us."

3. This grace came upon you, dear sons and daughters of the Church, at the beginning of your life with the Sacrament of Baptism. Since that day the Spirit of God has been guiding you, since you received "a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, 'Father!'" (Rm 8:15).

This is the same cry of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, one in being with the Father.

*The Spirit of the Father and the Son bears witness with our spirit* that we are children of God. And if we are children, we are also heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (cf. Rm 8:16-17). In this way the grace which embraces all the baptized is made manifest.

4. Dear sons, your vocation to the *ministerial priesthood* in the Church was born in the fertile soil of this inheritance.

Today this vocation of yours will be crowned with the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

In a special way the *divine inheritance* will come to pass in you — the inheritance which is God himself: "O Lord, my allotted portion and my cup" (Ps 15 [16]:5).

*You must become special co-heirs with Christ* to be able to serve all your brothers and sisters in the unity of God's People.

The priest is a co-heir with Christ in that he is a steward of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Co 4:1) and acts in *persona Christi*, so that *Christ can continue to serve and to save*. As he rendered service in the Upper Room by instituting the Eucharist which



contains the entire paschal mystery of his death and resurrection, so he has entrusted this service to his Church until the end of time.

5. *May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you."*

We stand before the inscrutable mystery of God himself: in front of the Trinitarian holiness of God, revealed by Christ crucified and risen.

*The grace of him to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given* is upon us (cf. *Mt* 28:18). His is the power which saves in the might of the Holy Spirit, the power which continues to raise up new generations of sons and daughters through divine adoption.

At the same time we know that each person carries this treasure in an earthen vessel (cf. *2 Co* 4:7). So too the priest.

O Christ! The hope we have in you is greater than our weakness!

6. At the moment of your ordination, dear sons, each of you will hear the words: "*May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to fulfillment*" (Roman Pontifical; cf. *Ph* 1:6).

In these words is expressed the hope of the entire Church.

Amen!

† JOHN PAUL II

## PETRINE MINISTRY AND PAULINE CHARISM\*

1. *"For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17).*

Only the Father knows the Son!

Only the Father can reveal the Son!

Just before this, Simon, son of Jonah, had answered Jesus' question, saying: "You are the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God" (cf. *Mt 16:16*). Jesus' question was "Who do you say that I am?" (*Mt 16:15*). You, that is, the apostles, the twelve whom Christ had chosen and called. *Simon Peter* answers the question asked of all of them, answers in the name of the twelve.

*In Jesus of Nazareth he recognizes the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

This confession has its origin in God; it is revealed by the Father, because only the Father knows the Son. And only the Father can make human reason recognize in Christ — the Son — the Son of the living God.

*And no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him (Mt 11:27).* From the beginning Jesus

\*On 29 June 1991, for the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Holy Father celebrated Mass in St. Peter's Square, conferring the pallium on the new metropolitans. During the Mass he preached the homily in Italian. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 July 1991.

of Nazareth revealed the Father to all, but to the apostles in a particular way. Allowing them to know the Father, he allowed himself to be known as the Son of the living God.

Simon Peter's answer, which took place in Cesarea Philippi, testifies to the establishment of a new bond between the human consciousness and the mystery of the living God.

2. A similar bond was established in other times and in other places between the mystery of the living God and Saul of Tarsus. "The Lord stood by me" (cf. 2 Tm 4:17). The Lord blinded him and made him fall to earth. He revealed himself to Saul as the Son of the living God.

Even if the risen Christ had converted the persecutor of his own Church, it is in any case only the Father who knows the Son and who can reveal him. *Only the Father, therefore, could reveal to Saul, on the road to Damascus, his only-begotten Son* in Christ crucified and risen. And he revealed Christ to Saul as the Son, one in being with the Father, reaching beyond the barriers of opposition put up by this zealous servant of God as he was revealed in the Old Testament. Saul is perhaps the first among those for whom Christ became "a sign of contradiction" (cf. Lk 2:34). But this *opposition by Saul showed itself to be an especially fertile terrain* precisely because the revelation of the Son took root there.

Christ, the Son of God, has joined the souls of these two: of Simon to whom the Lord himself gave the name Peter and of Saul who — after he was called to be apostle — began to call himself Paul.

3. The Church in Rome today looks with greatest veneration and adoration at "*the wonderful works of God*" (cf. Ac 2:11) *which are realized in both apostles*, in Peter and in Paul. According to tradition, they both died as martyrs here in Rome at the time of the Emperor Nero, giving ultimate witness to him who had called them to the dignity of apostles and martyrs for the faith.

*The Church of Rome and of the entire world pauses to consider this ultimate witness of the two apostles.* She looks at their whole life and vocation through the prism of such a witness; God, impenetrable in the mystery of his divinity, wants to reveal this mystery to mankind which, however, carries "this treasure in earthen vessels"

(2 Co 4:7). But even what God makes "in earthen vessels" can become stone, even rock. Therefore, Christ could say to the apostle: "You are Peter (that is, stone) and upon this rock I shall build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18).

On this rock stands the Church as "a people gathered in the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (*Lumen Gentium*, 4): the People of God!

Only the Father knows the Son and only the Son knows the Father. Only the Spirit searches the depths of God (cf. 1 Co 2:10) — the Spirit of the Father and the Son; the Spirit who is love. It is the same Spirit who fills our hearts with divine love and who has been given to us by the Father through the work of the Son: of Christ crucified and risen (cf. Rm 5:5).

4. Today's solemnity is a unique day which has been given to us by the Lord. This unique day in the life of the Church, however, extends throughout the world and, in a certain sense, through every day. In fact, *the Church lives constantly through the inheritance of Peter which is the "ministry" (ministerium petrinum)*. She lives constantly through *the inheritance of Paul* which is the special *charism of the proclamation of the Gospel*. "The Lord... stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully that all the Gentiles might hear it" (2 Tm 4:17).

This double inheritance — *ministerium petrinum* and *pauline charism* — leads us on today's feast to Rome, to the place of both *apostles' birth into heaven, to fullness of life in God*. This is the day on which *the meaning of the keys of the kingdom of God* is revealed in a special way. Whatever has been bound here on earth is bound in heaven — and whatever has been loosed on earth remains loosed in heaven (cf. Mt 16:19): it has been sealed in the glory of the kingdom which never ends.

5. All of us gathered here for this Roman solemnity are happy that the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrius I, *our brother*, is present in the person of Metropolitan Bartholomew of Chalcedon. This presence has a special meaning for us: the apostle Andrew, brother of Simon Peter, is with us as if to witness the desire to strengthen the fraternal link between the Churches which retain the *inheritance* of the twelve apostles of the Lord, and especially that of *Peter and Andrew, blood brothers*.

We are also happy because the ancient See of Peter is enriched with *new members of the College of Cardinals*, who represent in a special way the "petrine ministry" and participate in it not only as electors of the Successor of St. Peter but also as his senate and counsellors, called to share in a special way in the care of the universal Church.

The joy of today's feast finds its authentic expression in *the ancient rite of the conferral of the pallium which the new metropolitans receive near the tomb of St. Peter*, as a sign of the special bond they have with the universal Church in the care of the Churches throughout the world. Today we hope that these brothers of ours, involved in the apostolic ministry may not cease to make a part of their life the "ministry" and the "charism" so admirably linked in this place through the living inheritance of the two apostles Peter and Paul.

6. *O felix Roma!*

May we be granted this day to rejoice in the Holy Spirit (cf. *Lk* 10:21) and to repeat with Christ:

*"I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, who has hidden these things from the gifted and wise and revealed them to the little ones"* (ibid.).

We praise you. We bless you!

Glory to you forever and ever.

Amen.

† JOHN PAUL II

## THE PRIMACY OF PETER\*

The question of the primacy of Peter and its continuation in the bishops of Rome is by far the most burning issue in ecumenical discussions. Even within the Catholic Church, the primacy of Rome has repeatedly been a stumbling block, beginning with the medieval struggles between empire and priesthood, through the movements for national Churches at the beginning of the modern era, to the tendencies to separate from Rome in the 19th century, up to the contemporary waves of protest against the leadership function of the Pope and his way of conceiving that function. In spite of everything, however, a positive tendency is also present today: even many non-Catholics today are stating that a common center for Christianity is necessary. It is becoming evident that only a center of this sort can be an effective shield against an increasing dependence on conditions created by political or cultural systems. Only in this way can the faith of Christians acquire a clear voice in the midst of the confusing din of differing ideologies. All of this obliges us, in addressing our theme, to pay particular attention to the testimony of the Bible and to use special care in investigating the faith of the early Church.

\*On 18 April 1991, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, gave a conference at the Pontifical Urban University on the subject of the primacy of Peter and the unity of the Church. We present here a translation of the Cardinal's address, which was given in Italian. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 July 1991.

We must carefully distinguish two basic problems. The first can be sketched in this way: did Peter really have a primacy? Since it is difficult to deny this when faced with the witness of the New Testament, we must make the question more precise. What exactly is the meaning of this privileged position of Peter, which the New Testament documents for us in so many ways? The second question we must ask is more difficult and in some ways more decisive: can a Petrine succession be established on the basis of the New Testament? Does the latter support such succession, or does it exclude it? And even if a succession is admitted, does Rome have grounds for presenting a justified claim of being Peter's See? We will begin with the first set of problems.

## I. The place of Peter in the New Testament

It would be a mistake to hurry immediately to the classical witness of the primacy contained in *Mt* 16:13-20. Isolating an individual text always makes understanding more difficult. We prefer to address the question by approaching it in concentric circles, first inquiring into the image of Peter given in the New Testament as a whole, then clarifying the figure of Peter in the Gospels, so as to finally clear the way to understanding the specific texts about the primacy.

### a. *The mission of Peter in the whole of the New Testament tradition*

One is immediately impressed with the fact that all the great collections of New Testament texts are familiar with the subject of Peter, which appears to be a theme of such universal significance that it cannot be limited to a determinate tradition, circumscribed in a local or personal sense. In the Letters of Paul we first encounter an important testimony consisting of an ancient formula of faith, which the Apostle hands on in *1 Co* 15:3-7. Kephas (this is what Paul calls the Apostle of Bethsaida, using an Aramaic word which means *rock* or *stone*) is presented as the first witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From this we can conclude that the apostolic mission, even in the Pauline viewpoint, is essentially a witness to the resurrection of Christ: Paul can be considered an apostle in the full sense of the term on the basis of his personal testimony precisely because the Risen One appeared to him, too, and called him. And so, in a certain way one can

understand the very special importance given to the fact that Peter was the first to have seen the Lord and that he enters the primitive community's confession of faith as the first witness. In this fact we can also recognize something like a new establishment in primacy, in an order of precedence among the apostles. If we accept this text as a very ancient formula antecedent to Paul himself and passed on by him with great respect as an untouchable element of tradition, then its importance becomes obvious.

It is true that the polemical Letter to the Galatians shows us Paul in conflict with Peter and committed to vindicating his independent vocation as an apostle. But this polemical context gives an even more significant meaning to the epistle's witness about Peter. Paul goes up to Jerusalem "to confer with Kephas," *videre Petrum*, as the Vulgate translated it (Ga 1:18). He adds, "But I did not see any other of the apostles, only James the brother of the Lord." However, the sole purpose of his visit to Jerusalem was precisely to meet with Peter. Fourteen years later, following a private revelation, Paul went again to the holy city where he visited the three pillars, James, Kephas, and John, this time with a very clear and well-defined objective. He explains his Gospel to them, as he was preaching it among the pagans, "so that I might not be running, or have run, in vain" — an affirmation surprising for the perspective of the Letter and of the greatest importance for the self-consciousness of the Apostle of the Gentiles: there is only one common Gospel and the certainty of preaching the authentic message is tied to communion with the pillars. They are its criterion. The contemporary reader feels compelled to ask how they arrived at this group of three persons and what was Peter's position within it. O. Cullmann actually advanced the thesis that after the year 42, Peter had to yield the primacy to James; he is not the only one for whom the Gospel of John reflects the rivalry between John and Peter. It would be interesting to spend time on this question, but it would take us too far from our topic.

In all likelihood James exercised a sort of primacy over the Judeo-Christianity that was centered in Jerusalem. But this primacy never had much importance for the universal Church and disappeared from history with the decline of Judeo-Christianity. The special position of John was entirely different, as can be seen from the fourth Gospel. In this phase of the Church's formation, as described in the Letter to the Galatians, one can calmly accept



a sort of triple primacy, in which, however, each of the three had different reasons and was of a different nature. Thus, when one wants to define in detail the reciprocal relations within the group of pillars, the unique precedence of Peter remains intact, in respect to the common "function of the pillars" which goes back to the Lord himself; therefore, the fact that all preaching of the Gospel must allow itself to be measured according to the preaching of Peter remains confirmed. Furthermore, the Letter to the Galatians is also a witness to the fact that this precedence is valid even when in his personal conduct the first of the apostles remains beneath his ministerial mission (*Ga* 2:11-14).

If after this brief glance at the *Pauline* testimony we now look to the *Johannine* literature, we find throughout the Gospel a strong presence of the Petrine theme, with the figure of the beloved disciple in contraposition. This reaches its high point in the great passage of the mission in *Jn* 21:15-19. No less than R. Bultmann has stated clearly that in this text "the supreme guidance of the Church is entrusted" to Peter; there he discerns even the original redaction of the same tradition which returns in *Mt* 16, and he considers this text as a very ancient passage of pre-Johannine tradition. His thesis, according to which the evangelist would only be interested in Peter's authority to be able to claim it for the beloved disciple, after which it would remain vacant, so to speak, following the death of Peter, is a proposal which finds no support either in the text or in the history of the Church. It also shows, in truth, that one cannot avoid the question about the meaning which the words addressed by Jesus to Peter should assume after the latter's death. What is most important for us is that, parallel to the Pauline tradition, the Johannine tradition also offers us an absolutely clear witness for knowing that privileged position of Peter which derives from the Lord.

In each of the synoptic Gospels, as well, we find independent traditions on the same theme, with the result that once again it is evident how the theme is part of the essential structure of preaching and is present in all the contexts of Tradition: in the Judeo-Christian context, in the Antiochene, in that of Paul's mission, and in Rome. For brevity's sake, we have to refrain here from analyzing all the texts one by one, just as we must pass over the Lucan version of the primatial mandate, "You must strengthen your brothers" (*Lk* 22:32) which, by grounding the Petrine mission

in the event of the Last Supper, gives it an important ecclesiological emphasis. Instead of all this, I would rather like to show in a most general way the special place assigned to Peter in the synoptic Gospels, even independently of Mt 16.

*b. Peter among the Twelve, according to the synoptic tradition*

In this regard we must first establish in a completely general way the position of Peter among the Twelve. Together with the two sons of Zebedee, he forms, within the company of the Twelve, a group of three which is put in prominence. They alone are present at two especially important moments: the transfiguration and the Mount of Olives (*Mk* 9:2ff; 14:13ff); similarly, only these three become witnesses of the raising of Jairus' daughter (*Mt* 5:37). On the other hand, among these three, Peter stands out: he is the spokesman at the transfiguration; and he is the one the Lord turns to at the sorrowful moment on the Mount of Olives. In *Lk* 5:1-11, the vocation of Peter appears as the original form of the apostolic call. Peter is also the one who tries to imitate the Lord when he is walking on the water (*Mt* 14:28ff); in regard to granting the disciples the power of binding and loosing, he asks how many times one should pardon (*Mt* 18:21). All of this is highlighted by the position Peter has in the list of disciples. Four versions of this have been handed down to us (*Mt* 10:2-4; *Mk* 13:16-19; *Lk* 6:14-16; *Ac* 1:13), which show different variations in their particular elements, but all agree in putting Peter at the top. In the Gospel of Matthew, he is even introduced with the significant term "the first" — for the first time one hears the source of that word, "primacy," which became the concept for expressing the specific mission of the fisherman of Bethsaida. The same thing practically is stated in *Mk* 1:36 and *Lk* 9:32, when this disciple is presented with the formula "Peter and those who were with him."

Let us now go to the *second* important theme concerning the new name which Jesus gave the apostle. As the Protestant exegete Schulze-Kadelbach has pointed out, one of the things "we know with the greatest certitude about this man" is the fact that he was given the title "rock-stone" and that this was not his original name, but a new appellation given to him by Jesus. As we have seen, Paul still uses the Aramaic form of the name which comes from the lips of Jesus and calls this apostle "Kephas." The fact that this term is later translated and entered history in the

Greek form of "Peter" unequivocally confirms that we are in no way dealing with the proper name of a person. Proper names are never translated. Now, it was not unusual for rabbis to give nicknames to their disciples; Jesus himself did something similar with the two sons of Zebedee whom he called "sons of thunder" (Mk 3:17). But how should this new name of Peter be understood? Certainly, it does not define this man's character, about which a warning was given in Flavius Josephus' accurate description of the typical character of the Galilean people: "courageous, good-natured, trusting, but easily influenced and fond of novelty." The designation "rock-stone" has no pedagogical or psychological significance; it is to be understood only in the context of the Mystery, that is, in a Christological and ecclesiological perspective: by the charge conferred upon him by Jesus, Simon Peter will become that which he in no way is through "flesh and blood." J. Jeremias has shown that lying in the background is the symbolic language of the holy rock. A rabbinical text is enlightening in this regard: "Yahweh said, 'How can I create the world, when these godless people will rise up and revolt against me?' But when God saw Abraham who was to come, he said, 'Look, I have found a rock on which I can construct and establish the world.' For this reason he called Abraham a rock, 'Look to the rock from which you were hewn' " (Is 51:1-2). By this faith, Abraham, the father of all believers, is the rock which supports creation, pushing back Chaos, the original flood which imminently threatens to ruin everything. Simon, who was the first to believe in Jesus as the Christ and was the first witness of the resurrection, with the Christological renewal of a faith worthy of Abraham, now becomes the rock which stands against the filthy tide of disbelief and its power to destroy all that is human. Thus, one can state that in truth the entire theology of Mt 16:18 is even contained just in the absolutely undeniable name of "rock-stone" given to the fisherman of Bethsaida, and therefore, its authenticity guaranteed.

c. *The logion about the ministry: Mt 16:17-19*

We now must consider more closely this central text of the Petrine tradition. In relation to the significance which the Lord's words about binding and loosing have received in the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that in its exegesis one finds reflected all the confessional polemics, as well as the internal oscillations of

Catholic theology itself. Between the two World Wars, while Liberal Protestant theology found reasons to challenge whether these words were said by Jesus, even among Protestant theologians a sort of consensus was developing which accepted with sufficient unanimity that these words originated with the Lord himself. In the new theological climate after the war, this consensus was shattered rather quickly. It is no wonder that in the atmosphere after the Council, even Catholic exegetes distanced themselves from the thesis that this logion came from Jesus. They then searched for the origin of these words in the situation of the early Church, and with Bultmann, they turned their attention to the most ancient Palestinian communities, both in Jerusalem and Antioch, where, it was hypothesized, the Gospel of Matthew was formed. On the side of truth, there are other voices; recently J. M. Van Cangh and M. Van Essbroeck, following the observations of H. Reisenfeld, have again highlighted the Jewish context of Matthew's account and propose considerations worthy of the greatest attention, which confirm the great antiquity of the text and bring out more clearly its theological depth, even beyond what has been known up until now.

At this session we cannot engage in all these debates; nor is it necessary that we do so for two reasons: on the one hand, we have seen that everything stated in Matthew has a substantial correlate in all the strata of tradition present in the New Testament, however differently construed they may be. Such a unity in the tradition can be explained only if Jesus is the origin of the saying. But we do not have to follow these discussions at length for a theological reason as well, i.e., for anyone who reads the Bible as the Word of God in the faith of the Church, the validity of one word does not depend on historical hypotheses about its origin and most ancient form. Anyone who has been listening to the proposals of exegetes for a considerable length of time knows what a short life these hypotheses have. For the believer, a word of Jesus does not obtain its binding force from the fact that a majority of contemporary exegetes recognize it as such, and it does not lose its validity when the contrary is verified. In other words, its validity is not guaranteed by hypothetical constructions, however well founded they may be, but rather from its belonging to the canon of Scripture which the Church guarantees as the Word of God, i.e., as the sure foundation of our existence.

This having been said, it is still important, of course, to understand the structure and content of a text as precisely as possible, using the tools of historical science. The Liberal period's principal objection to attributing this expression of vocation to Jesus himself is in reference to the fact that the word "Church" (*ekklesia*) is used here and occurs in the Gospels only here and in Mt 18:17. When one presupposes with certitude that Jesus could not have wanted a Church, then this linguistic usage appears as a significant anachronism, revealing the late creation of the saying in the already existing Church. In contrast to this, the Evangelical exegete, A. Oepke, has drawn attention to the fact that one can never be entirely sure when one bases oneself on similar verbal statistics. He has pointed out, for example, that in St. Paul's entire Letter to the Romans the word "cross" never appears, even though without a doubt the Letter is permeated from beginning to end with the apostle's theology of the cross.

