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## Catechism of the Catholic Church

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*Maximiliano Rebollo, O.P.*

On December 8, 1992 John Paul II presented to the Catholic Church the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as part of the renovation envisioned by the Ecumenical Council Vatican II, and implemented through the different decrees and programs which have emanated from the Holy See at different times, pertaining as they do to various concerns.

Theological reflection is a part of the life of the Church which must present revealed doctrine in a meaningful way for the people to receive it. Divine faith is a living faith and not a mere formula expressing some stereotyped statements about dogma and morals, or expressing itself in an static way. A living faith is expressed in a living Christianity and formulas as such by their very nature are incapable of containing the whole mystery they wish to express.

The dynamic constitution of the Church requires and demands constant reflection on revealed truth so that one same revealed truth may be expressed in formulas and language which will be understood by the people of God in a particular historical context. On the other hand, the dynamism of living language requires a constant adaptation since language and words undergo changes, modifications of meaning which have to be taken into account.

This is also part of the dynamism of man and society. Today, we profess the same faith that the first Christians confessed in their

lives and through their martyrdom. But our understanding of this one same faith is not in the same as theirs because in the course of twenty centuries of Christian living and theological reflection the content of faith has been enriched by new insights which make explicit that which was implicit, that clarify that which was obscure. By these new clarifications the content of faith is made more explicit and perhaps more demanding.

It is true that today we do not live at the "frontier" of martyrdom as the early Christian did, but we live at the "frontier" of poverty and injustice, of hunger and deprivation, of refugees and displaced persons. Our confrontation may not be with civil authority but we are challenged by sickness and by dehumanizing society, consumerism and materialistic values. These challenges are as real and threatening as were those of the past.

To live our faith today we need to express it in a meaningful way; in a way that is adapted to today's life with its particular situations, problems, etc.. In an age marked by individualism and pluralism the Church through her pastors felt the need of expressing the faith in a way which maintains its unity by producing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This book, in turn, can be 'a point of reference' for all Catholics. Vatican II brought the Church to a meaningful and radical reflection. This reflection was a courageous act. The Church reflected in the revealed *fidei depositum* in order to present the Christian faith in terms that could be understood by the modern man. This reflection of Vatican II needed the test of time for its formulation in a systematic and synthetic way. What was called for was an undertaking to formulate the Catholic faith as revealed in the Bible, handed down through the centuries in Tradition and Liturgy, lived by the saints and understood by the Church today.

Perhaps the great asset of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is to be universal in the true sense of the word, since "it draws abundantly on Tradition of both the Eastern and Western Church, and is addressed to all the universal Church," (Card. Ratzinger, Press Conference, June 26, 1992), and it has been composed through the participation of the whole Church. John Paul II stresses this aspect in his Constitution *Fidei Depositum* "The project was of extensive consultation among all Catholic Bishops, their Episcopal Conferences or Synods, and of theological and catechetical institutions...

The achievement of this catechism thus reflects the collegial nature of the Episcopate: it testifies to the Church's Catholicity."

But the work is not yet finished. It has to be completed by the local Churches, by the national and diocesan Churches. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the guide, the "point of reference," the Catholic doctrine as understood by the Catholic Church. But it needs to be adapted to local conditions. It has to be supplemented by appropriate methods according to the different situations and cultures of the world.

As the Commission for the new Catechism of the Catholic Church ended his work, it brought us to begin our own, that is, to adapt this new catechism to the local conditions. Part of the work has already been done with the publication of the Philippine Catechetical Directory, but the Directory has to be adapted to the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It needs a serious reflection to adapt this major catechism to the destinaries of our own catechesis. If we are going to follow the example of the Catechism Commission, the whole Philippine Church will be called to cooperate in this endeavor so that maintaining the same content of the Church we may be able to use the Catechism of the Catholic Church for the presentation of the Catholic faith in a comprehensive and systematic way, that is, in a way that is accessible to the Philippine Community.

## **Fidei Depositum**

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*Apostolic Constitution  
on the Publication of the  
Catechism of the Catholic Church  
Prepared Following the  
Second Vatican Ecumenical Council  
John Paul II, Bishop  
Servant of the Servants of God  
for Everlasting Memory*

*To my Venerable Brothers the Cardinals, to the Archbishops,  
Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and all the People of God.*

### **1. Introduction**

Guarding the deposit of faith is the mission which the Lord has entrusted to his Church and which she fulfills in every age. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was opened 30 years ago by my predecessor Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, had as its intention and purpose to highlight the Church's apostolic and pastoral mission, and by making the truth of the Gospel shine forth, to lead all people to seek and receive Christ's love which surpasses all knowledge (cf. *Ep* 3:19).

The principal task entrusted to the Council by Pope John XXIII was to guard and present better the precious deposit of Christian

doctrine in order to make it more accessible to the Christian faithful and to all people of good will. For this reason the Council was not first of all to condemn the errors of the time, but above all to strive calmly to show the strength and beauty of the doctrine of the faith. "Illumined by the light of this Council," the Pope said, "the Church... will become greater in spiritual riches and, gaining the strength of new energies therefrom, she will look to the future without fear... Our duty is... to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, thus pursuing the path which the Church has followed for 20 centuries."<sup>1</sup>

With the help of God, the Council Fathers in four years of work were able to produce a considerable collection of doctrinal statements and pastoral norms which were presented to the whole Church. There the Pastors and Christian faithful find directives for that "renewal of thought, action, practices and moral virtue, of joy and hope, which was the very purpose of the Council."<sup>2</sup>

After its conclusion the Council did not cease to inspire the Church's life. In 1985 I was able to assert: "For me, then - who had the special grace of participating in it and actively collaborating in its development - Vatican II has always been, and especially during these years of my Pontificate, the constant reference point of my every pastoral action, in the conscious commitment to implement its directives concretely and faithfully at the level of each Church and the whole Church."<sup>3</sup>

In this spirit, on 25 January 1985 I convoked an Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the 25th anniversary of the close of the Council. The purpose of this assembly was to celebrate the graces and spiritual fruits of Vatican II, to study its teaching in greater depth in order the better to adhere to it and to promote knowledge and application of it.

On that occasion the Synod Fathers stated: "Very many have expressed the desire that a catechism or compendium of all Catholic

<sup>1</sup>John XXIII, Opening Address to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 11 October 1962: AAS 54 (1962), pp. 788, 791.

<sup>2</sup>Paul VI, Closing Address to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 8 December 1965: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>John Paul II, Address of 25 January 1985: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 January 1985.

doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed, that it might be, as it were, a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in various regions. The presentation of doctrine must be biblical and liturgical. It must be sound doctrine suited to the present life of Christian.”<sup>4</sup> After the Synod ended, I made this desire my own, considering it as “fully responding to a real need both of the universal Church and of the particular Churches.”<sup>5</sup>

For this reason we thank the Lord wholeheartedly on this day when we can offer the entire Church this “reference text” entitled the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for a catechesis renewed at the living sources of the faith!

Following the renewal of the Liturgy and the new codification of the canon law of the Latin Church and that of the Oriental Catholic Churches, this catechism will make a very important contribution to that work of renewing the whole life of the Church, as desired and begun by the Second Vatican Council.

## 2. The process and spirit of drafting the text

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the result of very extensive collaboration: it was prepared over six years of intense work done in a spirit of complete openness and fervent zeal.

In 1986 I entrusted a commission of 12 Cardinals and Bishops, chaired by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, with the task of preparing a draft of the catechism requested by the Synod Fathers. An editorial committee of seven diocesan Bishops, experts in theology and catechesis, assisted the commission in its work.

The commission, charged with giving directives and with overseeing the course of the work attentively followed all the stages in editing the nine subsequent drafts. The editorial committee, for its part, assumed responsibility for writing the text, making the emendations requested by the commission and examining the observations of numerous theologians, exegetes, and catechists, in order to improve the text. The committee was a place of fruitful and

<sup>4</sup>Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod, 7 December 1985, II, B, a, n.4: *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, vol. 9, p. 1758, n. 1797.

<sup>5</sup>John Paul II, Address at the closing of the Extraordinary Synod, 7 December 1985, n.6: AAS 78 (1986), p. 435.

enriching exchanges of opinion to ensure the unity and homogeneity of the text.

The project was the object of extensive consultation among all Catholic Bishops, their Episcopal Conferences or Synods, and of theological and catechetical institutes. As a whole, it received a broadly favorable acceptance on the part of the Episcopates of the Catholic Church, who generously accepted my invitation to share responsibility for an enterprise which directly concerns the life of the Church. This response elicits in me a deep feeling of joy, because the harmony of so many voices truly expresses what could be called the "symphony" of the faith. The achievement of this catechism thus reflects the collegial nature of the Episcopate: it testifies to the Church's catholicity.

### 3. Arrangement of the material

A catechism should faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition of the Church and the authentic Magisterium, as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers and the Church's saints, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery and for enlivening the faith of the people of God. It should take into account the doctrinal statements which down the centuries the Holy Spirit has intimated to his Church. It should also help illumine with the light of faith the new situations and problems which had not yet emerged in the past.

The catechism will thus contain the new and the old (cf. *Mt* 13:52), because the faith is always the same yet the source of ever new light.

To respond to this twofold demand, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the one hand repeats the "old," traditional order already followed by the catechism of St. Pius V, arranging the material in four parts: the *Creed* the *Sacred Liturgy*, with pride of place given to the Sacraments, the Christian way of life, explained beginning with Ten Commandments, and finally, *Christian prayer*. At the same time, however, the contents are often expressed in a "new" way in order to respond to the questions of our age.

The four parts are related one to the other: the Christian mystery is the object of faith (first part); it is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions (second part); it is present to



enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions (third part); it is the basis for our prayer, the privileged expression of which is the *Our Father*, and it represents the object of our supplication, our praise and our intercession (fourth part).

The Liturgy itself is prayer; the confession of faith finds its proper place in the celebration of worship. Grace, the fruit of the sacraments, is the irreplaceable condition for Christian living, just as participation in the Church's liturgy requires faith. If faith is not expressed in works, it is dead (cf. *Jm* 2:14-16) and cannot bear fruit unto eternal life.

In reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we can perceive the wondrous unity of the mystery of God, his saving will, as well as the central place of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, sent by the Father, made man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be our Savior. Having died and risen, Christ is always present in his Church, especially in the sacraments; he is the source of our faith, the model of Christian conduct and the Teacher of our prayer.