In regard to these kinds of remarks, then, the literary form of the text is much more important, about which the indisputable spokesman of Liberal theology, A. von Harnack, has said: "There are not many longer passages in the Gospels in which the Aramaic background of the thought and the form is so certainly apparent than in this very compact pericope." In a completely similar vein, Bultmann said: "I do not see how its conditions of origin could be other than the original community of Jerusalem." The introductory formula is Aramaic: "Blessed are you"; the unexplained name of Bar-Jona is Aramaic, as the following concepts: "gates of hell," "keys of the kingdom of heaven," "bind and loose," "in heaven and on earth." The play on words with "rock" (you are the rock and on this rock...) does not work at all in Greek, since it requires a change in gender between *petra* and *Petros*: here we can clearly discern the Aramaic word *kefa* and hear the voice of Jesus himself.

Let us pass on to its interpretation, where once again we can take up only a few main points. We have already talked about the symbolism of the "rock-stone," observing that in this way Peter is considered as a parallel to Abraham; his function for the new people, the *Ekklesia*, takes on a cosmic and eschatological significance, corresponding to the standing of this society. To understand the way in which Peter is rock, a prerogative which he does not have on his own account, it is useful to keep in mind the rest

of the story in Matthew. Not from "flesh and blood," but by a revelation of the Father did he recognize Christ on behalf of the Twelve. Then, when Jesus explains the manner and way of the Christ in this world, prophesying his death and resurrection, then flesh and blood reply: Peter "rebuked the Lord": "No such thing shall ever happen to you" (16:22). And Jesus answered him: "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle (*skandalon*) to me..." (v. 23). He, who by the gift of God can be solid rock, on his own is a stone along the road which will cause the foot to stumble. The tension between the gift from the Lord and one's own capacities becomes so evident as to cause a sensation; in some ways this is an anticipation of the whole drama of the papacy's history, during the course of which we continue to encounter elements: that by which the papacy, due to a force which does not come from itself, remains the foundation of the Church, and that by which at the same time individual popes, due to characteristics typical of their humanity, repeatedly become a scandal, because they wish to precede Christ rather than follow him; because they believe, with their human logic, that they must prepare for him that way which only he himself can determine: "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" (16:23).

Regarding the promise that the power of death will not prevail against the rock (or against the Church?), we find a parallel in the vocation of the prophet Jeremiah, to whom it was said at the beginning of his mission: "For it is I this day who have made you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass, against the whole land: against Judah's kings and princes, against its priests and people. They will fight against you, but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord" (*Jr* 1:18f). What A. Weiser writes about this passage of the Old Testament can also serve well as an explanation of Jesus' promise to Peter: "God demands all the courage of an unconditional confidence in his extraordinary power when he promises all that is apparently impossible, i.e., to make a fragile man a 'fortified city,' a 'pillar of iron' and a 'wall of brass,' so that alone he will be able to resist the people of the land and the holders of power, as a living bulwark of God... He is not guaranteed the untouchability of a 'consecrated' man of God... but only the closeness of God who 'saves' him, and his enemies will not prevail over him (cf. *Mt* 16:18)." In truth, the promise made to Peter is even greater than

the ones made to the prophets of the old covenant: they were opposed only by the powers that come from flesh and blood, while opposed to Peter are the gates of hell, the destructive forces of the abyss. Jeremiah receives merely a personal promise in view of his prophetic ministry; Peter obtains a promise for the assembly of the new people of God, which extends through all time — a promise which goes beyond the time of his personal existence. For this reason Harnack thought that Peter's immortality is prophesied here, and in a certain sense, he hit the mark: the rock will not be overcome, because God will not abandon his Church to the forces of destruction.

The power of the keys recalls the word of God addressed to Eliakim in *Is* 22:22, who is given "lordship and power over the house of David" along with the keys. But even the word of the Lord addressed to the scribes and Pharisees, who are rebuked for locking the kingdom of heaven before human beings (*Mt* 23:13), helps us to understand this saying about his ministry: because Peter is a faithful steward of Jesus' message, he opens the gate of the kingdom of heaven; he exercises the function of the gatekeeper who must decide whether to let in or keep out (cf. *Rv* 3:7). In this way the meaning of the saying about the keys approaches that of the one about binding and loosing. The latter is taken from rabbinical language and means, on the one hand, full authority in doctrinal matters, and on the other, an additional disciplinary power as well, i.e., the right to inflict or remove excommunication.

The parallelism "in heaven and on earth" states that Peter's ecclesial decisions also have value in the sight of God — an idea which one also encounters in a similar form in Talmudic literature. If we pay attention to the parallel saying of the risen Jesus in *Jn* 20:23, it becomes evident that the power of binding and loosing means essentially the supreme authority entrusted in Peter to the Church of forgiving sins (cf. also *Mt* 18:15-18). It seems to me that this is a matter of the greatest importance. The grace of forgiveness stands at the very heart of the new ministry which takes away the power of the forces of destruction. It is this grace which establishes the Church. The Church is established on forgiveness. Peter himself represents this fact in his own person since he, who can be the holder of the keys, although having fallen into temptation, is also capable of confessing his fault and is

restored by means of forgiveness. The Church in her essential being is the place of forgiveness and so in her chaos is banished. She is held together by means of forgiveness and Peter represents that forever: she is not a community of the perfect, but a community of sinners who need forgiveness and seek it. Behind the logion on authority one can see the power of God as mercy and thus as the cornerstone of the Church; in the background we hear the Lord's word: "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners" (Mk 2:17). The Church can arise only where human beings accept her truth, and this truth consists precisely in the fact that they need grace. Where pride impedes this knowledge, they do not find the way which leads to Jesus. The keys to the kingdom of heaven are the words of forgiveness, which certainly no one can pronounce on his own, but which only the power of God guarantees. We can now see why this passage is followed immediately by a prediction of the passion: by his death Jesus has bolted the gate of death, the power of hell, and thus has expiated all sins, so that the power of forgiveness continually flows from this death.

## II. The question of succession

### *a. The principle of succession in general*

It is indisputable that the New Testament, in all of the great strands of its tradition, is familiar with Peter's primacy. The true difficulty arises when the second question is asked: is it possible to establish the idea of a Petrine succession? And the third related question is harder still: can one justify in a credible way a Roman succession of Peter? Regarding the former question we must first of all state that in the New Testament there is no explicit affirmation of a Petrine succession. But in truth, we should not be surprised about this, inasmuch as the Gospels, like the Pauline Letters, do not address the problem of a post-apostolic Church - something which should be seen, however, as a sign of the Gospels' fidelity to tradition. On the other hand, in the Gospels it is possible to find this problem in an indirect way, if the methodological principle of form criticism is correct in recognizing as part of tradition only what was in some way significant at the time of that tradition's corresponding context. For example, this should



mean that John, towards the end of the first century, i.e., when Peter had already been dead for some time, did not consider his primacy as something belonging to the past at all, but as something which remains contemporary for the Church.

Some even believe — perhaps with a little too much imagination — that they can discern in the “competition” between Peter and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” an echo of the tensions between the Roman claim of primacy and the self-consciousness of the See of Ephesus and of the Church of Asia Minor. At any rate, this would be a very early witness, and one for the most part immanent in the Bible, of the fact that the Petrine line was considered to continue in Rome. However, we should in no way depend on such an uncertain hypothesis. On the contrary, I think the correct idea is the basic one according to which the New Testament traditions never correspond to mere historical curiosity, but have a contemporary dimension to them and truly pull things out from the pure and simple aspect of the past, without thereby eliminating the special authority of their origin.

However, even these scholars have proposed hypotheses on the succession which deny the very principle. *O. Cullmann*, for example, with great onesidedness, rejects the idea of succession, but still thinks that Peter was replaced by James and that the latter assumed the primacy previously possessed by the first of the apostles. *Bultmann*, basing himself on the reference to the three pillars in *Ga* 2:9, thinks he can conclude that a change was made from personal direction to collegial direction, and that a college followed in succession to Peter. There is no need to discuss these and other similar hypotheses; their basis is rather weak. However, this shows how the idea of succession cannot be avoided if one considers the word handed down as a possibility open to the future. In the New Testament writings which are dated at the beginning of the second generation or which already belong to it — especially in the Acts of the Apostles and the pastoral Letters — the principle of succession, in fact, assumes a concrete form. The Protestant conception, according to which “succession” is found only in the Word as such, but not in “structures” of any sort, is shown to be anachronistic on the basis of the forms which produce the New Testament tradition. The Word is tied to a witness who guarantees its unequivocability, which it does not possess as a

mere word entrusted only to itself. The witness, however, is not an individual who subsists in and for himself. He is no more a witness of his own because of his capacity for recollection than Peter can be the rock on his power. He is a witness, not insofar as he is "flesh and blood," but because of his bond with the Spirit, the Paraclete, who guarantees the truth and opens the memory. It is he, for his part, who ties the witness to Christ. In fact, the Paraclete does not speak on his own, but takes from "his" (i.e. from what is Christ's: *Jn 16:13*). This bond with the Spirit and his mode of being — "not on his own, but what he hears" — is called, in the language of the Church, "sacrament." Sacrament signifies the threefold intersection of Word — witness — Holy Spirit and Christ, which describes the specific structure of the New Testament succession. From the witness of the pastoral Letters and the Acts of the Apostles, one can infer with a certain sureness that the apostolic generation had already given the form of the imposition of hands to this reciprocal intersection of person and word, in the actuality of faith of the Spirit and Christ.

#### b. *The succession of Peter in Rome*

The New Testament model of succession established in this way, i.e., the Word is removed from human arbitrariness by the involvement of the witness in it, is very soon confronted by an essentially intellectual and anti-institutional model, which we recognize historically by the name of gnosis. Here free interpretation and speculative development are raised to the level of a principle. Faced with the intellectual pretense promoted by this current of thought, recourse to the individual witnesses quickly becomes insufficient. The testimony now requires points of reference which were found in the so-called apostolic sees, i.e., those places where the apostles worked. The apostolic sees became the reference point for true *communio*. Within these reference points, however, there is a precise criterion which sums up in itself all the others (clearly stated by Irenaeus of Lyons): the Church of Rome, where Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom. Each individual community must be in agreement with this Church; she is truly the criterion of the authentic apostolic tradition. Moreover, Eusebius of Caesarea, in the first edition of his *Ecclesiastical History*, described the same principle: the proof of continuity in the apostolic succession is concentrated in the three Petrine sees

of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, where Rome, as the place of martyrdom, is again the pre-eminent see among the three, the one that is truly decisive.

This enables us to make an observation of the greatest importance: the Roman primacy, i.e., the recognition of Rome as the criterion of an authentically apostolic faith, is more ancient than the canon of the New Testament as "Sacred Scripture." In this regard we must be on guard against an almost unavoidable illusion. "Holy Writ" is more recent than the "writings" which comprise it. For a long time the existence of individual writings did not yield the "New Testament" as Sacred Scripture, i.e., the Bible. Assembling writings as Scripture is instead the work of Tradition, which began in the second century, but reached a sort of conclusion only in the fourth or fifth century. A witness beyond suspicion on this point, A. Harnack, has pointed out that before the end of the second century, there was in Rome an obligatory canon of "the books of the New Testament" according to the criterion of apostolicity and catholicity, a criterion which little by little was also followed by the other Churches, "because of their intrinsic value and the weight of the Roman Church's authority." We can, therefore, state: Scripture became Scripture through Tradition to which the *potentior principalitas* — the original prevailing authority — of the cathedra of Rome belongs as a constitutive element, as an element within this process.

In the second place, another element became quite apparent: the principle of Tradition, in its sacramental modality as apostolic succession, was constitutive for the existence and continuation of the Church. Without this principle it is absolutely impossible to imagine a New Testament, and here we flounder in contradiction if we want to affirm the one and deny the other. We have seen further that in Rome from the very beginning a traditional list of bishops' names was established as a series of succession. We can add that Rome and Antioch, as sees of Peter, were conscious of being placed within the succession of Peter's mission, and early on Alexandria was included in the group of Petrine sees inasmuch as it was the place of activity of Mark, Peter's disciple. However, the place of martyrdom then appeared clearly as the principal holder of the supreme Petrine authority, and it played a preeminent role in the formation of the nascent ecclesial Tradition and, in particu-

lar, in the formation of the New Testament as Bible; it belongs to its essential conditions of possibility, both internal and external. It would be fascinating to show how all of this was influenced by the idea that the mission of Jerusalem passed over to Rome, which is the reason why Jerusalem was not originally the seat of any "patriarchate," and was never even a metropolitan see: Jerusalem resides now in Rome and its title of pre-eminence has been transferred, with Peter's departure, from there to the capital of the pagan world. However, further consideration of this topic would take us too far afield. I think that the essential point is clear: Peter's martyrdom in Rome determines the place where his function continues. Consciousness of this is already apparent in the first century, in the first Letter of Clement, even if in its particulars all of this only develops slowly.

### Concluding reflections

We will stop at this point at which the essential goal of our reflections has been reached. We have seen that in its totality the New Testament documents the primacy of Peter in an impressive way; we have seen that the formation of Tradition and the Church has as its intrinsic condition the continuation of the supreme authority of Peter in Rome. The Roman primacy is not the invention of the Popes, but an essential element of the Church's unity which goes back to the Lord himself and was faithfully developed in the early Church. But the New Testament show us something more than the *formal* aspects of a structure; it shows us its inner essence as well. The New Testament does not just hand on documentary proofs but remains a criterion and a duty. It shows us the tension between the stumbling block and the rock: precisely in the disproportion between human capacities and the divine plan, God allows himself to be recognized as he who is truly present and at work. If the granting of such supreme authority to men can, in the course of history, continually give rise to the fear of an arbitrary human authority (and not without reason), nevertheless, not only the promise of the New Testament, but also the course of history itself, demonstrates the contrary. The disproportion between men and this office is so striking, so evident, that the very act of conferring on a man this function of being rock makes it clear that it is not these men who sustain the Church, but only

he accomplishes it *in spite of* men, rather than *through* them. The mystery of the cross is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the historical-ecclesial reality of the primacy. The fact that its core was established through forgiveness is, at the same time, its premise and the sign of the special nature of God's power. Each individual biblical saying about the primacy thus remains from generation to generation an indication, a measure, to which we must continuously turn. If the Church maintains her faith in these words, it is not a question of triumphalism, but of humility, which to her amazement and gratitude recognizes the victory of God over and through human weakness. Anyone who, due to fear of triumphalism or arbitrary human power, empties these words of their force does not preach a greater God at all, but rather diminishes him. Indeed, God manifests the power of his love precisely in the paradox of human weakness and in this way remains faithful to the law of salvation history. Therefore, with the same realism with which we today admit the faults of the Popes, their failure to live up to the greatness of their ministry, we must also recognize that Peter continues to be the rock against ideologies; against the reduction of the Word to what is plausible in a given age; against submission to the powers of this world. Seeing this reality in the facts of history, we do not celebrate men, but rather give praise to the Lord who does not abandon his Church and who has made her rock through Peter, the little stumbling block: it is not "flesh and blood" which save, but the Lord who saves those who are made of flesh and blood. To deny this is not to have greater faith or greater humility, but it is rather to withdraw before that humility which can recognize the will of God exactly as it is. The promise made to Peter and its historical realization in Rome thus remain, on the deepest level, a continuous reason for rejoicing: the powers of hell will not prevail against her.

† JOSEPH CARD. RATZINGER

## NO SOCIETY HAS THE RIGHT TO MAKE LAWS WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO THE LAW OF GOD\*

*The life of every person is sacrosanct,  
Pope tells his compatriots*

1. *"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice" (Mt 5:6).* I greet the city of Radom with the Gospel of the eight Beatitudes of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. I also greet the Churches of the Diocese of Sandomierz-Radom. I greet all those gathered here.

It is with particular veneration that I now turn towards ancient *Sandomierz*, the town in which the annals of Poland, the annals of the nation and Church, have been written since time immemorial.

I salute the whole land, remembering with gratitude both its distant and its more recent past. It is *the land of saints*, beginning with the martyrs of Sandomierz, Blessed Vincent Kadlubek, Ladislaus of Gielniów and Salomea, all the way to *St. Casimir*, who as a royal son ruled the Polish Crown, in place of his father, King Casimir Jagiello, who was from Radom. Born in Wawel, he returned to Vilnius as a saint to serve as patron of the People of God in Lithuania.

I salute *the land of John Kochanowski, John Dlugosz* and of so many others who did work of great merit for Polish culture and

\*During his visit to Poland, Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass on June 4, 1991 in Radom. During the Mass he preached the homily as follows. *L'Ossevatore Romano*. 17 June 1991.

science. My mind turns to *the heroes of national uprisings*, saluting the officers and men of the last war, especially members of the underground army, to whom we owe Poland's place on the map of Europe.

2. During today's visit I paused at a stone monument bearing the inscription, "*In memory of those wronged in connection with the workers' protest of 1976.*" These are merely recent times which Radom, and indeed all of Poland, has stored in its memory. One can say that the year 1976 was the prelude to the developments of the 1980s. The cost to the victims was great indeed: arrests, humiliation, torture (especially those of the type known as the "health tracks") and death (including the death of a priest of Sandomierz); but through these they blazed a trail for the human search for justice.

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice" (*Mt 5:6*).

Can a thirst for justice be expressed by a protest? Like the workers' protest of 1976? The hunger and thirst for justice most certainly denotes striving to overcome everything that is unjust and harmful, everything that violates human rights.

3. Along the path of my Polish pilgrimage, I have been accompanied by the ten commandments, the ten words which God pronounced forcefully atop Mount Sinai, and confirmed by Christ in his Sermon on the Mount, within the context of the eight Beatitudes. This is the foundation of human morality given as a task to man by his Maker. The Creator is also the supreme Lawgiver because, by creating man in his own image and likeness, he inscribed in the human "heart" the entire order of truth, which is a requisite of good and of the moral order and in this way serves as the basis of the dignity of man, the image of God.

In the very center of that order is the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," a strict and absolute prohibition which is at the same time the affirmation of every person's right to life, from the moment of conception to natural death. This right first and foremost takes up the defense of the innocent and the most defenseless.

To "hunger and thirst for justice" means to do everything to ensure the observance of this right, so that no one ever falls victim to an assault upon his life or limb, that the innocent person is never

killed, tortured, mistreated or endangered. In his Sermon on the Mount Christ extends the range of the Decalogue's fifth commandment to cover all *actions stemming from hate or vindictiveness* aimed against one's neighbor, even if these stop short of manslaughter. "Whoever hates his own brother..." Christ says in the Sermon on the Mount.

4. Man's legal codes defend life and punish murderers. At the same time, it would be hard to deny that *ours is a century weighed down by the deaths of millions of innocent people*. That death was caused by a new way of waging war, which amounts to mass attrition and annihilation of non-combatant portions of the populace. Suffice it to mention aerial bombardment (including the dropping of the atomic bomb), concentration camps and mass deportations of innocent people to be exterminated by the millions. Among the nations of Europe, the Polish people had an exceptionally large share of suffering in this slaughter. On Polish soil the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" has been violated by millions of outrages and crimes.

Among these outrages was *the particularly appalling systematic killing of entire national groups* — the Jews first of all — but also of other ethnic groups, such as the Gypsies, motivated solely by membership in a certain nation or race.

5. Was it merely a fact of exceptional cruelty, of spontaneous cruelty? One must admit that the genocidal consequences of the last war *had been spelled out by entire programmes of racial or ethnic hatred!* These programmes rejected the moral tenet of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," as being absolutely and universally binding. Drawing upon demented ideologies, they equipped privileged human institutions with the right to decide about the life and death of individuals and entire groups of people and nations. The divine "Thou shalt not kill" was replaced with "You are free to kill" or even "You must kill."

Thus, vast areas of our continent became the graves of innocent people, victims of crime. The root of such crime is embedded in man's usurpation of the divine power over the life and death of others. One can hear over all this the distant, persistent echoes of the words that man accepted "from the very beginning," in defiance of his Creator and Father. These words are: "Like God, you will know good and evil"



(Gn 3:5), that is, you will decide for yourself what is good and what is evil. You yourselves, like God, like God, against God!

6. Pardon me, dear brothers and sisters, but I shall go even further. That cemetery of the victims of human cruelty in our century is extended to include yet another vast cemetery, that of the unborn, of the defenseless whose faces even their mothers had not seen before allowing, or being pressured into allowing, that their lives should be taken away from them before their birth. They were alive, they had been conceived and were growing in their mothers' wombs, unaware of the mortal threat which was looming large. And when that threat had become a fact, those defenseless human beings tried to defend themselves. A film camera has recorded a desperate defense against aggression by an unborn child in its mother's womb. (I once saw such a film and to this day I cannot free myself from what I saw. I cannot free myself.) It is hard to imagine a more appalling tragedy, bearing in mind its moral and human impact.