#### **4. The doctrinal value of the text**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which I approved 25 June last and the publication of which I today order by virtue of my Apostolic Authority, is a statement of the Church's faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith. May it serve the renewal to which the Holy Spirit ceaselessly calls the Church of God, the Body of Christ, on her pilgrimage to the undiminished light of the kingdom!

The approval and publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* represents a service which the Successor of Peter wishes to offer to the Holy Catholic Church, and to all the particular Churches in peace and communion with the Apostolic See: the service, that is, of supporting and confirming the faith of all the Lord Jesus' disciples (cf. *Lk* 22:32), as well as of strengthening the bonds of unity in the same apostolic faith.

Therefore, I ask the Church's Pastors and the Christian faithful to receive this catechism in a spirit of communion and use it

assiduously in fulfilling their mission of proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel life. This catechism is given to them that it may be a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechism. It is also offered to all the faithful who wish to deepen their knowledge of the unfathomable riches of salvation (cf. *Jn* 8:32). It is meant to support ecumenical efforts that are moved by the holy desire for the unity of all Christians, showing carefully the content and wondrous harmony of the Catholic faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, lastly, is offered to every individual who asks us to give an account of the hope that is in us (cf. *1 Pt* 3:15) and who wants to know what the Catholic Church believes.

This catechism is not intended to replace the local catechisms duly approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, the diocesan Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences, especially if they have been approved by the Apostolic See. It is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which must take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to Catholic doctrine.

## 5. Conclusion

At the conclusion of this document presenting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, I beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word and Mother of the Church, to support with her powerful intercession the catechetical work of the entire Church on every level, at this time when she is called to a new effort of evangelization. May the light of the true faith free humanity from ignorance and slavery to sin in order to lead it to the only freedom worthy of the name (cf. *Jn* 8:32): that of life in Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, here below and in the kingdom of heaven, in the fullness of the blessed vision of God face to face (cf. *1 Co* 13:12; *2 Co* 5:6-8)!

Given on 11 October 1992, the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the fourteenth year of my pontificate.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joannes Paulus PP II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "J" and "P" being particularly prominent.

# Pastores Dabo Vobis

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John Paul II

## Chapter IV COME AND SEE

*Priestly Vocation  
in the Church's Pastoral Work*

### Seek, follow, abide

34. “Come and see” (Jn 1:39). This was the reply Jesus gave to the two disciples of John the Baptist who asked him where he was staying. In these words we find the meaning of vocation.

This is how the Evangelist relates the call of Andrew and Peter: “The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ And they said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

“One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, ‘So you are

Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)" (*Jn* 1:35-42).

This Gospel passage is one of many in the Bible where the "mysitery" of vocation is described, in our case the mystery of the vocation to be Apostles of Jesus. This passage of John, which is also significant for the Christian vocation as such, has a particular value with regard to the priestly vocation. As the community of Jesus' disciples, the Church is called to contemplate this scene which in some way is renewed constantly down the ages. The Church is invited to delve more deeply into the original and personal meaning of the call to follow Christ in the priestly ministry and the unbreakable bond between divine grace and human responsibility which is contained and revealed in these two terms which we find more than once in the Gospel: *come, follow me* (cf. *Mt* 19:21). She is asked to discern and to live out the proper dynamism of vocation, its gradual and concrete development in the phases of *seeking Christ, finding him and staying with him*.

The Church gathers from this "*Gospel of vocation*" the paradigm, strength and impulse behind her pastoral work of promoting vocations, of her mission to care for the birth, discernment and fostering of vocations, particularly those to the priesthood. By the very fact that "the lack of priests is certainly a sad thing for any Church,"<sup>92</sup> pastoral work for vocations needs, especially today, to be taken up with a new vigor and more decisive commitment by all the members of the Church, in the awareness that it is not a secondary or marginal matter, or the business of one group only, as if it were but a "part," no matter how important, of the entire pastoral work of the Church. Rather, as the Synod Fathers frequently repeated, it is an essential part of the overall pastoral work of each Church,<sup>93</sup> a concern which demands to be integrated into and fully identified with the ordinary "care of souls,"<sup>94</sup> a connatural and essential dimension of the Church's pastoral work, of her very life and mission.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, *concern for vocations is a connatural and essential dimension of the Church's pastoral work*. The reason for this is that

<sup>92</sup>*Discourse at the end of the Synod* (27 October 1990), 5: *loc. cit.*

<sup>93</sup>Cf. *Propositio* 6.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. *Propositio* 13.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. *Propositio* 4.

vocation, in a certain sense, defines the very being of the Church, even before her activity. In the Church's very name, *Ecclesia*, we find its deep vocational aspect, for the Church is a "convocation," an *assembly of those who have been called*: All those, who in faith look towards Jesus, the author of salvation and the principle of unity and peace, God has gathered together and established as the Church, that she may be for each and everyone the visible sacrament of this saving unity."<sup>96</sup>

A genuinely theological assessment of priestly vocation and pastoral work in its regard can only arise from an assessment of the mystery of the Church as a *mysterium vocationis*.

### The Church and the gift of vocation

35. Every Christian vocation finds its foundation in the gratuitous and prevenient choice made by the Father "who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (*Ep* 1:3-5).