This is the root of the drama, however broad and far-reaching it may be. However, here too are the secular authorities, all those groups, sometimes even "pressure groups" and legislative bodies, who make "legal" the taking of life from an unborn human being. What human institution, what parliament has the right to legalize the killing of an innocent and defenseless human being? What parliament has the right to say "You are free to kill," or even "Killing is in order," when the greatest efforts should be made to protect and help life in the first place?

7. Let us pause to note that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is more than a mere prescription. This commandment, in fact, calls upon us to adopt a definite outlook and assume positive ways of acting.

"Thou shalt not kill," but rather you should protect the life and health and respect the dignity of each and every person, regardless of his race or religion, level of intelligence, degree of consciousness, or age, of his state of health or sickness.

"Thou shalt not kill," but rather you should try to help your neighbors to accept joyfully their child who, speaking in human terms, according to them has arrived "at the wrong time."

At the same time we must step up our social concern, not only about the unborn child, but also about the parents, the mother first and foremost, if the arrival of their child has forced them to face troubles and worries which seem to be beyond them. This concern should find expression in both spontaneous actions and attitudes and in the creation of institutionalized forms of assistance to those parents whose situations are particularly difficult. I hope that parishes and religious communities will also join the movement of social solidarity with the unborn child and its parents who are in difficulty.

8. *"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice."* Christ said these words and he took them with him to the cross. He was sentenced to die on that cross, and die he did, and that was the death of the holiest of the sons of man. His life was taken away from him, too.

The Son of God died on the cross to give the most radical confirmation to the power of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

Mary, his Mother, stood at the foot of the cross, as she stands in so many sanctuaries throughout the earth. I remember the shrine at Blotnica near Radom and the crowning of the Mother of God in 1977.

"Thou shalt not kill!"

On the cross, death was inflicted upon her Son. In the sign of the cross we seek ways of redemption and deliverance from all our sins.

Behold, on the timber of shame dies the one who proclaimed to mankind the message of the eight Beatitudes, *the Son of God who is "the First and the Last" (Rv 22:13) among those who hunger and thirst for justice*: the one who links that hunger and thirst for justice with the assurance that "they shall be satisfied."

Dear brothers and sisters of Radom and this entire country, *let us build today the future of our homeland in conformity with the divine law*, in conformity with that eternal Wisdom which never loses its validity in any era, in line with the Gospel of Christ. Let us build, or rather, let us rebuild, because so much has been destroyed.

Yes, destroyed in people, in human consciences, in customs, in public opinion, in the media. We implore you, O Redeemer of the world, O Christ crucified and risen, through your Mother and ours, through all the saints and the righteous sons and daughters of this land, *that the future may belong to those who truly and unflinchingly "hunger and thirst for justice."*

† JOHN PAUL II

## ECUMENISM REQUIRES OUR COMMITMENT TO DIALOGUE IN TRUTH SINCERITY AND CHARITY\*

*Christ and his Church truly desire unity,  
Pope tells Orthodox*

Your Excellency, Archbishop Sawa,  
Most Venerable Bishops Szymon, Jeremiasz, Adam and Abel,  
Venerable Priests and Deacons, Fathers,  
Religious Brothers and Sisters,  
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!

"This is the day the Lord has made: Let us be glad and rejoice in it" (Ps 117/118:24).

*To the Lord of the centuries and Lord of the Church* — to Jesus Christ, our Savior, we give deepest thanks for the *gift of this meeting today*. We are gathered here in his name and we believe, in conformity with the promise we have received, that he is present in our midst. Therefore from the depths of our heart, here in this sacred place we can repeat the verse from the Office of Readings for Easter: "This is the day which the Lord has made."

\*On June 5, 1991, during his visit to Bialystok, Poland, the Holy Father met with representatives of the Orthodox Church in Poland. In his address he asked all Christians, Orthodox and Catholics alike, to let go of their hurts and prepare a new future of unity, especially working to instill the desire for ecumenism in the young. This is a translation of the Pope's address. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 June 1991.

1. Dearly beloved brothers and sisters,

Our meeting is taking place shortly after Pentecost. Profoundly experiencing the mystery of the Descent of the Holy Spirit has prepared us for it spiritually. I am happy that it is taking place in this city where, for centuries, the *two Christian traditions* — *those of the East and West* — have met and that we are meeting in the cathedral dedicated to St. Nicholas who was a bishop in the Church which was still undivided and is venerated in the Christian East and West alike. The common veneration present in our Churches is also one of the reasons we long for full unity.

The Holy Spirit is the one who creates holiness in the Church. As one of the hymns from Byzantine Office for the Solemnity of Pentecost proclaims, "every grace comes from the Holy Spirit"; it is he "who keeps the Church in unity." The same Holy Spirit allows us to discover *the spirit of brotherhood* which exists between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

As we stated together with His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in the declaration of almost four years ago: "This brotherly spirit... does not cease to grow and to bear fruit for the glory of God. We experience again the joy of being together as brothers" (Rome Declaration of 7 December 1987).

The theological dialogue which has been taking place between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches for some time now shows the profound, sacramental roots of this brotherhood.

In the joint document from Munich we read:

"Believers are baptized in the Spirit, in the name of the Holy Trinity to form a single Body (cf. *1 Co* 12:13). When the Church celebrates the Eucharist it realizes 'that which is,' the Body of Christ (*1 Co* 10:17).

... Partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, the faithful grow in this mysterious deification which brings about their dwelling in the Son and the Father through the Spirit" (1982 Munich Document, I 4b).

The document of New Valamo in Finland, which is the result of the common dialogue reminds us that:

"[Thus] the Eucharist brings about the unity of the Christian community. It also manifests the unity of all the Churches which celebrate it in truth and, throughout the centuries, it manifests even more the unity of all the Churches with the apostolic communities, from the beginning until today. In its Spirit, beyond history, is gathered the great assembly of the apostles, martyrs, and witnesses of all times united around the Lamb" (New Valamo Document, 1988, n. 36). The Eucharist tends towards full unity through Christ's presence, in which the Eucharist becomes a sign of full unity in Christ accepted with faith in its full meaning.

Today we see more clearly and understand the fact better that our Churches are sister Churches. To say "sister Churches" is not only a convenient phrase, but it is a fundamental ecumenical category of ecclesiology. Upon it should be based the mutual relations among all the Churches and also between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church here in Poland.

2. Dear Orthodox brothers and sisters,

We stand before the Lord during this solemn, sublime prayer in which several times the invocation "*Hospodi, pomiluj*" — "Lord, have mercy on us" — has resounded; we cannot fail to admit with humility that in the past the relations between our Churches were not always marked by a spirit of evangelical fraternity. The painful experiences continue to live in the memories of all. The deep roots of distrust, not yet and not fully overcome, have their source there. All of us bear the yoke of the guilt of the past; all of us commit errors. "If we say 'We are without sin,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8). Wherever wrong existed, regardless of who was at fault, it is overcome only by recognizing one's own guilt before the Lord and through forgiveness. With deep and sincere sorrow today, in God's presence, we admit it, asking him to pardon us: "*Hospodi, pomiluj i prosti!*"

Mindful of the words of the Lord's prayer — "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" — in a spirit of mutual reconciliation, let us pardon one another for all the wrongs suffered in the past in order to form our mutual relations in a new, truly evangelical way, and build a better future for the reconciled Churches. May these relations show the world the truth of the deep spiritual bond which truly exists between us. Christ prays: "May

they be brought to perfection as one, that the world may believe that you sent me" (*Jn* 17:23).

3. *Dialogue in the truth, in sincerity and in charity is the only way to tend towards full unity. It is the gift of the Spirit of God, the irreplaceable means on the way of reconciliation. It goes on despite the difficulties which crop up. The Coordinating Committee of the International Dialogue Commission will soon meet to work in Ariccia, Italy, on the very difficult problem of uniatism. We hope that the patient, persevering dialogue will achieve, with God's help, the elimination of the obstacles which impede our progress towards unity. I want to quote once again from the words of the declaration which I signed in Rome together with Patriarch Dimitrios:*

"We renew before God our common commitment to promote the dialogue of charity in every possible manner, following the example of Christ in nourishing his Church and surrounding her with the solicitude of his charity (cf. *Ep* 5:29). In this spirit we reject every form of proselytism, every attitude which would or could be perceived as a lack of respect" (Rome Declaration of 7 December 1987).

*To God belong the ages and the centuries. He is the Lord of human history, the God of the definitive future. That future is the new humanity united in Triune God, reconciled and transformed. In the name of this new future we must form the new today and the new tomorrow of a Christianity that is more reconciled. Dialogue obliges all of us. We must first of all educate the young people in a new spirit, in the spirit which tends towards full unity, to the unity which is Christ himself, for which he prayed and to which he has committed us. Therefore may all the efforts aimed at solving the difficulties which are manifested in our mutual relations be marked by great kindness and the selfless love which Christ gave us an example of in his self-emptying and death on the cross.*

Brothers and sisters, let us combine our efforts and the aspirations of the hierarchy and the whole People of God, in order to form, in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Christian collaboration and cooperation in our homeland as well, maintaining and developing the wealth of the spiritual, liturgical and national tradition. May this spirit deeply pervade the daily life of the two communities and become a new way of living together in reconciliation and charity.

#### 4. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this place today I want to express my deepest compassion because of the sad trials which the Orthodox Church has suffered in Poland in recent years. With sadness I think of the fire set by arsonists which destroyed the venerated Orthodox shrine of the Lord's Transfiguration on the holy mountain of Grabarka, as well as the robbery at the monastery of St. Honuphrius in Jableczna. These sacrilegious acts cause great sorrow in my heart and in that of Catholics. Everything that disrupts a good, peaceful coexistence between Christians of diverse tradition comes from evil.

From our common prayer today, may Christ's desire that "they may all be one" be born anew in us.

May he, the Lord of the Church and the Lord of history, "the Alpha and the Omega... He who is, who was, and who is to come, the Omnipotent one" (*Rv* 1:8) bless our ecumenical efforts that we may finally overcome the sin of division and arrive at full unity.

May the Lord bless the venerable hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in Poland and all its faithful.

*"Ad multos annos! Is polla eti.*

"And may the mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen."

To all of the Orthodox communities of the Diocese of Bialystok, Gdansk and all of Poland, to all the parishes and all pastors, to this community with which we have prayed and to the choir which has give such beautiful help to our prayer I say: May God reward you.

† JOHN PAUL II



## THE MISSIONARY DIMENSION OF PCP-II\*

### The Title of the Document

The title itself of the PCP-II document, which beautifully and comprehensively embodies the month-long discussion and sharing of the council delegates, has been lifted up from the mission sending words of the Lord to his apostles and disciples as he was about to be taken up to Heaven: "Go... *I am with you always*" (Mt 28:19-20). These words, certainly not chosen at random and unanimously approved by the participants, tell us not only of the direction but more importantly of the spirit that the Council challenges the Christian Filipino to take as he/she journeys towards the third millennium: to continue along the path of mission.

### The Spirit of the Council

I believe that the choice of the title came out naturally in as much as one of the four directional factors of the council as laid down by the bishops of the Philippines right from its very conception was that the "spirit" of the council is to be: Evangelization 2000; with the other directional factor being: Christ is to be its "focus."

\*This talk was given on the occasion of the 39th National Mission Assembly of the Diocesan Directors of the Pontifical Missionary Societies held at the Betania Retreat House, Tagaytay City, August 26-29, 1991. This was in response to a skeptical question: Did PCP-II have a missionary dimension?

And evangelization is mission, and to lead men and women to Christ.

Thus, it is not strange at all that we hear these words in the Introduction Part of the document which underline the spirit of the council and summarize its *raison d'être*:

"... The four-week council we are now concluding must in God's grace be another Pentecost: Christ's Spirit descending on us his people, going forth in-spirited to renew the face of the world — our little world first, the Philippines; and through this little world of ours, the wider world of Asia and beyond, giving of ourselves unto the renewal and unity of God's whole creation."

## Two Moments of Mission

We traditionally recognize two moments of mission: *ad intra* in the sense of re-evangelization and *ad extra*. These two dimensions are what are treated in the document, with more emphasis on the *ad intra*, that is, our own re-evangelization.

## Mission Ad Intra

Our main concern here is the mission *ad extra* or *ad gentes*. Hence, I will give just a few indication on the *ad intra* dimension. The *leit motif* of the document is renewal — our own renewal as Christian Filipinos. Thus it talks about "Envisioning a Church Renewed," "A Renewed Integral Evangelization" and about the "Workers of Renewal." For this renewal PCP-II underlines two basic tasks: (1) knowing, loving and following Christ; and (2) conversion.

Concerning the first task, the Council says:

"How to live as Catholic Christians today? It is to know, to love, to follow Christ in the Church which he founded. This is why we need to contemplate the face — and the heart of Christ. We have to retell his story to ourselves, that we may more credibly, more authoritatively tell it to others. This is our belief."

And concerning the second, it says:

"Though the Kingdom is God's gift, we must receive it actively. 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel,' Jesus calls out. We must have a change of mind and heart, mend our ways and return to God."

## Mission Ad Extra

The missionary dimension *ad extra* of the Church is treated extensively in Part II of the document "Envisioning a Church Renewed." When it talks about the Church as a Community of Disciples, it also mentions her characteristics. And it says that one of her characteristics is that the Church is a Community in Mission.

### a. *A Community in Mission*

To reflect on this characteristic of the Church, the Council takes as its starting point no. 2 of the Vatican II document *Ad Gentes* (which talks about the missionary task of the Church on earth as planned by the Father) and no. 7 of the same Vatican document (which talks about the will of God to save all and to have all come to the knowledge of the truth and to give all the right to say "Our Father").

Then, after this reflection, the Council strongly declares: "The Church is a communion in a state of mission."

To elucidate this declaration better, allow me to quote two important paragraphs from the document:

"The community of disciples does not exist only for itself or its members. It exists for the world. It is sent on mission to proclaim the good news of Christ and to be the instrument of his grace. It exists in order to evangelize, i.e., to proclaim the Good News, to build up the Church, and to serve the Kingdom by permeating the world with Gospel values so that finally all creation may be united in Christ as head (*Ep* 1:10).

Christ did not only call his disciples to follow him. He did not only gather them around him. His final words to them are words of missioning: 'You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria and indeed to earth's remotest ends' (*Ac* 1:8). St. Matthew narrates the commissioning in another way: 'Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations... and look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (*Mt* 28:19-20)."

It will also be good to mention here that earlier in the document faith as a response to Christ's call is also described as missionary: "To

accept the mission and evangelize others is the test of authentic belief." "The person who has been evangelized," it goes on to quote from *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n. 24), goes on to evangelize others. It is unthinkable that a person should believe the Word and submit himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn." "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel," St. Paul said (1 Co 9:16).

*b. Missionary Vocation of the Church in the Philippines*

After talking about the missionary vocation of the Church in general, the Council then speaks about the missionary vocation of the Church in the Philippines; and about a couple of groups of people among us that incite our missionary concern.

The document reminds us of the insistence of the Popes on our missionary vocation because of our privileged status of being the predominantly Catholic nation in Asia. And it quotes some words from Pope John Paul II: "There is no doubt about it: the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News, to carry the light of Christ to the nations."

The Council acknowledges that we have indeed already started to launch ourselves into this new age of mission. We have already around a thousand missionaries abroad (priests, religious and lay faithful). Our Fil-Mission Society and the Philippine Lay Mission Program are flourishing, and (the documents just gives a slight hint at this in discussing the spirituality of the ordained minister) some diocesan priests are now affiliating themselves to missionary institutes for a taste of mission work. But these are only initial steps demanding intensification.

Article 19 of the Resolutions, under Title IV "Special Religious Concerns," makes the need to help "other... Churches in dire need of personnel" mandatory:

The aid of the Church in the Philippines to other (foreign) Churches in dire need of personnel should be stepped up through a more concerted effort to strengthen the missionary thrust of religious orders, lay mission groups, dioceses, and in particular the Philippine Mission Society.

The document makes special mention of the missionary potential of migrant workers (yes, of the domestics and chambermaids). Hence, the call for appropriate catechesis and pastoral care for them.

Article 56, n. 1 of the Resolutions, under Title X "Laity" says: "Special attention should be given to migrant workers not only to help protect them but also to make them more aware of and prepare them for their missionary role of witnessing to the Gospel in their employment overseas."

*c. Special Missionary Sections*

While looking at mission abroad, the Council does not overlook special groups of people in our midst that challenge our evangelizing task: the Filipino-Chinese and the Muslims.

Of the Filipino-Chinese the Council says that less "than 20% of the Chinese in the Philippines have had some effective evangelization." Thus the call to intensify this particular apostolate.

And concerning the Muslims, the Council says that though they may be few they are of special importance for religious and historical reasons. Connected with the question on the Muslims is the problem of inter-religious dialogue which the Church has now acknowledged as part of the Church's evangelizing mission. And also touched is the approach called "dialogue of life" now going on in some areas in Mindanao and Sulu.

*d. Special Concern: Inculturation*

The document then touches a very important reality in missionary work today: inculturation, the presence or absence of which can spell the success or failure of missionary work. Among other things, the Council says:

"... inculturation is necessary also for the sake of the Church itself. Unless it participates in this process it will not be able to respectfully draw the good elements within the culture, renew them from within and assimilate them to form part of its Catholic unity. The catholicity is more fully realized when it is able to draw itself and use for the glory of God the riches of a people's culture."

In talking about our faith-response in Part II of the council document, the Council says that our faith must be inculturated. It says: "Faith must take root in the matrix of our Filipino beings so that we may truly believe and love as Filipinos."

And the Council concludes that this process of inculturation is necessary for us as Filipino evangelizers so we can contribute something of ourselves to Catholic unity.

### **Means to Fulfill Missionary Task**

The document says that in order to fulfill this mission "Christ has constituted us as a priestly people, prophetic and kingly."

As a priestly people we share in the priesthood of Christ though in different ways. The ministerial priests help the people grow in holiness and to be leaven within the world; the people on the other hand collaborate in the life and mission of the Church.

As a prophetic people we can all by our lives, gestures, testimony and teaching bring the Word of God to others.

As a kingly people we are "to overcome the reign of sin" in the world. This we do when we "order creation to the praise of God, and make the world a place less unworthy of the children of God, whenever by our work we improve the world and permeate it with the values of Christ, whenever we are able to overcome sin in ourselves and in the environment and allow the grace of God to break through into the world..."

### **The Workers of Renewal and Mission**

#### *a. The lay faithful*

In talking about some aspects of the lay faithful's role and life, the document says that the "third aspect of the Church that helps us understand the life and role of the laity is the universal call to service and evangelization." And then it quotes John Paul II on the missionary task of the lay: "The lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the Church, have the vocation and mission to proclaim the Gospel... The entire mission of the Church, then is concentrated and manifested in evangelization... Evangelization is the fundamental apostolate of the Church" (C.L., n. 51).

#### *b. The Religious*

The document points out that the missionary effort is a dynamic factor that will revitalize religious charisms more fully. It says: "It

reminds us that historically, the missionary effort is a dynamic factor that revitalizes the charism of religious life."

c. *The Ordained Ministry*

One of the characteristics, the document says, of priestly spirituality is that it is missionary for after all he is ordained for the salvation of the whole world. He can help in the missionary task by prayer and material support and even by going to mission lands when he feels God calling him.

## CONCLUDING WORDS

From our very cursory review of the document produced with the help of the Holy Spirit by the delegates of PCP-II, we can very easily and confidently say that the Council is a call to evangelization, a call to mission.

The apostles and the disciples waited for the great day of Pentecost to be able to make their first sermon, their first step in the missionary work that bore fruit in their first converts. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines has been seen as a Pentecostal event for us calling us to a "new age of mission." Thus, Bishop Teodoro Bacani, in his most recent book "Towards the Third Millennium - The PCP-II Vision," concludes: "PCP-II was not only a visitation of the Church by the Lord. It was a moment of invitation, of mission. It is now the task of the Church in the Philippines to heed that invitation and to fulfill that mission" (p.89).

Allow me then to end with the very last words of the document of PCP-II itself that echo the mission sending words of Our Lord:

"This Council is a veritable Pentecostal event for us, the Church in the Philippines. And it is with the faith and hope, the joy and the courage, of Pentecost that we go forth to renew ourselves as Church.

We pray that the Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, be with us as she was with the Apostles at Pentecost. We pray too that the Spirit of Pentecost remain with us in our

journeying to our new reality: a Church totally for others and totally for God, true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we go."

Msgr. REY MANUEL S. MONSANTO

August 1991  
Betania Retreat House  
Tagaytay City



## MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

*Second Plenary Council celebrated in February*

*May they all be one; Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jn 17:21-22).*

When the first evangelizers from Spain came to our shores, they found a divided people. Stormy seas and straits divided one island from another. Different cultures and dialects prevented the early Filipinos from understanding one another. It was then the vital task of the first evangelization to give our people unity. This was accomplished through one faith — in Jesus Christ; through one bread — in the Holy Eucharist; through one body — in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

Thanks to the apostolic zeal and sacrifices of those early missionaries, we became one people, one nation. From Batanes even to distant Tawi-tawi, there were devotions to Mary and the saints, festivals and processions to the Sto. Niño, penitential sacrifices during Lent. After almost 500 years of Christianity, we should have become by now a light of faith to edify the nations of the Orient. We should have become by now a people renowned for its Christian way of life and its fidelity to justice, charity and peace. Since then, what has happened to our people and our country?

*Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim; redress the wronged; hear the orphans' plea, defend the widow" (Is 1:17).*

We are now hunted by some painful questions. After almost five centuries of Christianization, why are the majority of our brothers and sisters still living in conditions of poverty? We see children begging daily on our main streets. Their sunken eyes match their swollen stomachs. Many of our farmers remain without land to till, fishermen without shores to fish — their restless hands tempted to exchange idle plows and nets for the weapons of violence and destruction. Our rivers are polluted, our culture fragmented, our minds and hearts assaulted by irreverence and violence. Why is our country broken by conflicts and power struggles? Why is it divided by deep differences, regional bias and language barriers? Why are we, as a people, unable to transcend these differences in the name of a higher unity and greater solidarity?

*"Hasten, O Lord, answer us before our spirit fails; if you hide your face much longer, we shall go down to the grave like the rest. Let dawn bring proof of your love, for we have trusted in you; teach us the way we should go for we lift our soul to you" (Ps 143:7-8).*

And so it came to dawn that 470 years from the time Magellan planted the first cross in our land, 409 years after the First Synod of Manila, 354 years from the martyrdom of Lorenzo Ruiz, 46 years from the destruction of the Cathedral of Manila, 38 years since the First Plenary Council of the Philippines, 29 years after the opening of Vatican II, 5 years after the people's restoration of their political rights, and 70 hours away from the start of the Gulf War, that the Church in the Philippines, guided by the Holy Spirit in her discernment of the signs of the times, inaugurated her Second Plenary Council.

*"Blessed by God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning to act upon when the times had run their course to the end: that he would bring*

*everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Ep 1:1-10).*

We, the 489 participants from all over the Philippines, met for four weeks at the San Carlos Pastoral Formation Complex of the Archdiocese of Manila. We brought with us the dreams of our people for a revitalized Church and a re-evangelized country. We carried with us the hopes of our people for a resurgence of faith and charity. Through these Gospel values the structures of injustice and corruption in our midst can be firmly dismantled.

But we also brought into the Council our own individual failings and sinfulness, our doubts and divisiveness. We ourselves had to be converted. We had to learn humility in listening to one another. We had to learn respect for one another. We had to be obedient to the unexpected movements of the Spirit. We first had to be "servants of truth" in order gradually become a Christ-centered community. In our midst throughout our conciliar journey, we experience the powerful presence of Mary who is our mother and model.

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are the humble of heart; they will possess the land.*

*Blessed are those who mourn; they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice; they shall be satisfied" (Mt 5:1-6).*

The Council was not intended to be a forum for vested interests to prevail nor was it meant to be an exercise in authoritarianism or legalism. It was to be a venue for a meeting with Christ — sole architect of the Christian community. He builds his Church according to the plan of his Father, who wants it to be a communion of life, love and truth (LG, n. 9). In the Spirit, he gathers those who repent and believe into a community of disciples.

As we approach the year 2000, Christ bids this community — ourselves, the laity, religious and clergy of the Catholic Church in the Philippines — to be a Church of the poor:

— a Church that lives in evangelical poverty and combines detachment from material possessions with a profound trust in the Lord as the only source of salvation;

— a Church that defends and vindicates the rights of the poor even when doing so spells for herself alienation or persecution by the rich and powerful;

— a Church where the poor, equal to all others in dignity, are not only evangelized but become evangelizers themselves;

— a Church where no one is so poor as to have nothing to give, and no one is so rich as to have nothing to receive.

The ideal of this Church of the poor remains the first Jerusalem community, where the faithful were "united, heart and soul" (Ac 4:32) and where no one was in want (Ac 4:34) because everyone shared out of love.

This is the kind of Church which, in all humility, we hope would emerge as the fruit of this Council.

*"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you" (Jn 14:26).*

*"He will show the world how wrong it was about sin and about who was in the right" (Jn 16:8-9).*

The future ahead of us is uncertain and perilous. This condition has been brought about by man's destruction of his natural environment and by his misuse of technological power. Yet, in spite of this generation's pessimism, the Church which Christ founded faces the future with hope and confidence. For hers is the certain knowledge that the Father has sent the Spirit of Christ to accompany her earthly pilgrimage.

Accompanied by the Spirit of truth, we can purify our popular devotions and rituals from some of the superstitions that still contaminate them. He, the Spirit of Wisdom, can help our basic ecclesial communities progress from external rituals to inter-

nalized values. As the Spirit of fortitude, he brings us out of our selfish isolation and gives us the courage to be involved in those tasks which lead to the transformation of our society.

*"And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle they cannot comprehend, to the pagans madness but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength" (I Co 1:22-25).*

The Council's thrust is toward a new evangelization, based not on human expectations and wisdom, but on the preaching of Christ crucified to today's Filipinos and Asians. So challenging is this task that it can overwhelm our spirit. Deep are the wounds of conflict and violence in our society; many of today's Filipinos find it madness to talk of peace. For great is the corruption underlying our economic and political structures and system. Even today, there are still those who have little inclination to live in the light of Christ's teachings, which for them is foolishness.

And so, at the end of this Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, we humbly confess that we have barely analyzed the severity of the problems our Church and country face. We fully realize that we alone cannot design nor implement those basic recommendations that could lead to an era of peace, justice and charity for our suffering countrymen.

Therefore, at this historic moment, before the altar of God, in the presence of all the assembled bishops, priests, religious and laity who comprise this Council — we make our appeal to all of you, sisters and brothers in the faith dwelling in every corner of our beloved country — together let us complete our unfinished agenda! Participate in their fulfillment! And let us as one people proclaim the wonderful redemptive acts of Christ our Lord — from Batanes to Tawi-tawi.

*"Jesus came and spoke to them: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son*

*and of the Holy Spirit; and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.*

*'For behold, know that I am always with you — yes, to the end of time!'" (Mt 28:16-20).*

For the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines.

† LEONARDO L. LEGASPI, O.P.  
Archbishop of Caceres  
President, PCP II

## THE VISION OF A CHURCH RENEWED

"Then they said to each other: 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem" (*Lk 24:32-33*).

In the beginning we likened the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines to a journey. It was, in truth, more like a pilgrimage of faith undertaken by the Church in quest of her own revitalization and the renewal of the Catholic faith in the country. We harboured no illusions when we started out four weeks ago that we would fully achieve our goal.

Neither did we entertain for a moment that our plenary council would symbolize a new Pentecost. We were fully aware that, compared to the first Pentecost, there was a vital dimension missing in our Council, namely, the rest of the Christian community. For you will recall that the Holy Spirit descended on a gathering where *all* the Apostles, in company with Mary, were present. So likewise in our times, the charisms of the Holy Spirit await the proclamation and implementation of the Council's message all over our land. Only after the proposals of the council have taken root in the life of far-flung communities like Tayum in Abra, Jordan in Guimaras, Banay-Banay in Davao, will our land be blessed with a new Pentecost. It is therefore incumbent upon us, who have journeyed together in the council to turn back like the disciples on the road to Emmaus — and to return to our own Jerusalem communities, in Luzon, in Visayas, in Mindanao.

We have reached a turning point in the history of the plenary council. The celebration phase has come to a close. Our final "Conciliar Document" will now be forwarded for review to the Holy See. Once approved, this unified document of our council could well become the Magna Carta guiding the evangelizing mission of the Church in the Philippines unto the third millennium.

Today we pause after four intensive weeks of work to give praise and thanks to God whose graces accompanies us throughout the council period. At the same time, we humbly pray for his continued providence and presence as we inaugurate the implementation phase.

While we await the approval of the Holy See, already there is one manifest result of the council, namely, its effect on the nearly 500 members who participated in its deliberations. They came to the San Carlos Pastoral Formation Complex, venue of the plenary council, bringing with them the doubts and anxieties as well as the hopes and dreams of their communities. They came among strangers, harbouring within themselves the suspicions and competitiveness that plagued and divided our society.

But the Spirit of God who initiated the first evangelization on the shores of the Cebu Strait was now 400 years later also at work in unfolding the new evangelization on the banks of the Pasig River. Through their dialogue with one another, through their celebration of the Eucharist, through their vigils and prayers, they learned to respect one another, to work together so that gradually there emerged in the council a Spirit-filled community reflecting a "fellowship of life, charity and truth."

It can then be said that the first converts of the council are its members themselves, that the first to be evangelized by the council were its very own participants. In this way did Christ prepare and shape us to become the first evangelizers of the message of the council to our people.

It has then become our responsibility to be the "apostles of truth" who announce the good news of the council to all our people. Ours is the privilege to explain the council's major thrusts and directions: its message of renewal and unity; its summons to spiritual growth and maturity; its call for a "deeper and more effective evangelization."



Evangelization leads to inculturation which has been defined by the present Pope as the "intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity" (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 52). In our history, this intimate process of evangelical inculturation has been going on since the day Magellan planted the first cross on Filipino soil. In all these almost 500 years, Gospel charisms were quietly enriching and transmuting our original ethnic and social values with new spiritual graces that transcended our culture's natural capacities.

Thus, the introduction of Christian charity helped the Filipino rethink the narrowness and selfishness of his clan loyalties. The teaching of the Beatitudes confronted the Filipino with an alternative way of life from that of his violent impulses. Devotion to Mary ennobled Filipino womanhood. The celebration of feasts provided the Filipino with a glimpse of the providence of God.

As we study the history of the Church's inculturation, we discern the pattern of God's plan and initiatives for educating us in the faith. And we are awed by its pervasiveness, its persistence in spite of so many betrayals and infidelities, its majesty in the face of our puny assertions and rejections. So much so that we are led to exclaim with the Psalmist:

"O Lord, what is man that you should spare a thought for him, the children of men that you should care for them? Yet you have made him little less than a god, you have crowned him with glory and splendour... " (*Ps* 8). What has been the effect of this providential inculturation on the Filipino? It has challenged him and her to accept the vocation to be *maka-tao*, *maka-bayan* and *maka-Diyos*.

To help Filipinos put on these values in their daily lives, the council offers a vision.

This has been expressed by the conciliar document in this way:

This is our *vision*: that all Filipinos may have life in its fullness, we need to bring forth a free nation, nurturing a civilization of life and love —

where human dignity and solidarity are respected and promoted;

where moral principles prevail in socio-economic life and structures;

where justice, love and solidarity are the inner driving forces of development.

We shall have to build a sovereign nation: where every tribe and faith are respected; where diverse tongues and traditions work together for the common good;

where membership is a call to participation and involvement, and leadership a summons to generous service. Ours will have to be a people:

in harmony with one another through unity in diversity;

in harmony with creation and in harmony with the Creator.

Furthermore, the council not only offers the Filipino a vision, but also a Church renewed.

The Church has firmly entered the path of renewal because her hierarchy has stressed its role of service rather than of dominance. The Church is serious about renewal because she has invited the laity to greater participation in Christ's mission. The Church bears the marks of renewal in her body because she has taken upon herself the sufferings of victims. Above all, the Church has become the sign of renewal in electing to be a Church of the poor.

The impact of a Church of the poor on our vision and mission is immeasurable. But since the message to the People of God which will be read at the end of our Mass will touch on this topic. I shall not now expand on it.

The Church is a sign of renewal only because she is above all a sign of contradiction. She transforms herself not by pursuing political influence but by siding with the most powerless sectors of society. For the Church renews herself not by acquiring earthly possessions but by embracing the poverty and ignominy of the cross. This then is the vision of a Church renewed that is the council's gift to the Filipino.

Nourished by this vision and sustained by a Church renewed, the Filipino is better prepared than ever before to establish in our fair land a civilization of life and love.

We almost had in our grasp the beginnings of such a civilization. For one brief shining moment, Filipinos at EDSA opted for life and for love. Filipino men and women passed on food and water to one another. Filipinos, young and old, stood steadfast together before tanks. Filipinos, rich and poor, prayed together and together risked their lives for a transcendent cause. Their collective act of courage astounded the world and awakened dreams of freedom from the plains of Burma to the walls of Berlin.

That shining moment is gone — too soon, too quickly, its glory and promises have faded in the mire of corruption, greed and violence that once more engulfed our nation. Are we then a people condemned to liberations of a moment, to solutions of a moment, to commitments and loyalties that last but for a moment?

The Christ who stood before King Herod, the Christ who cleansed the temple, the Christ crucified, has a message to explain the brevity of our EDSA dreams. Time and again, he has told us not to place our hopes for liberation in any political or ideological messiahship, not to place our future in the schemes of economic wizards, not to build our nation's foundation on the shifting sands of human programmes. It is this message that the second plenary council sought to embody in our vision. It offers the Filipino an enduring future: the establishment of a Kingdom that will outlast all human monuments, an enterprise that is an apostolate worth all the Filipino's commitment and loyalty. Its permanence is assured, its victory guaranteed because, as we journey together to implement this vision, there stands by our side One who promised us his company, to the end of time.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, our preparatory task is over. Our enduring apostolate has but started as we now prepare to return to our own Jerusalems. We have prepared ourselves by internalizing our vision so that we might proclaim it with credibility and enthusiasm. We have prepared ourselves for our return journey by our participation in this holy sacrifice, the venue once more of our encounter with Christ.

And since Pentecost and the multiplication of its charisms of justice, peace and charity all over our land cannot take place without the presence of the Blessed Mother, we now humbly ask

her to journey once more with us as she once did to her cousin Elizabeth — this time to announce her Magnificat to our waiting people.

And so it is that we have come to the end of our conciliar journey; with hearts full of gratitude for the blessings from the Father, our vision fixed on Christ and with a determination born of the Spirit, I declare the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines formally closed.

Let us praise the Lord!

† LEONARDO LEGASPI  
*Archbishop of Caceres*  
*President of the Catholic Bishops'*  
*Conference of the Philippines*

## **STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR**

At the conclusion of our Retreat at the Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay, and at the start of our 63rd Plenary Assembly, we, the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, wish to thank with all our hearts the forces within the ranks of the Catholic Church who have worked so hard for the victims of Mt. Pinatubo. We want to thank the non-Catholics who have helped our people. We join hands, in a national effort in time of disaster.

The eruption has caused great loss of life, dislocation of people, and the destruction of a vast amount of property. The devastation is unparalleled in our history. Coming on the heels of many other natural calamities, it has crippled our nation. As pastors, we are deeply moved by all these loss and suffering. We have prayed for the victims, and even the Holy Father has granted them substantial aid.

Bishops from all over the country have reported intense activity in the parishes, in the schools, among the religious congregations of men and of women, to bring aid directly to those who are suffering. We wish to thank especially the laity, for their generosity and their personal sacrifice as volunteer workers. The physical evil of the eruption has caused many heroic demonstrations of Christian charity. Here, we see God drawing good out of evil.

The suffering has been aggravated by the insinuations of some that those calamities are punishments from God for personal and social sins. While it is true that God can use natural calamities to

punish sin, people should reflect carefully before making accusations like these. Many of the sufferers are certainly no more sinful than their accusers. And they are no more sinful than many who have not been harmed by the eruption.

The Bishops will continue to labor not only for the immediate relief of the victims, but for the long-term rehabilitation of the people. As a Conference, we have accepted the plan that each diocese adopt a parish in the stricken area. This will insure constant, continuing help to the places which have been devastated, and to the people who are destitute. We realize that it is not enough to meet the immediate emergency. We must plan and execute long-term assistance, until the people of these parishes are able to return to normal living.

This all-out effort to practice the Gospel of Christ by reaching out to the poor must extend to other areas. We must make an effort to lower the price of fuel, to lower the price of basic commodities, to lower the price of things which the poor need to live.

But this is not enough. Our mission demands that we lift our people out of their dehumanizing poverty. We must make it possible for the poor to live in dignity, and in honor, as the children of God. To become the Church of the Poor is our vision.

The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo has driven the Church into action on all levels, and on all fronts – in the schools, in the parishes, in the dioceses, in the National Conference of Bishops. It has united us in one common effort to help those who are in need. This is exactly what the Second Plenary Council wanted us to do.

Together with people of other faiths, we must become one with the poor – one people, one nation, one Filipino family.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of the Philippines  
† LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.  
Archbishop of Caceres  
President, CBCP

Tagaytay, 21 July 1991

## PASTORAL LETTER ON PREPARING FOR THE 1992 ELECTIONS

To our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings of love and peace in the Lord!

In a few months, we shall again reach a critical phase in the unfolding history of our beloved country. All of us who are of the required age will come forward to perform our very serious civic and moral duty to vote into office the people who will lead us in our continuing quest for mature and just nationhood.

We, your bishops given charge by the Lord of shepherding his flock, address you this letter as we recall the exhortation of Vatican II: "Every citizen ought to be mindful of his right and his duty to promote the common good by using his vote" (G.S., 75).

Once more, we challenge your patriotism because in the coming elections our duty as Christians coincides with our duty as citizens. Pope John Paul has told us:

*In order to achieve their task directed to the Christian animation of the temporal order, in the sense of serving persons and society, the lay faithful are never to relinquish their participation in 'public life'; that is, in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good (Christifideles Laici, n. 42).*

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines also strongly urged the lay faithful to participate in political activity. It said:

"In the Philippines today, given the moral perception that politics has become an obstacle to integral development, the urgent necessity is for the lay faithful to participate more actively, with singular competence and integrity in political affairs" (PCP II, p. 63).

This coming elections are very important acts of this needed participation in public life.

The importance of what we must do has been heightened by what we have done or failed to do in the past five years of transition. Some have all too willingly, and others unwittingly, allowed the squandering of time, spirit, and opportunities in our task of reconstructing a democratic society. We must change all this.

The past five years of irreplaceably lost opportunity demonstrate that the realization of our goals is determined very much by the electoral process. We have seen the wastage of our nation's resources and the perversion of democratic principles in the disservice done by those individuals who have proven themselves unworthy of the office entrusted to them. We seem unable to establish a democracy that can ensure the satisfaction of our people's basic human needs, and promote a life of peace and dignity.

We must change this situation. We must resurrect faith from pervading cynicism and possible despair. We must organize ourselves in the face of selfish interests and public disarray.

The key is in how we shall recognize and vote for true, generous and committed leaders of service and in who we shall preserve the sanctity and value of our votes. We have made some progress in this regard. But we must preserve and improve our gains.

There are indispensable requirements to be met so that the elections in 1992 and in subsequent years may serve as democratic



instruments for establishing and changing political leaders and for securing society changes beneficial to the people.

1. The first requirement is a wise, informed and formed electorate. The mature social conscience will reject as objectionable and harmful our typical politics of pay-offs, patronage and personalities. The mature social conscience will vote on the basis of political, social, and economic issues and programs. Such maturity of conscience will surely assist in transforming our nation into a genuine democracy.

For this reason we must commit ourselves to a program aimed at raising the level of our voters' political judgment. The marginalized sectors of our citizenry, powerless and often almost helpless, must realize that they ultimately end up as victims when the politics of pay-offs, patronage and personalities is perpetuated. Only when they insist that political leaders be honest and commit themselves to the poor can they be delivered from their abject condition. We all need to realize that buying or selling votes is always wrong. And we must act on this conviction. The temporary material benefit gained from immoral electoral practices can never outweigh the long-term destruction that they inflict on the democratic system and on the free and responsible values of the Filipino person.

We must know the candidates and the issues, and pray to the Lord, to show us whom he chooses to serve our people: "O Lord, make known to us whom you choose" (cf. Ac 1:24).

2. The second requirement is the existence of conditions that will enable voters to choose freely. Freedom of choice is undermined by corruption, fraud, force and intimidation. In the past elections we witnessed the persistent and abhorrent use of "guns, goons and gold." Political hooliganism and vote-buying have survived our efforts to change politics into becoming moral and mature. Even now talks are rife about expenditure of money far in excess of limits established by law and from sources that are highly objectionable, like illegal gambling and foreign interests. Guns are reported to have been smuggled into the country, in quantities allegedly sufficient to equip two more armies.

Candidates who resort to these practices do not deserve the offices they seek. They have no commitment and moral

responsibility to the people. When elected they will most likely use again the same means to pursue their personal interests and those of their patrons at the expense of the people. We must denounce them and their practices. We must exact a promise from those who hold and aspire for political power to forswear such practices.

3. The third requirement is the organization of our people down to the precinct level to combat the age-old practices calculated to falsify the expressed wishes of the people and to attain victory at any cost. Ballot-box stuffing, the switching and falsification of election documents and the intimidation and bribery of election officials sadly persist. To guard against these evils, we must set up task forces which are technically competent in election rules and courageous in the face of formidable intimidation. Parish pastoral councils can set up these task forces in parishes and basic ecclesial communities can do the same for their localities. In this effort, we must link arms with one another and with others similarly-intentioned in every barangay in the country, and thus overcome evil with good (cf. *Rom 12:21*).