Each Christian vocation comes from God and is God's gift. However, it is never bestowed outside of or independently of the Church. Instead it always comes about in the Church and through the Church because, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, "God has willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness."<sup>97</sup>

The Church not only embraces in herself all the vocations which God gives her along the path to salvation, but she herself appears as a mystery of vocation, a luminous and living reflection of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. In truth, the Church, a "people made one by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,"<sup>98</sup> carries within her the mystery of the Father, who, being neither called nor sent by any one (cf. *Rm* 11:33-35), calls all to hallow his name and do his will;

<sup>96</sup>SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 9.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup>SAINT CYPRIAN, *De Dominica Oratione*, 23: CCL 3/A, 105.

she guards within herself the mystery of the Son, who is called by the Father and sent to proclaim the Kingdom of God to all and who calls all to follow him; and she is the trustee of the mystery of the Holy Spirit, who consecrates for mission those whom the Father calls through his Son Jesus Christ.

The Church, being by her very nature a "vocation," is also a *begetter and educator of vocations*. This is so because she is a "sacrament," a "sign" and "instrument" in which the vocation of every Christian is reflected and lived out. And she is so in her activity, in the exercise of her ministry of proclaiming the Word, in her celebration of the Sacraments and in her service and witness to charity.

We can now see the *essential dimension of the Christian vocation*: not only does it derive "from" the Church and her mediation, not only does it come to be known and find fulfillment "in" the Church, but it also necessarily appears – in fundamental service to God – as a service "to" the Church. Christian vocation, whatever shape it takes, is a gift whose purpose is to build up the Church and to increase the Kingdom of God in the world.<sup>99</sup>

What is true of every vocation, is true specifically of the priestly vocation: the latter is a call, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders received in the Church, to place oneself at the service of the People of God with a particular belonging and configuration to Jesus Christ and with the authority of acting "in the name and in the person" of him who is Head and Shepherd of the Church.

From this point of view, we understand the statement of the Synod Fathers: "The vocation of each priest exists in the Church and for the Church: through her this vocation is brought to fulfillment. Hence we can say that every priest receives his vocation from our Lord through the Church as a gracious gift, a grace *gratis data* (*charisma*). It is the task of the Bishop or the competent superior not only to examine the suitability and the vocation of the candidate but also to recognize it. This ecclesiastical element is inherent in a vocation to the priestly ministry as such. The candidate to the priesthood should receive his vocation not by imposing his own

<sup>99</sup>Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 3.

personal conditions, but accepting also the norms and conditions which the Church herself lays down, in the fulfillment of her responsibility."<sup>100</sup>

### The vocational dialogue: divine initiative and human response

36. The history of every priestly vocation, as indeed of every Christian vocation, is the history of an *inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings*, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him. These two indivisible aspects of vocation, God's gratuitous gift and man's responsible freedom, are reflected in a splendid and very effective way in the brief words with which the Evangelist Mark presents the calling of the Twelve: Jesus "went up into the hills, and *called* to him those *whom he desired*; and *they came* to him" (*Mk* 3:13). On the one hand, we have the completely free decision of Jesus; on the other, the "coming" of the Twelve, their "following" Jesus.

This is the constant paradigm, the fundamental datum of every vocation: whether of Prophets, Apostles, priests, religious, the lay faithful – of everyone.

First of all, indeed in a prevenient and decisive way, comes *the free and gracious intervention of God who calls*. It is God who takes the initiative in the call. This was, for example, the experience of the Prophet Jeremiah: "Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (*Jr* 1:4-5). The same truth is presented by the Apostle Paul, who roots every vocation in the eternal election in Christ, made "before the foundation of the world" and "according to the purpose of his will" (*Ep* 1:4-5). The absolute primacy of grace in vocation is most perfectly proclaimed in the words of Jesus: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (*Jn* 15:16).

If the priestly vocation bears unequivocal witness to the primacy of grace, God's free and sovereign decision to call man calls for the total respect. It cannot be forced in the slightest by any human ambition, and it cannot be replaced by any human decision. Vocation

<sup>100</sup> *Propositio* 5.

is a gift of God's grace and never a human right, such that "one can never consider priestly life as a simply human affair, nor the mission of the minister as a simply personal project."<sup>101</sup> Every claim or presumption on the part of those called is thus radically excluded (cf. *Heb* 5:4 ff). Their entire heart and spirit should be filled with an amazed and deeply felt gratitude, an unshakeable trust and hope, because those who have been called know that they are rooted not in their own strength but in the unconditional faithfulness of God who calls.

"He called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him" (*Mk* 3:13). This "coming," which is the same as "following" Jesus, expresses the free response of the Twelve to the Master's call. We see it in the case of Peter and Andrew: "And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him" (*Mt* 4:19-20). The experience of James and John was exactly the same (cf. *Mt* 4:21-22). And so it is always: in vocation there shine out at the same time God's gracious love and the highest possible exaltation of man's freedom: the freedom of following God's call and entrusting oneself to him.

In effect, grace and freedom are not opposed. On the contrary, grace enlivens and sustains human freedom, setting it free from the slavery of sin (cf. *Jn* 8:34-36), healing it and elevating it in its ability to be open to receiving God's gift. And if we cannot in any way minimize the absolutely gratuitous initiative of God who calls, neither can we in any way minimize the serious responsibility which man faces in the challenge of his freedom. And so when he hears Jesus's invitation to "come, follow me" the rich young man refuses, a sign – albeit only a negative sign – of his freedom: "At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions" (*Mk* 10:22).