We urge the Commission on Elections to be steadfast in guarding against fraud and ensuring the free expression of the people's will.

We are not helpless. If we are in solidarity there is much that we can do. If we reflect together, we can choose wisely. If we act together, we can assert real popular sovereignty in the elections. If we organize ourselves, we can screen out those who are unworthy to serve. We can vote into office capable persons of high moral integrity who are truly committed to promoting the common good. It is through our votes that God wants to choose those who will exercise God-given powers over us.

The time to prepare and act has begun. Even as forces of corruption plot their moves, we must prepare to resist them. We must be on God's side, the side of justice and integrity, for we are his people.

In the exercise of our pastoral responsibility, we shall issue another letter to you for our common reflection and strengthening as the elections draw nearer.

Together with Mary, patroness of our country, we humbly and earnestly pray for God's grace. Gifted with this grace, we shall prevail.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of the Philippines:

† LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, OP, D.D.  
Archbishop of Caceres  
President, CBCP

Tagaytay City  
22 July 1991  
Feast of St. Mary Magdalene

## CBCP NEW SET OF OFFICERS

The Assembly elected a new set of Officers whose term of office will begin on 1 December 1991 and will extend to 30 November 1993. *Bishop Carmelo Morelos* of Butuan in Mindanao, replaces *Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, O.P.*, as President of the Conference. Archbishop Legaspi, having served the maximum two successive terms, is not eligible under the CBCP Constitution. The new Vice-President is *Archbishop Oscar Cruz*, recently appointed to the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan. The Treasurer was re-elected: *Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez* of Iba (Zambales). The Secretary General remains *Bishop Nestor Cariño*.

Members of the Permanent Council who will govern the CBCP for the next two years are:

From Luzon : *Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, OMI*  
*Archbishop Paciano Aniceto*  
*Bishop Cirilo Almario, Jr.*  
*Bishop Jose Sorra*

From Visayas : *Archbishop Onesimo Gordoncillo*  
*Archbishop Alberto Piamonte*

From Mindanao : *Archbishop Francisco Cruces*  
*Bishop Generoso Camiña*  
*Bishop Fernando Capalla*

Elected Chairmen of the Episcopal Commissions were:

Biblical Apostolate	: <i>Bishop Cirilo Almario, Jr.</i>
Canon Law	: <i>Archbishop Manuel Salvador</i>
Catechesis and Catholic Education	: <i>Bishop Manuel Sobrevinas</i>
Clergy	: <i>Ricardo Card. Vidal</i>
Doctrine of the Faith	: <i>Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, O.P.</i>
Ecumenical Affairs	: <i>Bishop Deogracias Iniquez</i>
Family Life	: <i>Bishop Jesus Varela</i>
Health Care	: <i>Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan</i>
Inter-Religious Dialogue	: <i>Bishop Fernando Capalla</i>
Laity	: <i>Bishop Angel Lagdameo</i>
Liturgy	: <i>Archbishop Onesimo Gordoncillo</i>
Migration and Tourism	: <i>Bishop Gabriel Reyes</i>
Missions	: <i>Archbishop Antonio Mabutas</i>
Pontificio Colegio Filipino	: <i>Jaime Card. Sin</i>
Prisoners' Welfare	: <i>Bishop Francisco San Diego</i>
Seminaries	: <i>Bishop Gaudencio Rosales</i>
Social Action, Justice & Peace	: <i>Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, O.M.I.</i>
Social Communications & Mass Media	: <i>Bishop Teodoro Buhain</i>
Tribal Filipinos	: <i>Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez</i>
Vocations	: <i>Bishop Vicente Navarra</i>
Youth	: <i>Bishop Leo Drona, S.D.B.</i>
Permanent Committee on Public Affairs	: <i>Bishop Teodoro Bacani</i>
Mixed Commission on Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious	: <i>Bishop Cornelio de Wit, M.H.M.</i>

## Announcements

The new church of the Filipino Community in Rome is that of St. Pudenziana.

Bishop Severino Pelayo of the Military Vicariate was appointed Episcopal Vicar for the Philippine National Police (PNP).

**Atty. Sabino Padilla, Legal Counsel of the CBCP, spoke to the Bishops on the right of the Catholic Church to open schools and on the control which the Church must exercise over these schools.**

**Fr. Gino Henriquez, C.Ss.R., of Evangelization 2000, is planning a national retreat for priests in February of 1992 on the anniversary of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. He hopes for an attendance of 2,000 priests.**

**The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) will hold its next Plenary Assembly in Manila, late 1994 or early 1995, to celebrate its Silver Jubilee. FABC was founded in Manila during the pastoral visit to the Philippines of His Holiness, Paul VI. It highlights the fact that the Philippines is the only Christian country in the Orient.**

## WE HAVE MANY VOCATIONS TO CISTERCIAN CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

*Interview with Trappist Abbot in the Philippines\**

*Asia Focus: What is a Trappist monk's life all about?*

Abbot Joseph Chu Cong: "Strict observance" means a life totally dedicated to prayer and contemplation.

*What is the social meaning of your kind of witness?*

The great changes in societies today, particularly in Eastern Europe and even in our country and in China, indicate a general human longing to free one's self from dominance and oppression. This calls for a change of heart and attitude toward human brotherhood. It is not enough to conquer our enemies. We must conquer suspicion, fear and the ambition to make a horrible Third World War possible.

*What are signs of the need for contemplative orders today*

There is a strong longing for an interior life among people, not only here in the Philippines, but also in America, Europe and Latin America.

\*Abbot Joseph Chu Cong is the first abbot of Our Lady of the Philippines (OLP) Abbey, a community of Trappist monks on the rolling hills of Jordan, Guimaras, 450 kilometers southeast of Manila.

He spoke with *Asia Focus* recently about his order, the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, his life as a priest in Vietnam, and his hopes for the community. The following interview appeared in the 13 February 1991 issue of *Asia Focus* and 27 May 1991 issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

I see mushrooming everywhere many prayer centers and retreat houses. In the United States in recent years I observed hundreds of thousands of young men and women going to India, to Japan in search of a spiritual master.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is opening to interreligious dialogue. We offer our share in this happy dialogue, especially with leaders of non-Christian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

As monks, we do have something in common, religious language and monastic experience, which we can exchange with them. We can share our Christian heritage with them, and in turn, share their rich spiritual heritage.

*What are your impressions of your stay at Our Lady of the Philippines?*

When I first came I felt I had just moved from one room to another in the same family. With the brothers here I pursue the same monastic purpose, the search for God and the living experience of God.

*What about your stay in the United States?*

When I was about to join the Trappists, I got scared at the thought that I would have to live with a group of over 100 Americans. I was the only Oriental. But I found no difficulty. The brothers there were supportive that right after I made my solemn commitment, I was appointed novice master and was kept on the job for 20 years.

*How did the war in your country affect your priesthood?*

I have not set foot in my homeland since 1954. That was six years after my ordination and the Diocese of Haiphong (North Vietnam) sent me to Fordham University (in New York) for doctoral studies in finance.

When I finished my studies in 1960, I did not return to Vietnam. I feared that I would no longer be able to exercise my priestly ministry there. The war was escalating. I was being called for military



service (by the South Vietnam government). I knew all along the communists were going to win. They had already beaten the French. My ordination was delayed two years because [communist guerillas] cordoned the [Ba Dong] Seminary (100 kilometers from Haiphong). All of us were under house arrest. Myself and a companion slipped out of the cordon and reached Haiphong Cathedral where I was ordained (in 1948).

*What was your life like as a priest in Vietnam?*

For two years I was assistant parish priest of the Haiphong Cathedral parish. I was also the bishop's roving secretary, visiting France military garrisons and interceding for the release of hundreds of jailed Vietnamese suspected as guerillas. These caused occasional friction between me and the French.

*What about your family in Vietnam?*

I always look forward to visiting my family in Vietnam. That prospect is getting brighter because of recent relaxation of controls there.

*How did you become interested in the priesthood?*

We joke that in Vietnam priestly vocation can be discerned through a special grace from God, through relatives, or through calamities. I got mine through a calamity. I was then 12 and fond of skipping classes. My mother got wind of it one day and with a big stick chased me out of the house, cursing me. Our parish priest who happened to be strolling saved me from my mother. From then on, I began staying at the parish rectory and my interest in the priesthood began.

*Are there many vocations to the contemplative life?*

In our General Chapter in Rome, representatives from the West acknowledged that Asia will be the center of contemplative life in the future. Monasteries in the West have declining vocations, while ours in Asia, particularly in the Philippines, are increasing. This is also true for vocations in active religious life. Asians have a strong tendency for contemplation.

*What is your vision of the community in the 1990's?*

My prayer has been that the internal community will move toward a deeper contemplative life. Only by truly living the contemplative life can we have a part in the life of the Church. Externally, my vision is that Our Lady of the Philippines become an independent abbey, and then expand.

God has blessed us with an even flow of vocations from our beginning in 1972. Recently, with generous help from friends here and overseas, we are provided with sure means of economic self-support. Therefore, our Cistercian General Chapter declared our monastery an autonomous abbey.

*What are present concerns?*

Our task is how to expand our community. We are thinking of having a "daughter house" some place in the country, and eventually abroad. Concretely, we are doing legwork for a possible Trappistine foundation (for contemplative nuns) somewhere in the Visayas.

## THE QUEST FOR BISHOP BRENT

I first heard the name of Bishop Brent in a way he would have detested, that is in the name of an institution. The place was called Brent House and was a "settlement" outreach to social deprived citizens on the South side of Chicago. In his lifetime Brent was vehemently averse to having places named after him. Today, many are, such as the prestigious Brent Schools in Baguio and Manila. As a teenager studying in the mountains of Tennessee I learned two things I vaguely was to remember about Bishop Brent: first, that he was pioneer missionary in the Philippines early on in life and then that he became a pioneer ecumenist later in life. As a postulant of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, an Anglican religious community in which he once enjoyed a similarly lowly status for a longer time seventy years before me, I first learned of Brent as a subject of controversy and a source of historic bitterness. But it was not until May 20, 1986 when I was a guest of the Jesuit Fathers in Cagayan de Oro and Fr. Bernad kindly lent me a copy of Volume One of his co-authored (with Fr. Achutegui) book, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines: the Life and Church of Gregorio Aglipay 1860-1960* (IV vols., Manila, 1960), that Charles Henry Brent began to fascinate me.

In 1987 I was assigned to the Fathers' Residence of the University of Santo Tomas and began to teach ecumenism in the Faculty of Sacred Theology. Bishop Brent and his work, in ecumenical pioneering from the Edinburgh Conference on Missions which he attended in 1910 to the Lausame Conference of "Faith and Order" which he

prepared and chaired in 1927 (two years before his death) were the subjects of earnest academic reflection. But the quest had not begun.

The quest began because a mutual friend introduced me to the then Obispo Maximo of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Msgr. Soliman F. Gano. My interest in the Aglipayan Movement, its history and results, an interest which was sparked off back in school-boy days, rekindled by Fr. Bernad's kindness in 1986 had now burst into flames thanks to meeting Msgr. Gano and the encouragement received from my Dominican confreres. I reread Achutegui and Bernad. I liked what they said about Brent but was flabbergasted by what they said about Aglipay and his Church. After all, I was a trained ecumenist and used to calm, painstaking dialogue. Anything polemical by now repulsed me. And yet I knew the two Jesuits were very learned scholars and very careful and fair with their sources. So I was faced with a problem.

Let me put my problem in terms of a question. Why was Gregorio Aglipay whose ecclesiology, according to Fr. Manaligod in *The Ecclesiality of the Philippine Independent Church* (Quezon City, National Priest Organization, 1988) was so similar to theirs refused Episcopal ordination by Anglicans and Old Catholics alike between 1902 and 1908, and what role did Bishop Brent play in this? In other words, was it Brent's fault that Aglipay was never ordered a Bishop by anyone who already was or claimed to be one? All sorts of subordinate questions derive from this one and I was eager enough to investigate them, having as they had to do with Philippine history in the early years of this century and the status, roles and ongoing realities of the Episcopal and Independent Churches. But the impasse was Brent. And so I had to search for him.

A footnote in Achutegui and Bernad's classic work sent me on my way. They admitted they had never seen the seventy-odd boxes of primary source material, commonly called the "Brent Papers" on file in the Library of Congress in Washington. In time I obtained permission to go and search through these "papers" myself. That story of my "going out and coming in" I have already told in the last issue of *Boletin* as a "pilgrim's" editorial. It is the context of my quest. The quest itself was, of course, more moving, more illuminating and more detailed. It gave me what every academic yearns for from time to time, a "taste of honey" or "glimpse of paradise" — time and place,

solitude and silence for thorough investigation based on real research. The honey is sweetest and the paradise the rarest delight when one's sources are as primary as mine were. And so I hope my readers will share my sense of awe and wonder, the ground and commonplace in the life of a great man, as I reiterate what sort of pursuit this quest for Bishop Brent involved.

My pocket diary for 1990 reminds me that I arrived in Washington, D.C. from Newark, New Jersey, on the evening of Monday, 17 December of that year. It notes that from Tuesday the 18th through to Saturday the 22nd I spent considerable time each day at the Library of Congress. These were cold days of learning to "commute" by metro from our House of Studies on the Catholic University campus to Capitol Hill, learning to avoid the rush hours, to put off lunch as long as possible and to eat it as cheaply as I could. But, best of all, they were days of a new rhythm or work in a place for which from the first I entertained both a heartfelt respect (after all it is unique on the face of the earth) and a functional familiarity.

I presented my credentials from Manila the first day in the Manuscript Division, the way having been pointed out by a heavy and well armed policeman who was quiet amiable. Southern courtesy permeated the staff. They "checked me out" on how to stow my outdoor wear and excess baggage (books, pens, papers and personal effects not being allowed in the reading room) in a metal locker. This was to become daily routine. Then we checked on the Brent Papers as written up in the General Catalogue, and I was issued a personal copy of the pamphlet: *Bishop Charles Henry Brent, a Register of his Papers in the Library of Congress* (Washington, Manuscript Division-Reference Department, Library of Congress 1959). This pamphlet provides essential information but is by no means an index.

The manuscript material and, in some cases, clippings, photographs and printed material contemporary with it, is found loose inserted into assorted folders in great cardboard boxes 18" x 24" x 5". The original collection of Brent Papers consists of sixty-seven of these boxes to which nearly twenty more have been added since the bulk of the material was given to the Library by Bishop Brent's sister, Miss Helen C. Brent, in 1955. These boxes cover more than thirty feet of shelf space in an area not accessible to readers and contain probably as many as fifteen thousand items. When I learned that, I wondered

how much I could really cover in the little time at my disposal. The task was easier than I thought. The reference librarian also advised me of standard reference works and books available in the reading room and of another collection (I was to browse later) of some interest on Brent, the Mercer Green Johnston Papers.

Johnston was one of Brent's most colorful early lieutenants and Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of SS. Mary and John in Manila. A Texan by birth Johnston was unlike Brent and his colleagues in the Philippines on Evangelical Episcopalian, a "Low Churchman." His father was Bishop of West Texas, and he had served in New York and San Antonio before coming to Manila in 1903. He returned to America in 1908. Later he left the ministry and became an entrepreneur and lobbyist. His letters throw little light on the ecclesiological questions of the time other than to show hostility to Aglipay and to *all* Roman Catholics.

So I found a table, ordered five boxes and, right on the first day, sat down to work. I had selected as my first sources of investigation Boxes 5 to 10 of the Papers (part of the section of Boxes 4 to 20) with "letters sent and received, chronologically arranged by months" from 1901, the year of Brent's elevation to the episcopate to 1914 when World War I began in Europe. I must admit it was with a certain fear and trepidation that I opened the first box. In seconds I had entered a new world. There on my table in that silent, well furnished, wall-to-wall carpeted room were just three objects of concern: a letter in his own handwriting, signed "Chas. H. Brent"; a pasteboard card on which to take notes; and a pencil. My note-taking begins with a letter from Rome dated June 7, 1902 and addressed to Brent's confessor and lifelong mentor, Bishop Arthur Hall of Vermont. it is a very pro-Papal letter. The next of July 23 is less enthusiastic. Brent admits the Roman Catholic position is logical, but he notes typically: "the defense of Christianity is not logic, it is righteousness." And one could well write a thesis in moral theology on Brent's concept of "righteousness" for the word is one of his favorites and is sprinkled liberally throughout his letters and diaries, his sermons and books.

My quest, I felt, was taking the right direction. Before Christmas of 1990 I was able to jot down in short notes everything I found important in Brent's letters from 1902 to 1908 that treated of his relations with Don Gregorio Aglipay. My work was begun, and that

was good. Even better, I felt I had *met* the young Bishop through the "works of his hands," his own personal, intimate thoughts, feelings and reactions. I had come to know his relationship with Governor William Howard Taft and with President Theodore Roosevelt. I had come to hear what he thought of Filipinos rich and poor, from benefactors to servants and from government workers to street urchins. He loved and embraced people of all classes and walks of life. He abhorred hypocrisy and he both extolled and emulated child-likeness in persons of whatever age or position. He was a plain man in looks and a gracious man in manners. Before all else he was a servant of Christ and a brother of all Christians. He was hurt but never scandalized by the faults of others; rather he prayed for their repentance. He wanted all men and women to be saved, but not necessarily as Anglicans. Indeed, I was later to hear him cry across the years: "I ABHOR PROSELYTISM," and he meant it.

After a whirlwind tour of Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Colorado, New Mexico and California (including in the last some fruitful work in the Library of the Graduate Theological Union near the campus of the University of California at Berkeley) I returned to my desk in the Manuscript Reading Room and to "my" boxes. The reference librarians had begun by now to identify me with the Brent papers and usually began preparing my trolley as soon as I walked in the door. This second phase of my research began on Ash Wednesday, February 13, 1991. I had arrived at our House in Washington from San Francisco at midnight of the twelfth and was in the Library by 9:30 the next morning.

In this second phase I switched to Brent's diaries. These consist of thirty-one bound volumes in three boxes and date from 1901 to 1929. My concern was with the first six volumes. Their reading was a new and fresh adventure, though as a priest I felt I was in the confessional each morning on Capitol Hill! For Brent tells all. Sometimes he crosses things but anyone can read through the crossings. What is deleted? Generally speaking, he wishes to remove from his remembrance anything later seen as uncharitable or hurtful to anyone else's character. He is far less mild with himself.

Beginning with September 30, 1901, the day of the death of his co-pastor in Boston, Fr. Torbert, I worked through Brent's election as first Missionary Bishop of the Philippines, his consecration and the

months of his preparation for landing on these shores. I have seldom felt in contact with so frank and modest a man. And, yet, he can rejoice. when notified of his election on October 11, 1902 he writes: "The first feeling is one of exhilaration. The trust is a glorious one and the Church bids me accept it... The call is to lay foundations. What a company it is I am asked to join: St. Paul, St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Francis Xavier, Steere and the Selwyns [these last three Anglican missionaries]." The very next day he wanted to preach to his South Boston congregation on "Security in Peril." But he changed his mind and to a full church preached on his favorite line of Dante: "in His Will is our peace" which he conflated with Ephesians 4:30 on not grieving "the Holy Spirit of God to whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

Brent's consecration duly occurred on December 19, 1901 and he became the two hundred second member of the line of Bishops of the Episcopal Church. The ceremony was grand and held at Emmanuel Church, Boston. Brent's first photograph as bishop (and there are not very many more extant as he *hated* to be photographed) in mozetta with a large ring on his right hand and a pectoral cross worn *more Romano* on his chest. Later this cross would be blessed by Pope Leo XIII. Brent always considered himself to be a Catholic bishop. He dressed like one. He very often talked like one. And he winced whenever called a "Protestant." For at heart he certainly was not, despite his schismatic status in the view of the Holy See.

As I patiently worked through Brent's diaries at the Library of Congress from February 13 to 22 I also took up corroboratory work in two more libraries. In the Library of the Dominican House of Studies (where I was to enjoy the hospitality of the Prior who had invited me there in October of the previous year until March 19, 1991) I found Remson B. Ogilby's fine article "Charles Henry Brent" in Harris E. Starr, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* Vol. XXI, Supplement One, to December 31, 1935, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1944, pp. 115a-117a, to which I shall refer below and the entry on Brent in *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. I 1897-1942, Chicago, Marquis 1968, p. 135 a & b. Also in our own House one of the student brothers kindly loaned me for the second time two valuable pamphlets by Robert Cheney Smith, S.S.J.E., namely: *The Cowley Fathers in America - The Early Years*, Cambridge, Mass. Society of St. John the Evangelist n.d. and *The Shrine on Bowdoin, Street 1883-1958*, Cambridge,



Mass., Society of St. John the Evangelist, 1958. These pamphlets threw much light on Brent's early career in Boston and why and how he left the aspirancy of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, commonly known as Cowley Fathers.

My second source of information on both Brent and Aglipay was the Library of the Virginia Theological Seminary at Alexandria where another student brother kindly took me by car once or twice a week. I had been there before Christmas, 1990 and had begun to use the truly fabulous collection of *Anglicana* of this post-graduate institution of the Episcopal Church where, despite a traditionally "Liberal Evangelical" reputation, a full stock of Anglo-Catholic and Old Catholic references and studies is maintained. Again, as at the Congress Library, Southern charm gave a pleasant context to my work. At VTS, as it is fondly called, I found a number of theses and studies on Aglipay and his Church, some rare works on Old Catholicism and much standard material on Brent whose principal biographer, Dr. Alexander Zabriskie, was once Dean of the Seminary. Zabriskie's work, *Bishop Brent, Crusader for Christian Unity*, published in New York in 1948, is the longest biography of Brent to appear thus far. But the greatest "help" I found at VTS was in the form of various Episcopal Church directories and annuals where I could look up Brent and his lieutenants (a curious string of clerics great and small, high and low) and where they stood with their Church in the years 1901-1908 and even later on into the twenties and beyond. My hours at VTS were admittedly not as strenuous or as rewarding as those at the Library of Congress, but they gave me a sort of "light relief" from the weight of more difficult research and dispelled some of the chill of Lent and Atlantic coast late winter.

My work at the Library of Congress took a new turn on March 22 when I finished my diary research. First I had looked at the Mercer Green Johnston collection. I discovered that Johnston was a narrow minded and pugnacious man who tried to "Protestantize" Anglicanism in the Philippines. He failed. Now I turned back to the Brent Papers and to the nineteen boxes of "biographer's papers ca. 1890-1943." This near score of boxes contains rather disorganized research of Dr. Remson B. Ogilby mentioned above of Brent to be entitled, *Impatient Crusader*, which was far from finished at the time of Ogilby's death in 1943. My quest for the bishop would be incomplete, indeed, without what Dr. Ogilby has left us. Ogilby was

once one of Brent's clergy in the Missionary District of the Philippine Islands (a Missionary District is a paradiocesan structure in Episcopalian's roughly analogous to a Roman Catholic Vicariate Apostolic in that its prelate is in episcopal orders but directly depends on Church headquarters in New York the way that a Vicar Apostolic is immediately subject to the Holy See through Propaganda). Ogilby later returned to America where he took on various educational and administrative duties in schools and colleges. His last years he spent as distinguished President of Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. He was Brent's lifelong friend and knew him as well as if not better than anyone. Ogilby's draft chapters and extensive notes gave a structure to my own studies of Brent's letters (many of which Ogilby has typed out in full giving legibility and correcting misspellings) and diaries.

Curiously, Ogilby, like most writers on Brent, shows no real interest in Aglipayan questions. The reason for this is not hard to find. Most Anglicans before the late 1940's found the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (if they had heard of it at all) an embarrassing curiosity, a would be National Catholic Church with no orders, Unitarian theology, virtually untrained clergy and adrift on a sea of barely explainable devotionism of the most decadent Counter Reformation type. Aglipayans in those days, however strong numerically, fared poorly in the estimation of the outside world when contrasted with any other Christian bodies in the Philippines save the smallest and most extravagant local sects.

After several days on Ogilby's work and revising my previous notes from the letters and diaries I entered the "jungle" of Box 37 which includes bibles, memorabilia, commissions, licenses, passports, fragments, photographs and financial papers. Then I looked at Brent's five scrap books in Boxes 42 and 43. They cover the years 1896-1928. After what I had done they were largely "light" reading on known topics as were the contents of Boxes 44 and 45 which I looked at next with Boxes 47 and 48. They contain a hodgepodge of miscellaneous material all printed, sometimes with photographic illustrations. Boxes 56 through 68 took a lot of sifting but rendered scant results as did the score of boxes of additional material. By Saturday, March 16 I was ready to round off my work at the Library of Congress as far as manuscripts were concerned. I had been spending some time each day in another part of the vast warren of the

Library to which I gained access by an underground tunnel. There I had been reading some of the twenty-eight books by and about Brent and the nine on Aglipay found in the general stacks of the Library. This incidental reading was almost "recreation" compared with the grinding task of research from primary sources.

I left Washington for San Francisco on March 19 but not before spending the previous afternoon at VTS and the previous evening dining nearby with the former Superior of the Cowley American Congregation, who is one of the spiritual directors of the Seminary. We did not talk much about Brent except to note in passing that I knew a lot more about him and Bishop Hall than I had when the two of us were under the same roof thirty-five years ago. Both of us knew enough about him to see Brent as a "person" rather than a legendary hero. There is much that is human and colorful about Brent which most "serious" writers (probably quite justifiably) overlook. He was a crusader against alcohol, opium, and all other drugs. He was given to introspection, worry and a sense of failure, but he was a keen sportsman (a terror on the polo field) and an entertaining host and guest. His clothes hung on his gaunt frame as on a scarecrow but looked his best in vestments with mitre and crosier.

Back in the Bay Area I took up residence at St. Albert's Priory in Oakland and made occasional forays into the Graduate Theological Union Library in nearby Berkeley. This was mostly to tie up loose ends especially as regards works by Frederick Ward Kates whose excellent *Charles Henry Brent, Ambassador for Christ*, London, SCM, 1948, is a fine pamphlet, indeed, and whose editorial work on the Brent miscellany, *Things that Matter: The Best of the Writings of Bishop Brent, with a Biographical Sketch*, NY, 1949, is first rate. By the time I left America for Taiwan on April 9, having collated in a preliminary manner my notes and papers, I felt my quest for Bishop Brent had left the investigative phase. Now I had a new task, to write about Brent and present my own ideas.

This essay, if I may paraphrase Kirkegaard, is an "unscientific praenotandum." I set out to find Brent. He appeared to be a legend. I found the historic trace he had left of himself and others had left of him. Legend turned to fact. I began to discover the person behind both the legend and the facts. What I have shown of my quest is not the whole story either of Brent or of my discoveries. Nor does it, as

yet, answer my question: Why did Brent act as he did towards Aglipay and the Independent Church? But I hope to have shown that by the method I intend to employ, a constant hearking back to primary sources a better answer *may* be found than has heretofore been given. My true desire and real goal is to turn whatever answer I find into a basis for ecumenical meditation, for reevaluation of the past and future conclusions leading to unity through a new approach.

The central phase of the quest for Bishop Brent lasted about eight weeks. I could never have started, continued or arrived where I did without Dominican hospitality in Washington and Oakland and the unfailing, courteous will to help shown me by research librarians of the three libraries where I worked. A very special word of thanks is due to the staff and security force of the Library of Congress who, midst care for millions of volumes and manuscripts and thousands of readers and researchers, coolly went forward day by day to provide the tools for so much individual work of investigation, including mine.

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

## CASES AND INQUIRIES

### 1. Parochial Books

*Would it be too much to ask you to enumerate distinctly which are the "parochial books"? In your case of November-December 1990, you mentioned only the Book of Baptisms, the Book of Marriages and the Book of the Dead. Are these the only books that are called parochial books and which should be kept in every parish? Moreover, it would be very helpful to all parish priests, if you elaborate in detail how the Books of Baptisms and Marriages should be written up and which are the data they should contain. Oftentimes we have to send baptismal certificates to other parish priests or even to the ecclesiastical tribunal. We would like to do this properly. Thanks in advance.*

*A Parish Priest*

As a rule, in answering the cases presented to us, we try to limit the answer, as much as possible to the question or questions raised by the consultants. In the case of November-December 1990 the consultant's question referred only to the Books of Baptisms, Marriages and the Dead. Thus, we did not mention other books that should be kept in a parish. In other words, our answer was restricted to the consultant's inquiry.

In the present case the parish priest's first question is: Are the Books of Baptisms, Marriages and the Dead the only books called parochial books? Canon 535, § 1 gives us the answer. It reads as follows:

*"In every parish parochial books should be kept, namely: Books of Baptisms, Marriages, the Dead, and others according to the norms given by the Bishops' Conference or by the Diocesan Bishop. Let the parish priest take care that said books be written accurately and kept diligently."*

Three books are specifically enumerated in this norm, namely: the Book of Baptisms, the Book of Marriages, and the Book of the Dead. Obviously, this is not an exhaustive enumeration of books that may exist in a parish. The same § 1 adds: "*and others according to the norms given by the Bishops' Conference or by the Diocesan Bishop.*"

The 1917 Codex included in canon 470 § 1 the Book of Confirmations among the parochial books. It also strongly advised parish priests to keep accurately a book on the State of Souls. The new Codex does not mention in canon 535, § 1 these two books among the parochial books. The Bishops' Conference, however, or the diocesan Bishop may order the parish priest to continue with these two books if they think them to be useful or necessary. Canon 895 of the new Codex reads as follows: "The names of the faithful confirmed, the names of the minister, parents, God-parents, place and date of the performance of confirmation should be written in the Book of Confirmations of the Diocesan Curia or, where the Bishops' Conference or diocesan Bishop prescribe it, *in the book to be kept in the parochial archive.*" It is clear, therefore, that the Book of Confirmations can be imposed as compulsory upon the parish priests. Likewise, the book on the state of souls is obviously important in the proper administration of the parish. A pastor of souls should know his parishioners well and their needs, spiritual as well as temporal. A well done and updated census is imperative, so that the parish priest and his assistants can fruitfully visit the families, especially the sick and help them if they are in need.

As stated in canon 535, § 1 of the new Codex, the Bishops' Conference or the Diocesan Bishop may prescribe *other books* that the parish priest must carefully write and keep diligently. There are, therefore, other books that a parish should or might have, though they are not expressly mentioned in canon 535. Such is, for instance, the Book of Public Associations of Faithful approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority which may be in the parish. It is but natural

that the parish priest should have a book where the names of the affiliates to those associations within his parish are registered. Likewise, canon 958, § 1 expressly states: "The parish priest and rector of a church or of any pious place, where stipends of Masses are received, should have a peculiar book, in which the number of Masses to be said, the intention, the stipend given and the celebration of Masses are accurately annotated." In parishes where pious foundations exist, "there should be another book where the obligations, their fulfillment and the corresponding amount are accurately described" (can. 1307, § 2). Moreover, if the parish has any temporal goods, the parish priest must have and diligently keep the corresponding Book of Income and Expenses (cans. 532 and 1284, § 1, n. 7o).

The new Codex imposes upon the Vicars Forane the obligation of seeing whether the parish priests within their vicariates properly write and diligently keep the parochial books (can. 555, § 1, n. 3). They should also take care that when the parish priests fall ill or die, the parochial books do not disappear or become misplaced (*Ibid.*, I, 2, n. 3).

The importance given in the Church to the parochial books is great, especially in regard to the Books of Baptisms and Marriages. The facts or events entered in such books reflect the social and juridical condition of the persons concerned within the Church itself. Through baptism, for instance, an individual is incorporated to the Church of Christ, thus becoming a person with all duties and rights proper to Christians (can. 96). His baptism being registered in the Book of Baptisms will be the warrant of his ecclesiastical identification throughout his lifetime. A young man who wants to enter the seminary and aspires to be a priest needs to show the certificates of his baptism and confirmation (can. 241, § 2). Those who want to enter a religious institute are required to exhibit the certificates of their baptism and confirmation (can. 645, § 2). Before receiving sacred orders, the person to be ordained has to prove he has been baptized (can. 1024) and confirmed (can. 1033). In order to contract marriage the parties should prove they have been baptized, even in danger of death (can. 1068); and they should receive the sacrament of confirmation if they have not received it yet. Nobody may be accepted as a godfather in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation unless he himself is baptized and confirmed (can. 874, § 1, n. 3 and 893, § 1).

It is worth noting the importance given by the Family Code of the Philippines itself to the baptismal certificate. Its article 12 reads: "The local civil registrar upon receiving such application, shall require the exhibition of the original birth certificate or, in default thereof, the *baptismal certificates* of the contracting parties or copies of such documents duly attested by the persons having custody of the originals."

If the Book of Baptisms is important, the Book of Marriages should hardly be belittled. The married state entails special rights and obligations. The fact of being married is an obstacle to be admitted validly into the novitiate in a religious institute (can. 643, § 1, n. 20). The existence of a valid marriage is a diriment impediment for a subsequent marriage (can. 1085).

The Book of the Dead does not lack importance either. The faithful who have died, though free of any obligation, however, sometimes leave their relatives and heirs some rights and obligations. In order to clarify their last will and define in a clear way the duties and obligations of their children and heirs it is useful to keep the Book of the Dead accurately and diligently.

We hope that the foregoing information on parochial books answers satisfactorily the first question of our consultant parish priest. In some other issue of the *Boletín Eclesiástico* we shall deal more in particular with the Books of Baptisms and Marriages.

## 2. Elected in the Third Scrutiny

The Constitutions of our community prescribe that our elections must conform to whatever is prescribed by common law. Hence, canon 119, 1o. should be followed. In our election last year, out of eighteen members with right to vote only sixteen attended the election, the other two were absent. The result of the scrutinies was as follows:

*In the first scrutiny:*

- A. (fifty years of age) obtained 5 votes
- B. (forty-eight years of age) obtained 5 votes
- C. (thirty-nine years of age) obtained 3 votes
- D. obtained 2 votes

There was one blank ballot.



*In the second scrutiny:*

A. obtained 5 votes

B. obtained 5 votes

C. obtained 5 votes

There was one blank ballot again.

*In the third scrutiny:*

A. got 8 votes

B. got 7 votes

There was one blank ballot again.

*Was the election valid or null? If valid, who was elected?*

*A Religious*

Canon 119 gives us a complete revision of the previous legislation on the matter. Hence, canon 6, § 1, 4o (not § 2) should be taken into consideration in its interpretation. The old system has been abrogated, and the whole matter has been entirely revised and reformed. No reference, therefore, to the relative majority should be made. The new legislation never mentions it.

Canon 119, reads:

"In regard to collegial acts, unless the law or the statutes provide otherwise:

1o. in regard to elections, provided a majority of those who must be summoned are present, what is decided by an absolute majority of those present has the force of law. If there have been two inconclusive scrutinies, a vote is to be taken between the two candidates with the greatest number of votes or, if there are more than two, between the two senior by age. After a third inconclusive scrutiny, that person is deemed elected who is senior by age;

The following, therefore, should be considered as necessary for the validity of the election:

*With regards to the voters:*

1o. that the persons with the right to vote have been summoned;

2o. that the absolute majority (more than half) of those summoned are present at the election;

*With regards to the election itself:*

1o. there will be three scrutinies only;

2o. in the first two scrutinies, the absolute majority of votes cast is needed for a valid election, i.e., more than half of the cast votes (valid or invalid);

3o. if a third scrutiny is necessary, only the two who obtained more votes in the second scrutiny may be validly voted upon; in case there are more than two with equal votes, only the two more seniors by age may be validly voted;

4o. If both have the same number of votes in the third scrutiny, the more senior of the two by age, is to be considered elected.

The election, as presented by the consultant, was conducted according to the prescription of the law (can. 119, 1o), and consequently, it was a valid election. Obviously, there was no absolute majority in the first scrutiny. Nobody obtained the 9 votes needed for the absolute majority. The same thing happened in the second scrutiny. Three electors obtained the same number of votes. In the third balloting only the two seniors were voted, i.e. A and B. However, neither of them obtained in his favor the absolute majority, which is 9 votes. A obtained 8 votes and B obtained 7 votes. There was no equality of votes, so that the more senior by age would be elected, as canon 119, 1o says. Does this mean that there was no valid election?

Reading carefully canon 119, 1o we note that the legislator requires for the first two scrutinies the absolute majority of those who are present at the election. For the third scrutiny, however, he does not require the absolute majority of the voters present. He contemplates the possibility of both candidates obtaining equal number of votes (lower than the absolute majority). In which case the more senior by age is considered elected. In our case this equality of votes could take place if each had obtained eight votes, or even less than eight (consequently less than half of the votes). This implies that the absolute majority of votes is not considered in the third scrutiny by the legislator as necessary for the validity of the election. In case of

disparity of votes, as in the case proposed to us, who will be considered validly elected? The undersigned firmly believes that A who obtained 8 votes, the majority of valid votes in the third balloting, is to be considered as elected.

To think otherwise would be tantamount to admit the following illogical consequence:

The equality of votes (8 votes or even 7 or 6) admitted by the legislator, would give the senior by age the advantage of being considered as elected. But if the more senior obtained the same number of votes (8 votes) in his favor, against 7 votes for the younger, would this be not sufficient for the senior to be declared as elected? In other words, 8 votes would be a basis to declare him as elected if there were a parity of votes, but the same 8 votes will not constitute any basis to declare him as elected if his opponent does not reach the same number. This is clearly absurd and illogical.

Obviously, the intention of the legislator is to finish the election on the third scrutiny by counting not the number of votes but only the *valid* votes. The same opinion is held by Timoteo Urquiri in *Claune*, n. 73, 1984, pp. 338-341. Consult also the *Codigo de Derecho Canonico (BAC)*, footnote to canon 119. Otherwise, the election presented in our case would be invalid. There is no basis for this in the present legislation, and it seems alien to the spirit of the new Code.

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

## **HOMILIES FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER**

### **THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**November 3, 1991**

*(Dt 6:2-6; Heb 7:23-28; Mk 12:28-34)*

On this thirty-first Sunday of the year "love" (albeit of a rather special type quite beyond ordinary human actuation if not beyond common understanding) is seen both in terms of an Old Testament "cultic credo" and a summarized "New Law" as given by Christ. We also see, in the second reading, how in, through and by Christ alone can the "legal demands" of biblical love be carried out and fulfilled.

Let us look at the readings, one by one. The first contains for every form of Judaism, from the end of the Babylonian Captivity in 538 B.C. until the present time, not just a well-known passage of scripture but a basic statement of faith. It is unthinkable that any Jew much over the age of twelve would not know the last verses of this passage by heart. Most can sing it and many do so with gusto every Sabbath Day in public and every day of their lives in prayer. In this great ecumenical age after Vatican II many Christians sing it, too, in the original Hebrew at that. Why is the *Shemah Israel* or "deuteronomic cultic credo" so important? Because it is full of divine promises, commemorating what God has already done, who he is (now and forever) and telling what he will do, but giving a condition: believing man's relationship with God must be put into practice. This is done, first and foremost, in

*cultus*, the worship of the one God, at one time and, if possible at one place, Jerusalem. The practice of God's love (or love for God) in daily life is an ongoing (and exclusive) relationship outlined with great force by the prophet Hosea.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark's Gospel, is, of course, a pre-eminently devout Jew. He not only knows the Torah (the first five books of the bible) as God's law, he also practices it. Thus, he can take an obscure and easily skipped over verse of Leviticus, namely 19:18, combine it with the cultic credo of Deuteronomy and legislate for his New People. This is not exactly a "new" law but it is a new emphasis because Jesus Christ is not merely a devout Jew inclined towards "orthodoxy" of belief and practice. He is true God and true man. He fulfills in himself all that went before him. And his emphasis becomes new law for he is the Divine Legislator. What is he really saying in the "Summary of the Law"? He is saying that when and if what God truly commands is fully carried out the Law of Old is fulfilled and the Kingdom comes.

Our real difficulty, that of St. Paul and all earnest seekers for the doing of God's will, is that we, unaided by grace, cannot obey these laws of love, however noble and high sounding their formulation. We can sing them in worship, and we can attempt them in life. But only one Person can truly and thoroughly fulfill them, Christ Himself. For them we need his mediation, his priesthood, the grace that flows from his incarnate life and saving work. Here, as so often at Mass, is where the second reading (tucked away in the liturgy of the word and neglected time and again by superficial commentaries) is so vitally important.

Neither Israel of old nor God's New People, the Catholic Church, can do without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews sees him not only as a possible and practical mediator but as an *eternal* one. Why is that important? Because, try as we will to love God, we shall fail without Christ. An old and transient priesthood in a "temple made by hands" has long since passed away. The priesthood of Christ will last forever. It is permanent and untransferable. But by grace it can compenetrates time and space, whenever and wherever hearts are open to it. And it is a priesthood in which we

can participate not only by gleanings its effects but by sharing in its extension.

You and I cannot love God as we ought, much less love our neighbor to the degree with which we love our all too selfish selves. But Christ can love God and all men, perfectly and always! If this is so, he (by his love) can raise our feeble efforts to the realm of accomplishment, what Mark calls the Kingdom. And he can do it now at this Mass. He can extend the power of his love (the love which brought him to the cross), because it is the power of resurrection and new life, to our lives beyond this celebration.

May God's Kingdom come when, through the grace of Jesus our priest, we become perfected in loftiness of worship, holiness of life and true service of God and man!

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

## THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

November 10, 1991

(1 K 17:10-16; Heb 9:24-28; Mk 12:41-44)

### *Love Is Generous to the Point of One's Being "Hurt"*

Jesus took a seat opposite the treasury and observed the crowd putting money into the collection box. Many of the wealthy put in sizable amounts; but one poor widow came and put in two small copper coins worth about a cent.