*Freedom, therefore, is essential to vocation*, a freedom which when it gives a positive response appears as a deep personal adherence, as a loving gift, or rather as a gift given back to the Giver who is God who calls, an oblation: "The call – Paul VI once said – is as extensive as the response. There cannot be vocations, unless they be free; that is, unless they be spontaneous offerings of oneself, conscious, generous,

<sup>101</sup>Angelus (3 December 1989), 2: *Insegnamenti* XII/2 (1989), 1417.



total... Oblations, we call them: here lies in practice the heart of the matter... It is the humble and penetrating voice of Christ, who says, today, as yesterday, and even more than yesterday: come. Freedom reaches its supreme foundation: precisely that of oblation, of generosity, of sacrifice."<sup>102</sup>

The free oblation, which constitutes the intimate and most precious core of man's response to God who calls, finds its incomparable model, indeed its living root, in the most free oblation which Jesus Christ, the first of those called, made to the Father's will: "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me... Then I said, Lo, I have come to do your will, O God' "(*Heb 10:5,7*).

The creature who more than any other has lived the full truth of vocation is Mary the Virgin Mother, and she did so in intimate communion with Christ: no one has responded with a love greater than hers to the immense love of God.<sup>103</sup>

37. "At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions" (*Mk 10:22*). The rich young man in the Gospel who did not follow Jesus's call reminds us of the obstacles preventing or eliminating man's free response: material goods are not the only thing that can shut the human heart to the values of the Spirit and the radical demands of the Kingdom of God; certain social and cultural conditions of our day can also present many threats and can impose distorted and false visions about the true nature of vocation, making it difficult, if not impossible, to embrace or even to understand it.

Many people have such a general and confused idea of God that their religiosity becomes a religiosity without God, where God's will is seen as an immutable and unavoidable fate to which man has to bend and resign himself in a totally passive manner. But this is not the face of God which Jesus Christ came to reveal to us: God is truly a Father who with an eternal and prevenient love calls human beings and opens up with them a marvelous and permanent dialogue, inviting them, as his children, to share his own divine life. It is true

<sup>102</sup>*Message for the Fifth World Day for Priestly Vocations* (19 April 1968): *Insegnamenti VI* (1969), 134-135.

<sup>103</sup>*Cf. Propositio 5.*

that if human beings have an erroneous vision of God they cannot even recognize the truth about themselves, and thus they will be unable to perceive or live their vocation in its genuine value: vocation will be felt only as a crushing burden imposed upon them.

Certain distorted ideas regarding man, sometimes backed up by specious philosophical or "scientific" theories, also sometimes lead people to consider their own existence and freedom as totally determined and conditioned by external factors, of an educational, psychological, cultural or environmental type. In other cases, freedom is understood in terms of total autonomy, the sole and indisputable basis for personal choices, and effectively as self-affirmation at any cost. But these ways of thinking make it impossible to understand and live one's vocation as a free dialogue of love, which arises from the communication of God to man and ends in the sincere self-giving.

In the present context there is also a certain tendency to view the bond between human beings and God in an individualistic and self-centered way, as if God's call reached the individual by direct route, without in any way passing through the community. Its purpose is held to be the benefit, or the very salvation, of the individual called and not a total dedication to God in the service of the community. We thus find another very deep and at the same time subtle threat which makes it impossible to recognize and accept joyfully the ecclesial dimension which naturally marks every Christian vocation, and the priestly vocation in particular: as the Council reminds us, priestly ministry acquires its genuine meaning and attains to its fullest truth in serving and in fostering the growth of the Christian community and the common priesthood of the faithful.<sup>104</sup>

The cultural context which we have just recalled, and which affects Christians themselves and especially young people, helps us to understand the spread of the crisis of priestly vocations, a crisis that is rooted in and accompanied by even more radical crises of faith. The Synod Fathers made this very point when recognizing that the crisis of vocations to the priesthood has deep roots in the cultural environment and in the outlook and practical behavior of Christians.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup>Cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 10; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priest *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 12.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. *Propositio* 13.

Hence the urgent need that the Church's pastoral work in promoting vocations be aimed decisively and primarily towards restoring a "Christian mentality," one built on faith and sustained by it. More than ever, what is now needed is an evangelization which never tires of pointing to the true face of God, the Father who calls each one of us in Jesus Christ, and to the genuine meaning of human freedom as the principle driving force behind the responsible gift of oneself. Only thus will the indispensable foundations be laid, so that every vocation, including the priestly vocation, will be perceived for what it really is, loved in its beauty and lived out with total dedication and deep joy.

### **Content and methods of pastoral work for promoting vocations**

38. Certainly a vocation is a fathomless mystery involving the relationship established by God with human beings in their absolute uniqueness, a mystery perceived and heard as a call which awaits a response in the depths of one's conscience, which is "man's most secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."<sup>106</sup> But this does not eliminate the communitarian and in particular the ecclesial dimension of vocation. The Church is also truly present and at work in the vocation of every priest.