If Jesus were looking at things superficially, he would have praised the rich rather than the poor widow. After all, the former had given more. However, Jesus sees beyond appearances. The secret recesses of our hearts are not hidden from his gaze. This is the reason why he appreciated the poor widow more than many of the wealthy. He saw love in her heart. Love that inclined her to be generous. And generous to the point of being "hurt." She gave from her want, all that she had to live on.

In the first reading, there was another poor widow whose loving heart enabled her to share to the point of being "hurt." "As

the Lord, your God, lives," she said to Elijah who was asking her for bread, "I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." In spite of this, she made a little cake for Elijah.

In the world of the superficial where appearances are most important, the 'big,' the 'great,' the 'loud,' and the 'showy,' get more attention and admiration. In politics, very often, it is they who get elected. In showbiz, they are the ones idolized. And even in the Church, they are the ones looked up to.

Indeed, in the area of love, it is not uncommon that the suitor who showers the 'biggest' and the 'greatest' gifts on the lady is considered most deserving of her "yes," for he seems to be the most loving. And in the family, the number and the size and the price of the toys bestowed upon one's children are often taken as proof of real love!

I remember the story of a young man who had been showy in his love of an intelligent lady. He would give her roses almost every day and expensive gifts for her birthday. One evening as they were walking together holding hands, a bulky man carrying a knife approached them from behind, grabbed the left arm of the girl and pointed the knife at her throat. Seeing what happened, the lover conveniently ran away. The lady was robbed of her money and jewels. She went home feeling miserable not so much because she lost her belongings as because she realized that her 'lover' never really loved her. He abandoned her when he thought he might get 'hurt.'

Real love is generous to the point of being hurt, to the point of being inconvenienced. Both of the poor widows in the first reading and the gospel reading were generous to this point. This is the kind of love that Christianity preaches. This is the kind of love which Jesus himself exemplified when for love of us and God his Father, he was generous even to the point of death. Indeed, one incontrovertible sign of Christianity is being generous till it hurts.

In our country today, there is a scandalously big gap between the rich and the poor. Too few are extremely wealthy and too

many are extremely impoverished. One wonders where generosity is! In a country that prides itself as a bulwark of Christianity in this part of the world, this great disparity between the rich and the poor is a crystal-clear indication of a lie. For a truly Christian nation whose people are hopelessly divided between the many who are poor and the few who are rich is a flat contradiction.

When Christianity finally enters our hearts and our minds, we shall learn to love. We shall be generous to the point of being 'hurt.' And when that day comes, all of us will have enough to eat and enough to drink. And the "jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry."

ERNESTO ARCEO, O.P.

### THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

November 17, 1991

(Dn 12:1-3; Heb 10:11-14, 18; Mk 13:24-32)

Will it happen in our time? The Great Disaster? Are not earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, wars and revolutions, floods, epidemics, if not in themselves the "Great Disaster," at least preludes to it? Someone in every age has asked this question. Someone has said a fearful "Yes." Someone has said an emphatic "No!" Someone else said "Who knows?" But ALL have made a RESPONSE. And in our age we continue to make a response.

The "words" of Jesus have not come to pass. They will not, merely as they sound. They will come to pass but differently. And when time comes, all of our response, all the conjectural "words" of man and woman alike, will lose their content and meaning. The human creative "word" will lose its power. It will become impotent.

Are we reaching that point? Our "creative" word is losing its force. What has come "to be" because of our "word" is fading, slowly yet painfully. Leaders are less listened to. Parents' words fall on deaf ears. Protestations of love are doubted. Vows in religion are disregarded.

"All these things will pass away," even our "word." Only the "word" of Christ will remain. Only his "word" will find fulfillment.



It will find fulfillment in us who have remained faithful to it. Or in us who disregarded or chose to be indifferent to it. For us who have clung to Jesus' "word" with fidelity, the "Great Disaster" will be a transforming event, a transformation to a "new" creation. For those who have ignored it, a worse "word" lies ahead.

TERESO CAMPILLO, O.P.

## SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

November 24, 1991

(Dn 7:13-14; Rv 1:5-8; Jn 18:33-37)

The Church celebrates as a grand feast, the kingship of Jesus Christ, this in our world of democracies, when kings are disappearing from the life of nations, or when they are being reduced to mere colorful reminders of a glorious glamorous past. Something great must be found in Christ's kingship; and something that benefits peculiarly the greatness of the Son of God Incarnate that could inspire the Church to celebrate it today.

The Church explains herself in the selection of the readings through which she prepares the soul of her ministers and her faithful for the celebration of the sacrifice.

The *first reading* in the Eucharistic celebration of the Kingship of Jesus Christ describes a vision granted to the prophet Daniel (Dn 7:12-14). God Almighty, the Eternal One with the whitest hair, is seen as Supreme Ruler sitting on his throne while he imparts to a man, who climbs aloft on heavenly clouds, authority over peoples of whatever nationality or language, thus conferring upon that man a sovereignty that will never end.

The vision involves a plain view of the installation of the Messiah announced down through the ages of the Old Testament. The Son of the Woman who shall crush the head of Satan (Gn 3:15), and the Son of Abraham who will be the "blessing of the Nations" (Gn 12:18) is announced by the Patriarch Jacob as the "scepter," the royal staff that will be preserved in Judah until the predestined one comes (Gn 49:10), and is foretold by the Prophet Balaam as the Star of Israel guiding and ruling over the chosen

people and the neighboring countries (*Nb* 24:17-19). David in time became king and planned to build a temple to God Almighty, who rewarded him with the promise and the prophecy of building for him a dynasty which would lead to the great King who was to insure the welfare and happiness of the people of God as long as the sun and the moon would master the sky (2 *S* 7:12-16; cf. *Ps* 2, 72 [73], 88 [89], 110 [111]). The Prophet Isaiah summing up the revelations given to previous and subsequent prophets: *Mi* 4-5; *Am* 9; *Hab* 3; *Hg* 2:21-24; *Zc* 12:1-13, *Ml* 4:2-4) describes the King Messiah as the Child-Emperor endowed with the divine attributes and as the Prince of Peace (*Is* 9:2-7). He is empowered by the spirit of God to bring the fullness of happiness both in this world and in the world to come (*Is* 11:1-9) to his subjects of all levels throughout all ages (*Is* 12:1-11).

God loves man. God has created man and destined him to share in God's own eternal glory in heaven both as an individual and in one humanity, because of this he organized his own people into the Kingdom of God. The true mission of kingship is to bring into the life of men the sense of that oneness within the realm which through the wisdom, justice, graciousness, initiative, dedication, authority and majesty of the king leads the efforts of every one of his subjects to success. All the accidents and incidents of history that bring a man to kingship are but ways of the divine providence leading him towards the fulfillment of that glorious mission.

The scion of the House of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, was announced (*Jr* 33:3-8; *Ez* 24:23-31) as the "Good Shepherd" not only of Israel but of all nations, giver of peace, happiness and life, in truth and forever (cf. *Jn* 10:7-21).

The *second reading* is the acclamation with which Jesus Christ is greeted in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation. The titles given to Jesus Christ as the King of the Universe are therein proclaimed.

He is the Faithful Witness, who, coming to us from the innermost life of the Divine Trinity imparts to us the mysteries of God's own life and his infinite love which created us, cares for us, and leads us towards sharing the eternal bliss of heaven, our

immortal home. He is the Sovereign of all rulers, because his wisdom and power and life and his right to rule the whole of the Universe are rooted in his very nature, in his being the God who created and at once set in motion the entire world. He is the Lord, greater than all possible conquerors, for his victory is not a victory brought about by blood or by armies overrunning countries. He is the Victor who wins hearts. He surrendered his own life in a sacrifice of atonement for sin, which is the reason his for death, and he gained pardon and life and bliss for everyone. Thus, he appeals to and claims the gratitude of every man who is or who could be, of every sinner and of every angel who longs for heaven.

The evangelists held fast to the teaching of Jesus about this kingdom wherein he is the King (*Mt* 13:45-53; *Mk* 4:26-34; *Lk* 18:20-21) as well as his command to struggle and to pray for its coming (*Mt* 6:10; *Lk* 11:2). St. Paul reminds all Christians of their having been called to be its noble subjects (*1 Th* 2:11-12). The supreme glorification of God is in Christ (*1 Co* 15:20-28). His kingdom is one of life and grace and justice (*Rm* 5:1-21). These crimes and vices are ousted and virtues flourish (*Ga* 5:16-25; *1 P* 2:9, 3:21-22). This is definite glory planned by God from all eternity (*Ep* 1:15-23), a glory that Jesus shares with his brethren (*Heb* 2:5-18). This are the royalties of his love (*Col* 1:12-23) into which he is ready to welcome us (*2 P* 1:11).

In the Gospel reading of today's Mass (*Jn* 18:33-37) Jesus stands before us as he stood before Pilate. He stands accused of being a culprit. Yet he is the King of the Universe.

He is Scion of the royal house of David (*Mt* 1:1-8; *Lk* 3:23-38) and lawful heir of the throne of Israel (*Lk* 1:32-33; *Mt* 1:20-21). During his ministry he avoided being recognized as such (*Jn* 6:15; cf. *Mk* 1:34), though the fact was very well known (*Mt* 20:29-34). Only when entering solemnly into the royal city of Jerusalem, where he was crucified, did he accept the Hosannas, or acclamations of "Long Life to the King." Thus he was proclaimed as the Son of David. He asserted this by telling his adversaries that if the children shouting the greetings were quiet, the very stones themselves would proclaim the truth (*Lk* 19:40).

The highest Roman official in the land of Israel, doubtlessly basing himself on the findings of his staff, was well acquainted with the facts. Thus Pilate interrogates his accused culprit: "Are

you the King of the Jews?" And Jesus places the plea in its proper legal setting by asking back: "Are you saying this by your own conviction or on hearsay?" Pilate enters into true legality with the definite statement: "Your people and the High Priests have delivered you to me. What have you done?" Jesus then dissolves any possible ground for the accusation of his being a rebel king against Rome with the official royal declaration: "My kingdom is not of this world. My subjects are the men who long for the Truth." And Pilate judges him: "Not guilty!"

"A kingdom not of this world...!" How true! The kingdoms of this world, like the Roman Empire and all the empires that ever were, are based on territorial dominion, but the realm of God's Kingdom is the whole universe. The kingdoms of the world endure for a single age. But the time of the Kingdom of God involves the ages of expectation and prophecies in the past and the ages of life still to come, until eternity is reached. The kingdoms of this world depend on the strength of their armies and administrators, but the Kingdom of God is backed by infinite omnipotence and wisdom. The kingdoms of this world live on taxes and material resources, but the Kingdom of God lives on the irradiation of love, grace and truth, springing up from the divine heart. Indeed, the Kingdom of Jesus is not a "kingdom of this world."

Jesus is the King in truth, the truth of the real life of man. Riches, dignities, enterprises, delights, joys, treasures, honors burden man. They make him busy; but they stop at the brink of the tomb, unable ever to have rendered a man happy and at peace. The truth of man's life is in his inner well being, full, alive, everlasting. Jesus has come into the world to bring about in consciousness and in realization, by the almighty power of the grace of the Most High, that well being of man, of every man from the highest and wisest to the most humble and derelict. The Kingdom of God, Jesus said once, is within you (*Lk 17:21*).

Above the cross from which Jesus was hanging, crowned with the thorns the Roman soldiers had placed on his head, and covered with blood and with the filth his enemies had spat on him, as he bled the last drop which throbbed from his heart, was the proclamation decreed by Pilate: "*Jesus of Nazareth, King...*" In the most majestic of the silences resound the words the agonizing Master once uttered, those he will order to be carried out until the end of

the world, inaugurating the life of lovers of truth: "Come to me all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest... shoulder my yoke and learn from me..." (*Mt* 11:28). "Abide in me... abide in my love..." (*Jn* 15:4-10; cf. *Mt* 28:16-20).

"Learn from him..." Today, throughout our life, he is our Shepherd who knows his sheep (*Jn* 10:7-18); at the end of the world, after he, Victor King of Kings and Lord of Lords (*Rv* 19:11-16), had conquered and ruled all powers on earth, he will be the Judge of the living and of the dead, welcoming into the everlasting Kingdom of God those who have learned of Him and lived following Him. So boundless is the breadth of his heart (*Mt* 25:31-40).

We celebrate Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe, the Son of God incarnate who rules over the angels and the forces of nature, and the powers of life and history. He is the sun of love divine, who comes to find his home in the hearts and souls of his brethren and subjects, to enliven them for life everlasting.

JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P.

## YEAR C

### FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 1991

(*Jr* 33:14-16; *1 Th* 3:12 - 4:2; *Lk* 21:25-26, 34-36)

As we enter this season of Advent and prepare both for Christmas (Christ's coming in humility) and the Last Day (Christ's coming in glory) the Church gives us, in this third year of the cycle of readings, three veritable gems of scripture on which to reflect. The first is from that somewhat unwieldy conglomerate of texts which made up the great Hebrew roll dubbed "the Prophecy of Jeremiah." The second is from what many consider to be the oldest complete book of the New Testament, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Finally, we have the awesome, apocalyptic words of the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, the Gospel standard to year three.

The portion of Jeremiah's prophetic fragments we have heard read a few moments ago is unusual for the author and, indeed,

sounds more like Isaiah than Jeremiah. In effect it is a two strophe poem which Père Couturier in his commentary in the *Jerome* places in the second part of Restoration Prophecies which range from chapter 26 to well into chapter 35. This part deals specifically with the restoration of Judah, the southern kingdom, as distinct from the antecedent prophecies on the north, Israel. The oracle can be precisely dated to the year 587 B.C. the year of Jeremiah's imprisonment and Jerusalem's fall to Babylon. At the very moment of havoc, sacrilege and destruction the prophet cries out in hope. His cry is probably taken from his secretary Baruch's memoirs, poetically reworked by some later disciples who reflect in the sense of "revealing mysteries" on part of the prophet-master's basic message.

What the text of Jeremiah teaches is that God, in fulfillment of his promise of old, will raise up a Davidic King who as "the Lord's integrity" will identify himself with Jerusalem and bestow on the city his own name, another way of saying "his character, his personality, his strength." Jesus Christ, born in all humility in Davidic Bethlehem will someday, long after 587 B.C. but long before our time, too, found a new Jerusalem. This city, which like its founder descends from heaven, is the dwelling place of the new elite, the true Judah and true Israel. It is manifest in time and space in the Catholic Church. It will be manifest completely and eternally before God's throne in heaven forever.

If we turn to the Gospel we can obtain a partial view of how this is to come about. Here Luke, steeped in the traditions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Micah, adds the psychological observations which make our Lord see and express things as with the eyes and tongue of a physician. What is cosmic, earth shaking, terrible in din and tremor is made personal and interior. The disaster cataclysm of the end evokes sensitivity and inner strength. Pagans merely fear. Christians stand firm, knowing God's love, protection and final blessing as the Heart of Jesus speaks to their hearts even in the midst of destruction and trial.

St. Paul in the second reading summons up a calmer tone as assuring as Jeremiah's or Luke's but more intimate and less dramatic. Rather than concern us or himself with the end, he takes us back to our Christian beginning. He finds good starts

praiseworthy, but he insists on growth and spiritual progress as the real signs of holiness. All we do must be centered in Christ. He is our norm for life. He is the authority behind apostolic teaching. He is more. He is the very agent and paradigm of our "godlikeness." We cannot be holy unless we become like God. But we can only be sanctified by Christ himself, holy God made holy man.

God will, if we let him, fulfill *all* prophecy in us. He will give us his Son, born of Mary, not only to rule over us, but to identify himself by name with us. God will in time bring to destruction and desolation the whole ecologically sick world in which we live. But he will bring us from fear to love in the process and guide us to inner strength. God will praise our efforts and insist on our growth. In the person of Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit's unceasing work, we can (if we are willing) be led this Advent, by giant steps of grace, nearer and nearer to our Father's house on high. And when the Kingdom comes in glory we'll be there!

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**December 8, 1991**

(Ba 5:1-9; Ph 1:4-6, 8-11; Lk 3:1-6)

*Vision of Baruch.* At the time of the prophet Baruch the land of Israel was desolate, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the people together with the king and priests were captives in Babylon. The reason for this pitiful situation was their infidelity to God, for they had abandoned Yahweh and his covenant to worship foreign gods. The vision of Baruch goes beyond the misery of his people to announce the day of deliverance, the day when the Lord will visit his people and bring them back to Jerusalem. For this the prophet commands Jerusalem to "take off the robe of mourning and misery, and to put on the splendor of glory from God."

Baruch's vision conveys a message of hope. To Jerusalem it announces that she will be "clothed with the splendor of the glory of God," when the temple of Yahweh is restored and people come

to offer sacrifices and worship the true God. To the people who were enslaved in Babylon he gave the hope of their deliverance and their return to the Promised Land, for "God will bring them back to you." In this new order the people of God will live in the "peace of justice." For peace is the result of justice and equity. Justice is the fruit of the knowledge of God who will establish a new covenant.

This is the message of preparation. God will prepare the road of Israel's return by making the road smooth in the desert, by leveling the mountains and filling up the valleys. The preparation of the road in terms of Baruch means: first, the initiative comes from God, "God commanded...." In all relations of man with God, it is He, God, who invites, inspires, moves. He begins and man responds, he invites, man follows the invitation. The initiative is from God. Second, the road of the return is prepared in the desert. A desert separates Babylon from Jerusalem, but the idea of the desert evokes those days when Israel enjoyed the intimacy of God, when Yahweh was the leader and shepherd of Israel, when Israel promised to abide to the covenant and thus to be the people of God. Third, the road is prepared by removing obstacles; sinful ways; by lowering the mountains of pride and treading the path of humility; by filling up with God the emptiness of man's soul.

*Mission of St. John the Baptist.* The vision of Baruch was immediately fulfilled at the end of the Israel's captivity, but this return of Israel did not really match the vision in the glorious and joyous return to Jerusalem, painful task the people had ahead of them to reconstruct the city and the temple. For this reason, the vision of Baruch is meant to transcend the historical return of Israel to the Promised Land and describes the vision of messianic times. God prepared in truth his people for the coming of the Messiah.

In this way the vision of Baruch has acquired a new dimension, precisely in the mission of St. John the Baptist. The mission of John is to prepare the people of God to receive Christ, the Messiah. The mission of St. John the Baptist was twofold, namely, to prepare the coming of Christ and to present Christ as the promised Messiah. The Second Sunday of Advent is dedicated to the first aspect of the mission: to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ. Baruch reminds us that the initiative is



from God. St. John points out that man must follow the initiative of God. Man must do his part. He must prepare himself for the coming of Christ. This preparation for the coming of Christ is twofold: it awakens and sustains hope and it involves receiving the baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

The mission of John was to arouse the spirit of expectation of the people of Israel, to make the people ready for the coming of the Lord. They must repent from their sins. That is, they must reject them, confess them and live the life of hope, waiting for the Lord to come. Thus to feel sorry. They must reject their wrong doings. This must culminate in the forgiveness of their sins by God. It is a joyful repentance by which man turns away from his sin and returns to God. St. John proclaimed a complete change. For he who is baptized begins a new life, a reformed life. For to be baptized means to die to the old ways and begin a new life. It marks the incorporation of the neophyte into a community. It means the washing away of the "old man" and man's becoming a "new creation." It means to be cleansed from sins and purified from all impurities. The baptism of John is an invitation to a new way of life, a new beginning for those who were expecting the salvific mission of Jesus, the Messiah. For this reason he preached a baptism of repentance, of the rejection of sin and that repentance which leads man to the forgiveness of sin. This is man's great hope: forgiveness of sin, for only God can forgive sins. The message of John to his listeners and to us is that God will come, is coming, to forgive the sins of the world. But this forgiveness cannot be effected by God unless we repent from our sins.

*The task of a Christian.* The message of John transcends space and time and reaches us in the words of St. Paul. "He who has begun the good work in you will carry out to completion right up to the day of Christ Jesus." A Christian who is baptized in Christ, first rejects Satan and his works. That is, he rejects sin. Secondly, he accepts Christ as the redeemer, as the Son of God. He receives faith from the Church. Thirdly, he dies to the old man and is born again into the life of grace. This is the beginning of the good work initiated by Christ who will bring it to completion in us by making us abound in love. As Pope John Paul II points out "Christian life on earth is like an initiation into the full participation in the glory of God" (*L'Osserv. Rom.*, 3 July 1991). The growth and the completion result from "a clear conscience a

blameless conduct," that is judging things on basis of faith with right intention, and doing things motivated by love. This is a continuous cooperation with the grace of God, a total determination to follow Jesus.

*Conclusion.* Baruch's vision represents the initiative of God. Any return to God is our first conversion, that by which we become conscious that we must return to God. There are successive conversions from earthly things to heavenly things. In all the initiative is from God. It is God who prepares us to repent, to ask for forgiveness.

But St. John's message reminds us that we must correspond with the initiative of God, in its twofold aspect: the negative, by which we reject that which is evil and we feel sorry for our wrong doings; and the positive, in which we receive the grace of life from Christ. St. John's mission is a present reality in our lives, for we must prepare, too, for the coming of the Lord. Christ is coming. Thus we must wait for him, and we must prepare for his coming. We wait for his coming hoping that his salvation will be ours when the glory will "be found rich in the harvest of justice... to the glory and praise of God." We must prepare for his coming by changing our evil ways and accepting his grace.