In her service to the priestly vocation and its development, that is, in the birth, discernment and care of each vocation, the Church can look for her model to Andrew, one of the first two disciples who set out to follow Jesus. Andrew himself told his brother what had happened to him: "We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ)" (*Jn* 1:41). His account of this "discovery" opened the way to a meeting: "*He brought him to Jesus*" (*Jn* 1:42). There can be no doubt about the absolutely free initiative nor about the sovereign decision of Jesus. It is Jesus who calls Simon and gives him a new name: "Jesus looked at him, and said, 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)" (*Jn* 1:42). But Andrew also acted with initiative: he arranged his brother's meeting with Jesus.

"*He brought him to Jesus.*" In a way, this is the heart of all the Church's pastoral work on behalf of vocations, in which she cares for the birth and growth of vocations, making use of the gifts and

<sup>106</sup>SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.

responsibilities, of the charisms and ministry she has received from Christ and his Spirit. The Church, as a priestly, prophetic and kingly people, is committed to foster and to serve the birth and maturing of priestly vocations through her prayer and sacramental life, by her proclamation of the Word and by education in the faith, by her example and witness of charity.

The Church, in her dignity and responsibility as a priestly people, possesses in prayer and in the celebration of the *Liturgy the essential and primary stages of her pastoral work for vocations*. Indeed, Christian prayer, nourished by the word of God, creates an ideal environment where each individual can discover the truth of his own being and the identity of the personal and unrepeatable life project which the Father entrusts to him. It is therefore necessary to educate boys and young men so that they will become faithful to prayer and meditation on God's word: in silence and listening, they will be able to perceive the Lord who is calling them to the priesthood, and be able to follow that call promptly and generously.

The Church should daily take up Jesus' persuasive and demanding invitation to "pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (*Mt 9:38*). Obedient to Christ's command, the Church first of all makes a humble profession of faith: in praying for vocations, conscious of her urgent need of them for her very life and mission, she acknowledges that they are a gift of God and, as such, must be asked for by a ceaseless and trusting prayer of petition. This prayer, the pivot of all pastoral work for vocations, is required not only of individuals but of entire ecclesial communities. There can be no doubt about the importance of individual initiatives of prayer, of special times set apart for such prayer, beginning with the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and of the explicit commitment of persons and groups particularly concerned with the problem of priestly vocations. Today the prayerful expectation of new vocations should become an ever more continual and widespread habit within the entire Christian community and in every one of its parts. Thus it will be possible to re-live the experience of the Apostles in the Upper Room who, in union with Mary, prayerfully awaited the outpouring of the Spirit (cf. *Ac 1:14*), who will not fail to raise up once again in the People of God "worthy ministers for the altar, ardent but gentle proclaimers of the Gospel."<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup>ROMAN MISSAL, Collect of the Mass for Vocations to Holy Orders.

In addition, the Liturgy, as the summit and source of the Church's existence<sup>108</sup> and in particular of all Christian prayer, plays an influential and indispensable role in the pastoral work of promoting vocations. The Liturgy is a living experience of God's gift and a great school for learning how to respond to his call. As such, every liturgical celebration, and especially the Eucharist, reveals to us the true face of God and grants us a share in the Paschal Mystery, in the "hour" for which Jesus came into the world and towards which he freely and willingly made his way in the obedience to the Father's call (cf. *Jn* 13:1). It shows us the Church as a priestly people and a community structured in the variety and complementarity of its charisms and vocations. The redemptive sacrifice of Christ, which the Church celebrates in mystery, accords a particular value to suffering endured in union with the Lord Jesus. The Synod Fathers invited us never to forget that "through the offering of sufferings, which are so frequent in human life, the Christian who is ill offers himself as a victim to God, in the image of Christ, who has consecrated himself for us all" (cf. *Jn* 17:19) and that "the offering of sufferings for this intention is a great help in fostering vocations."<sup>109</sup>

39. In carrying out her prophetic role, the Church feels herself irrevocably committed to the task of *proclaiming and witnessing to the Christian meaning of vocation*, or as we might say, to "the Gospel of vocation." Here too, she feels the urgency of the Apostle's exclamation: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (*1 Co* 9:16). This admonishment rings out especially for us who are pastors but, together with us, it touches all educators in the Church. Preaching and catechesis must always show their intrinsic vocational dimension: the word of God enlightens believers to appreciate life as a response to God's call and leads them to embrace in faith the gift of a personal vocation.

But all this, however important and even essential, is not enough: we need a "direct preaching on the mystery of vocation in the Church, on the value of the ministerial priesthood, on God's people's urgent need of it."<sup>110</sup> A properly structured catechesis, directed to all the members of the Church, in addition to dissipating doubts and

<sup>108</sup>Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

<sup>109</sup>*Propositio* 15.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

countering one-sided or distorted ideas about priestly ministry, will open believers' hearts to expect the gift and create favorable conditions for the birth of new vocations. The time has come to speak courageously about priestly life as a priceless gift and a splendid and privileged form of Christian living. Educators, and priests in particular, should not be afraid to set forth explicitly and forcefully the priestly vocation as a real possibility for those young people who demonstrate the necessary gifts and talents. There should be no fear that one is thereby conditioning them or limiting their freedom; quite the contrary, a clear invitation, made at the right time, can be decisive in eliciting from young people a free and genuine response. Besides, the history of the Church and that of many individual priests whose vocations blossomed at a young age bear ample witness to how providential the presence and conversation of a priest can be: not only in his words, but his very presence, a concrete and joyful witness which can raise questions and lead to decisions, even definitive ones.

40. As a kingly people, the Church sees herself rooted in and enlivened by "the law of the Spirit of life" (Ro 8:2), which is essentially the royal law of charity (cf. *Jm* 2:8) or the perfect law of freedom (cf. *Jm* 1:25). Therefore, the Church fulfills her mission when *she guides every member of the faithful to discover and live his or her own vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity.*

In carrying out her educational role, the Church aims with special concern at developing in children, adolescents and young men a desire and a will to follow Jesus Christ in a total and attractive way. This educational work, while addressed to the Christian community as such, must also be aimed at the individual person: indeed, God with his call reaches the heart of each individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple (cf. *1 Jn* 3:24), gives himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to embrace the gift entrusted to him as a completely unique person, and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him.

From this point of view, the pastoral work of promoting vocations to the priesthood will also be able to find expression in a firm and encouraging invitation to *spiritual direction*. It is necessary to rediscover the great tradition of personal spiritual guidance which has always brought great and precious fruit to the Church's life. In certain cases and under precise conditions this work can be assisted,

but not replaced, by forms of analysis or psychological help.<sup>111</sup> Children, adolescents and young men are invited to discover and appreciate the gift of spiritual direction, to look for it and experience it, and to ask for it with trusting insistence from those who are their educators in the faith. Priests, for their part, should be the first to devote time and energies to this work of education and personal spiritual guidance: they will never regret having neglected or put in second place so many other things which are themselves good and useful, if this proved necessary for them to be faithful to their ministry as cooperators of the Spirit in enlightening and guiding those who have been called.

The aim of education for a Christian is to attain the "stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ep 4:13) under the influence of the Spirit. This happens when, imitating and sharing Christ's charity, a person turns his entire life into an act of living service (cf. Jn 13:14-15), offering to God a spiritual worship acceptable to him (cf. Rm 12:1) and giving himself to his brothers and sisters. *The service of love is the fundamental meaning of every vocation*, and it finds a specific expression in the priestly vocation. Indeed, a priest is called to live out, as radically as possible, the pastoral charity of Jesus, the love of the Good Shepherd who "lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11).

Consequently, an authentic pastoral work on behalf of vocations will never tire of training boys, adolescents and young men to appreciate commitment, the meaning of free service, the value of sacrifice and unconditional self-giving. In this context it is easy to see the great value of forms of volunteer work, which so many young people are growing to appreciate. If volunteer work is inspired by the Gospel values, capable of training people to discern true needs, lived with dedication and faithfulness each day, open to the possibility of a total commitment in consecrated life and nourished in prayer, then it will make more readily able to sustain a life of disinterested and free commitment and will make the one involved in it more sensitive to the voice of God who may be calling him to the priesthood will make the one involved in it more sensitive to the voice of God who may be calling him to the priesthood. Unlike the rich young man, the person involved in volunteer work would be able to accept the invitation lovingly addressed to him by Jesus (cf. Mk 10:21); and he would be

<sup>111</sup>Cf. C.I.C., can. 220: "It is not lawful for anyone (...) to violate the right which each person has of defending his own privacy"; cf. can. 642.

able to accept it because his only wealth now consists in giving himself to others and in "losing" his life.

## **We are all responsible for priestly vocations**

41. The priestly vocation is a gift from God. It is undoubtedly a great good for the person who is its first recipient. But it is also a gift to the Church as a whole, a benefit to her life and mission. The Church, therefore, is called to safeguard this gift, to esteem it and love it. She is responsible for the birth and development of priestly vocations. Consequently, the pastoral work of promoting vocations has as its active agents, as its protagonists, the ecclesial community as such, in its various expressions: from the universal Church to the particular Church and, by analogy, from the particular Church to each of its parishes and to every part of the People of God.

There is an urgent need, especially nowadays, for a more widespread and deeply felt conviction that *all the members of the Church, without exception, have the grace and responsibility to look after vocations*. The Second Vatican Council was quite explicit in this regard: "The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives."<sup>112</sup> Only on the basis of this conviction will pastoral work on behalf of vocations be able to show its truly ecclesial aspect, develop a harmonious plan of action, and make use of specific agencies and appropriate instruments of communion and corresponsibility.

The first responsibility for the pastoral work of promoting priestly vocations lies with the *Bishop*,<sup>113</sup> who is called to be the first to exercise this responsibility, even though he can and must call upon many others to cooperate with him. As the father and friend of his presbyterate, it falls primarily to the Bishop to be concerned about "giving continuity" to the priestly charism and ministry, bringing it new forces by the laying on of hands. He will be actively concerned to ensure that the vocational dimension is always present in the whole range of ordinary pastoral work, and that it is fully integrated

<sup>112</sup>Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatum Totius*, 2.