It is by responding to God's initiative, his invitation to change, to improve, to dedicate ourselves to the apostolate, and to serve God, that Christ fulfills in us his perfection, so that the glory of God will be manifested in us.

MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

## SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

December 9, 1991

(Gn 3:9-15,20; Ep 1:3-6,11-12; Lk 1:26-38)

This year we keep the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the day of the titular patronage of the Philippines, on a Monday. For yesterday was a privileged and special Sunday, the second of Advent. Our readings (as so often) show Old Testament prophecy, this time from the Law in the Book of Genesis, New

Testament fulfillment which as always grandly excels what was dimly promised and a Pauline synthesis on the place of holiness in man's relationship with God. In the first reading Satan is cursed while mankind is given hope. In the Gospel Mary accepts God's word from Gabriel's address and gives herself over to the most concrete manifestation mankind can know of God, the Incarnation, which takes its beginning in the depth of her body through the consent of her mind and the commitment of her heart. St. Paul points out to us in the letter to the Ephesians that God's inscrutable ways involve election before the world began and that Redemption follows a predetermined plan which manifests his will in the elect. Mary was prophesied. Mary is the chief protagonist in the beginning of final, prophetic fulfillment. Mary is chosen by God as Mother of the Redeemer and First of the Redeemed.

Most of us are aware that there are detractors on all sides who neither understand nor believe the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. There are even people who confuse it with the Virgin Birth of Christ! And there are those who would exploit ignorance about our Blessed Lady to mock our faith and devalue its Marian teachings. Here let us state as clearly as we can just what we as Catholics mean by the ponderous theological term "Immaculate Conception" and how we can take its mystery and make it somehow our own.

From the moment of her conception Mary, alone of all mere creatures since the Fall, was free from every stain of sin whether original or actual. This singular grace of freedom foresaw and applied the merits to be acquired in time by her not yet born but Eternal Son. This truth is implicit in Christian teaching from apostolic times forward and is traceable as explicit to patristic, scholastic and, later, magisterial teaching on Genesis 3:15 (a verse found in our first reading). The high favor which Mary held with God even before the Annunciation in today's Gospel (specifically in *Lk* 1:28) together with the call and blessing of the Father for all saints underlined in 1 Peter 1:16 and Romans 8:9 are also cited as implicit scriptural backing for this Catholic dogma. But it took the Church a long time to appreciate the depth of the holiness of Mary and to make explicit the doctrinal basis for the external devotional and liturgical honors gradually bestowed on her in the course of that lengthy period.

The Council of Ephesus in 431 began the process of making public and official what thousands of Catholics had always held in their hearts and private musings. By proclaiming Mary "Mother of God," the increasing veneration given to her was both, as it were, "canonized" and given an unquestionable theological basis. By the eighth century Mary's "spotlessness" was everywhere intoned in the East and in the last years of the eleventh the Western doctor St. Anselm could write: "it was fitting that Mary should be clothed with a purity so splendid that none greater under God could be conceived."

It is not necessary or fitting to mention here all the pro's and con's of scholastic discussions in the Middle Ages. Liturgically the feast of Mary's Conception dates in the West from the mid-eleventh century. By the early fourteenth century the Franciscan theologian, Duns Scotus, had worked out his doctrine of prevenient mediation or foreseen merit. This and popular devotion made the explicit holding of the Immaculate Conception universal by the end of the seventeenth century. By 1854 Pope Pius IX was ready to confirm by infallible pronouncement what was already liturgically fostered and in fact held by everyone from the most eminent theologian to most humble of the devout faithful. And his definition is the faith of the Church, a faith without which we should lose our hold on eternal life.

What can the Immaculate Conception mean to your life and mine? How can so awesome, so intimate and so singular a mystery belonging personally and exclusively to the Blessed Virgin Mary be appropriated to us? The mystery can be ours by participation as the grace and meaning of this Solemnity are taken in by our hearts and minds. It is already ours by faith as we believe *all* the teachings of the Catholic Church and profess them explicitly. It is ours in hope for we look forward to the application of Christ's triumph over sin (a triumph applied beforehand to his Mother) to all mankind and indeed all of creation. It, as a mystery of faith and a part of our hope, must, however, be made one with our love: love for the Father's will, love for the Son's redemptive work, love for the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power and, above all in this context, love for Mary herself as object of this threefold, divine action.

If, after God himself, we give Mary center stage in our Christian love, if we look to her as model and let ourselves be beholden to her as advocate with Christ, we shall grow in a holiness ornate with Marian graces, Marian charisms and Marian overtones. Mary will then be imitated by us, even though we can never attain to the sublime degree of her innocence and purity, according to our growing measure of grace and holiness. For her part, she will never leave us unaided. Come earthquake, fire, flood or *lahar*, she will be with us still. She will fall before the Throne of her divine Son for us. Her heart will speak to his. And, whatever our distress, she will give us hidden protection in the folds of her queenly cloak!

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**December 15, 1991**

*(Zp 3:14-18a; Ph 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18)*

The three readings for the Third Sunday of Advent in this third year of the lectionary cycle all try to tell in different ways of truly unspeakable joy. This is not just the joy of Christmas, anticipated with unwonted scurrying all around us, but the joy of God himself. He alone can bring lasting joy by resolving conflicts, forgiving sins and bringing us through Christ into his presence.

Our first reading comes from the "Psalm of Zion" in the last and most optimistic part of the roll of Zephaniah, a prophet in Judah in the mid-seventh century before Christ, just before the time of Jeremiah. The country had lost much territory through the encroachments of the Babylonians and was on the brink of either chaos or reform. Fortunately, after the wickedness of Kings Manasseh and Amon, the reform came under Josiah. But the prophet looks forward to something more joyous than political peace or a transitory religious renewal. He looks to the "great and terrible day of the Lord" when, all conflicts finally having been resolved, God will *enjoy* his people. We now know what the prophet could only implicitly foresee. The joy of God is Christ himself who, risen from the dead, dances at his wedding feast on high.

In Luke's Gospel, St. John the Baptist, perceived by many as overly stern, gives counsels of moderation and of hope. It is true he lacks the exuberance of Zephaniah. But the content of his message is much the same as that of the earlier prophet. The Lord is drawing nigh, and we must prepare for him by repenting and accepting new life styles which he can elevate through the Holy Spirit and fire to modes of enjoying him forever. All of this Luke rightly qualifies as "Good News," and that is what every word of the Gospel ought to be for us every day of our lives.

St. Paul, earnest as the Baptist in his realism but as recklessly happy as Zephaniah in his positivity, exhorts the Philippians and exhorts us to ceaseless joy. He wants anxiety gone forever from our hearts. He wants us to pray and to find peace. He wants divine protection to raise us above our tawdry plans and stupid concerns to where our hearts will be guarded always for they are "in Christ Jesus." And this of course is the real meaning of Christmas. Through Christ's birth God's light banishes darkness. Through Christ's joy the shadows of our sin pass away, giving place to new constancy before God in the unending stability of faith.

God calls us to a joy that is true and lasting, however sad our outward circumstances may seem to the world of unbelief. We may have lost many material things this year, but we shall never lose hope. We are God's people, and he has made his presence felt. Still, none of us can be complaisant. Great reforms must be effected in all of our lives before the pardon of God can become completely effective. In the midst of our struggle against worldliness and against a lazy condescension towards sin we have, however, an apostolic command regarding joy. "Don't worry, be happy" is a motto based on St. Paul.

Let us make it ours at Christmas and always.

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**December 15, 1991**

*(Zp 3:14-18; Ph 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18)*

## *Mary and Elizabeth, Guides to the Incarnation*

Christmas is at hand. Everybody is waiting for it. Waiting... for what? Children are waiting for Santa Claus and for the gifts their "*ninong*" and "*ninang*" will give them. Teenagers are waiting for the Christmas parties and carolings they are going to hold during their vacation. Employees and workers are waiting for the bonuses their employers are going to give them. Even poor people and victims of some recent natural calamities (earthquakes, floods, typhoons, Mt. Pinatubo eruptions and destructive *lahar*, etc.) are waiting for the goods and gifts some Catholic and civic organizations are going to distribute. Everybody is waiting for "something."

Sad to say, materialistic as we have become, we may have missed the point. During Advent season we have been preparing not just for the coming of "something," but of Someone: Christ, our Savior. Thus, whenever Christmas approaches the Church invites us to rejoice. And she is right, even though in the present situation we may find hard to rejoice because of financial problems, hardships, family trouble, difficulties, social instability, and the like. Still the Church invites us to rejoice. The reason is because "the Lord is near." Christ's victory over sin and death has been won and, thus, also our own victory over sin and death.

Joy is a manifestation of hope. In hope Christians expect the coming of Christ and his kingdom. Thus, our Christian hope is no other than Christ himself! Toys, gifts, food are useful to make Christmas meaningful; however, what the poor need on Christmas is not just a "*supot*" of rice, not a piece of cloth, but indeed Christ himself. For Christmas brings joy and everlasting peace only if we accept Christ as our Messiah and Liberator. He, with his teaching, is the gift we need to remedy our personal and national problems. If, for instance, there is poverty around us it is not because God gave us a poor country; it is because we have not practiced Christ's justice and charity. How can we hope to share in the benefits of peace, order and social contentment if we refuse again and again to fulfill our obligations and responsibilities?

One of the finest Advent pictures is the one of today's Gospel: Mary hurrying over the hill country to a town of Judah, talking to her divine son under her heart, intending to help her

relative Elizabeth. To Mary was granted the blessedness of being the mother of the Son of God. Yet she does not think she should lock herself up in her room, or even hide in her joy. She wants equally much to help her cousin Elizabeth. Loving our neighbor, we love God, and talking to him in our heart increases our capacity for work. It is the paradox of blessedness that it confers on a person at one and the same time the greatest joy and the greatest task in all the world.

Longfellow tells of a monk whose daily duty it was to give food and clothing to the poor at the monastery gate. One evening, a vision of Christ appeared to him in his cell. The face and features were in-distinct so that sometimes he doubted if it were there. As he gazed with joy at the vision, the bell sounded the hour when the poor were waiting at the convent gate. How could he leave now? What should he do, stay with his heavenly Visitor, or go to his duty of distributing help to the needy? He decided in favor of duty. He bade farewell to Christ and went to relieve Christ's poor. Darkness fell before he finished, and as he entered his cell he struck a light. The room was immediately filled with heavenly brightness. There stood Christ, not indistinct now but shining as the sun, smiling upon him with divine tenderness. Jesus spoke, "Had you not gone I would have left indeed!" One part of our veneration of Christ in the crib on Christmas is to help those who represent Christ in the flesh around us.

The time before Christmas is for many of us a busy time. Work is piling up in preparation of the great feast. And similar busy times there are often during the year. We might like to go into seclusion as Elizabeth did. But we cannot. Mary shows the way: the busier we are in working for our friends and relatives, the more we want to talk to Christ in our heart. Work becomes prayer. Then we are prepared for his coming.

Elizabeth also guides us, through the liturgy of this fourth Sunday of Advent, to recognize Christ in our midst, as she recognized Mary as the mother of the Messiah: "Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And she is the one inviting us today once more to single out Mary's greatness because of her faith in God.

The same Person who became flesh in Mary's womb by the working of the Holy Spirit (*Gospel*), and was born at Bethlehem



(1st Reading) some two thousand years ago, is also the one who, through the action of the same Spirit, is coming now to us under the form of bread and wine to be our nourishment, to set us free, to be our companion on the way. We welcome Him with grateful hearts.

JAVIER GONZALEZ, O.P.

## CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25, 1991

(Is 52:1-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18)

It's Christmas! And in a night like this, our mind goes back to that night almost two thousand years ago when humanity has heard a "cry in the dark." The cry came from a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, there in a far-away manger, because there was no room for him and his parents in the inn. On the sidelines, a heavenly host of angels was praising God and saying, "Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favor rests."

What is striking in this scene of the Nativity of our Savior, is that our Lord chose to be born in an atmosphere of Poverty. He was born poor. He was born with the lowly, with the shepherds living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flocks. These first worshipers, the shepherds, despised by the Orthodox because their occupation made them neglectful of religious observance, are the forerunners of the multitude of humble folk who were to throng him in his public ministry. Just as later the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head, the King of the Jews no throne but a cross, there was no room for the Savior in the common guest-room of the inn.

Right at his birth, our Lord gives us the Message that he had *nothing* to offer except himself. And yet his gift was *everything*.

Jesus enriched himself not in terms of material possessions but in terms of virtue — love, faith, justice, honesty, forgiveness, compassion for people. For him, it is more important *to be* than *to have*. It is far more useful to become than to acquire. The Letter of Paul to Titus in the second reading expresses this very well:

desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Christ Jesus" (Tt 2:11-13).

In our times, what is happening is that we are being bombarded with value-systems that promote *having* rather than *being*. Most of the world is ruled by people who are rich rather than by people who are virtuous. What is good and what is not good nowadays are dictated by businessmen (with help from the media) who want to sell their products.

It is in this sense that the newborn babe is, for us, according to the Prophet Isaiah in the first reading, a *light*, a great light for people who walk in darkness (Is 9:1). For our very beings have been blurred by the shadows of our possessions. We are slowly becoming persons who live in order to possess rather than men and women who possess in order to live. It is human to work for a living. It is human to want to own a house, a car and other necessities. What is inhuman is the senseless accumulation of wealth and possessions which we really do not need when there are millions who starve in our own times. This is living in order to possess. This is darkness.

Jesus, the Light, tells us something else: *Be poor* (that is, have an unwavering trust in God), *be merciful*, *be just*, *be charitable*, *be compassionate* and *forgiving*. In all these virtues, one can observe that there is no prohibition for owning — but simply an imperative to practice virtue in our use of material things. for, by practicing virtue, our *being* would not be blurred by the things that we own.

Jesus' emphasis on BEING is not without reason. For only when we develop ourselves can we have something to give. The essence of Christianity is self-offering for the sake of others. We may be able to increase production, but if we have not grown in the virtue of justice, there will never be enough for everyone. We may have limited resources, but if we have grown in charity, nobody will be deprived.

Jesus' birth in poverty prepared him for a lifetime in which he had nowhere to lay his head and for an even poorer death.

There in the Cross he had nothing except Himself. When he was buried, he was wrapped in a shroud which perhaps was very similar in stuff to the swaddling clothes wrapped around him at his birth.

When our Lord was born, his *home* was almost empty. In that home, the members, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, had nothing to offer except themselves. And yet that was all that was needed to make wondrous things happen for all of us.

Our Lord is inviting us to the poverty in which he was born and with which he died. He is inviting us to the richness of that poverty — a poverty that could provide us abundant possibilities to share our very selves. The Second Plenary Council's effort to fashion a Philippine Church of the Poor is but an echo of our Lord's invitation.

Jesus is calling us home... home to that far-away manger... where shepherds tended their flocks by night and where angels joyfully sing. Jesus calls us to his poor home so that we may enrich ourselves with the wealth of his being.

VIRGILIO OJOY, O.P

## **FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

**December 29, 1991**

*(Si 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23)*

### *The Value of the Family*

That progress is one of the factors that have eroded family ties cannot be denied. The negative results that progress has foisted on the family are most telling. Because of the fast pace of living family members, particularly parents, find too little time for personal interaction among themselves. Because mother and father are often away most of the time, children cannot help but feel taken for granted. Hence, they feel unwanted and unloved. The end results of the fast-paced lifestyle are most disastrous. Children get into dangerous experiments, like alcohol, vagrancy, drugs and pre-marital sex.

Traditional parental roles have slowly been devolving. Have you noticed the growing number of working mothers who have joined the 9 to 5 brigade doing their daily grind in offices? Notice, too, the proliferation of day-care centers to which children have been entrusted by the absentee-parents. The home has been reduced to a dormitory or a mere bus stop. It has ceased to be a home.

Modern life seems to have rendered family life obsolete. Because the children are not nurtured in love, it is not any wonder, therefore, that they grow up confused, as they do not have clear father/mother images. Is it worth making scientific advances and gains even if it means the loss of values of family life?

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The family is a divine institution. Because God created it, the family belongs to God. As such, family life must find its roots in God, it must be rooted in the faith of the members, their faith in God. The heads of the families must exhaust all efforts to cultivate their families' relationship with Jesus Christ, by helping create an atmosphere where all the family members acknowledge the presence of Christ in the family.

As Vatican II has put it: "the family has received from God its mission to be the first and vital cell of society." Jesus affirmed the role of the family by becoming a member of a human family. He did not enter the world as a full-grown man. In the institution of the family, God supremely accommodated himself to the level of human relationship in sending his Son to become a human being. Jesus was born, and he grew up as an ordinary child would in the midst of his chosen earthly family. St. Luke tells us some details of his childhood between his infancy and his public life. The family of Jesus seemed to be an ordinary, simple Jewish family to his townspeople. Joseph was a carpenter, and Mary, in all likelihood, was the homemaker, doing household chores and looking after the needs of Jesus and Joseph. And Jesus, before his public life, must have lent a helping hand to both his parents. Presumably, he took over the trade of Joseph when the latter died.

We could not find better role models than the members of the Holy Family.

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Jesus' family was not just a simple ordinary Jewish family; it was a holy family. Its holiness comes from each member doing faithfully God's will. Its holiness is derived from its being a praying family and from the close union of all members during crises, such as when they were denied "room at the inn," their flight into Egypt and the case of Mary seen weeping at the foot of the cross.

The loss of Jesus in the temple and the accompanying anxiety of Mary and Joseph tell us that every family has its share of problems. This incident also illustrates the concern of the parents for the child.

The calling of every man and woman who enter into marriage is to form a holy family. Each and both are called upon to devote a good amount of their time in care, personal care for their offspring. They should instill in their child the love of God, especially when in his tender years. They should teach the child the rudiments of the faith. They should be the embodiment of what they teach. For it is in the ideal family that we can see the wisdom and gentleness of command, the willingness of obedience, the unity and firmness of mutual confidence. These are what characterize the perfect kingdom of God.

H.Q.S.Jr., O.P.

## Curia Appointments

The Holy Father has appointed the newly elevated Cardinals as Members of the following dicasteries (25 July 1991):

- *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*: Cardinals Angelo Sodano, Robert Coffy, Edward I. Cassidy;
- *Congregation for the Oriental Churches*: Cardinal Alexandru Todea;
- *Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments*: Cardinals Virgilio Noe and Henri Schwery;
- *Congregation for the Causes of Saints*: Cardinals Anthony Bevilacqua and Virgilio Noe;
- *Congregation for Bishops*: Cardinals Angelo Sodano, Antonio Quarracino, Camillo Ruini, Pio Laghi, Edward I. Cassidy;
- *Counsellors of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America*: Cardinals Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez and Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo;
- *Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*: Cardinals Frederic Etsou-Nzabi-Bamungwabi and Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo;
- *Congregation for the Clergy*: Cardinals Giovanni Saldarini, Henri Schwery, Pio Laghi;
- *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life*: Cardinals Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez, Jan Chryzostom Korec, Fiorenzo Angelini;
- *Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions)*: Cardinals Georg Maximilian Sterzinsky, **Jose T. Sanchez**;
- *Pontifical Council for the Laity*: Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini;
- *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*: Cardinals Alexandru Todea, Antonio Quarracino, Cahal Brendan Daly;
- *President's Committee of the Pontifical Council for the Family*: Cardinals Frederic Etsou-Nzabi-Bamungwabi and Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo;
- *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*: Cardinal Roger Michael Mahony;
- *Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"*: Cardinal Anthony Joseph Bevilacqua;
- *Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue with Non-Believers*: Cardinals Jan Chryzostom Korec, Georg Maximilian Sterzinsky;
- *Pontifical Council for Social Communications*: Cardinals Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez, Roger Michael Mahony;
- *Council of Cardinals for the Study of the Organizational and Economic Questions of the Apostolic See*: Cardinals Roger Michael Mahony, Camillo Ruini;
- *Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See*: Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy;
- *Pontifical Committee for the International Eucharistic Congresses*: **Cardinal Jose T. Sanchez**.

## Changes in Episcopate

The Holy Father has accepted the resignation from the pastoral governance of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, the Philippines, presented by Bishop Federico G. Limon, in conformity with canon 401, § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (15 July 1991).

The Holy Father appointed as Metropolitan Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz, currently Archbishop emeritus of San Fernando.

Archbishop Cruz, 57, was ordained a priest in 1962. He served in seminaries before being appointed titular Bishop of Martirano and Auxiliary of Manila in 1976. In 1978 he was made Archbishop of San Fernando where he served until 1988 when he became Secretary General of the Second Plenary Council of the Filipino Bishops.

## Apostolic Administrator

The Holy Father appointed as Apostolic Administrator of Prelature of Marawi, Philippines, Fr. Desmond Hartford, S.S.C.