<sup>113</sup>Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops *Christus Dominus* 15.



and practically identified with it. It is his duty to foster and coordinate various initiatives on behalf of vocations.<sup>114</sup>

The Bishop can rely above all on the cooperation of his presbyterate. All its priests are united to him and share his responsibility in seeking and fostering priestly vocations. Indeed, as the Council states, it is the priests' part as instructors of the people in the faith to see to it that each member of the faithful shall be led in the Holy Spirit to the full development of his own vocation."<sup>115</sup> "This duty belongs to the very nature of the priestly ministry which makes the priest share in the concern of the whole Church lest laborers should ever be wanting to the People of God here on earth."<sup>116</sup> The very life of priests, their unconditional dedication to God's flock, their witness of loving service to the Lord and to his Church – a witness marked by free acceptance of the Cross in the spirit of hope and Easter joy – their fraternal unity and zeal for the evangelization of the world are the first and most convincing factor in the growth of vocations.<sup>117</sup>

A very special responsibility falls upon the *Christian family*, which by virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony shares in its own unique way in the educational mission of the Church, Teacher and Mother. As the Synod Fathers wrote: "the Christian family, which is truly a 'domestic Church' (*Lumen Gentium*, 11), has always offered and continues to offer favorable conditions for the birth of vocations. Since the reality of the Christian family is endangered nowadays, much importance should be given to pastoral work on behalf of the family, in order that the families themselves, generously accepting the gift of human life, may be 'as it were, a first seminary' (*Optatam Totius*, 2) in which children can acquire from the beginning an awareness of piety and prayer and of love for the Church."<sup>118</sup> Following upon and in harmony with the work of parents and the family, is the *school*, which is called to live its identity as an "educating community," also by providing a correct understanding of the dimension of

<sup>114</sup>Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam Totius*, 2.

<sup>115</sup>Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 6.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup>Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam Totius*, 2.

<sup>118</sup>*Propositio* 14.

vocation as an innate and fundamental value of the human person. In this sense, if it is endowed with a Christian spirit (either by a significant presence of members of the Church in state schools, following the laws of each country, or above all in the case of the Catholic school), it can infuse "in the hearts of boys and young men a desire to do God's will in that state in life which is most suitable to each person, and never excluding the vocation to the priestly ministry."<sup>119</sup>

The *lay faithful* also, and particularly catechists, teachers, educators and youth ministers, each with his or her own resources and style, have great importance in the pastoral work of promoting priestly vocations: the more they inculcate a deep appreciation of young people's vocation and mission in the Church, the more they will be able to recognize the unique value of the priestly vocation and mission.

With regard to diocesan and parish communities, special appreciation and encouragement should be given to *groups which promote vocations*, whose members make an important contribution by prayer and sufferings offered up for priestly and religious vocations, as well as by moral and material support.

We should also remember the numerous *groups, movements and associations of lay faithful* whom the Holy spirit raises up and fosters in the Church with a view to more missionary Christian presence in the world. These various groupings of lay people are proving a particularly fertile field for the manifestation of vocations to consecrated life, and are truly environments in which vocations can be encouraged and can grow. Many young people, in and through these groupings, have heard the Lord's call to follow him along the path of priestly ministry<sup>120</sup> and have responded with a generosity that is reassuring. These groupings, therefore, are to be utilized well, so that in communion with the whole Church and for the sake of her growth they make their proper contribution to the development of the pastoral work of promoting vocations.

The various elements and members of the Church involved in the pastoral work of promoting vocations will make their work more

<sup>119</sup>Propositio 15.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. Propositio 16.

effective insofar as they stimulate the ecclesial community as such, starting with the parish, to sense that the problem of priestly vocations cannot in any way be delegated to some "official" group (priests in general and the priests working in the seminary in particular), for inasmuch as it is "a vital problem which lies at the very heart of the Church,"<sup>121</sup> it should be at the heart of the love which each Christian feels for the Church.

<sup>121</sup>Message for the 22nd World Day of Prayer for Priestly Vocations (13 April 1985), 1: AAS 77 (1985), 982.

## Message for the World Day of Peace\*

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*"If you want Peace,  
Reach out to the Poor"*

### **If you want peace..."**

1. What person of good will does not long for peace? Today, peace is universally recognized as one of the highest values to be sought and defended. And yet, as the specter of a deadly war between opposing ideological blocs fades away, grave local conflicts continue to engulf various parts of the world. In particular, everyone is aware of the situation in *Bosnia-Hercegovina*, where hostilities are daily claiming new victims, especially among the defenseless civil population, and causing enormous destruction to property and territory. Nothing seems able to halt the senseless violence of arms: neither the joint efforts to promote an effective truce, nor the humanitarian activity of the International Organizations, nor the chorus of appeals for peace which rise from the lands stained by the blood of battle. Sadly, the aberrant logic of war is prevailing over the repeated and authoritative calls for peace.

Our world also shows increasing evidence of *another grave threat to peace*: many individuals and indeed whole peoples are living

\*January 1, 1993.

today in conditions of extreme poverty. The gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations. *This is a problem which the conscience of humanity cannot ignore*, since the conditions in which a great number of people are living are an insult to their innate dignity and as a result are a threat to the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community.

The gravity of this situation is being felt in many countries of the world: in Europe as well as in Africa, Asia and America. In various regions the social and economic challenges which believers and all people of good will have to face are many. Poverty and destitution, social differences and injustices, some of them even legalized, fratricidal conflicts and oppressive regimes - all of these appeal to the conscience of whole peoples in every part of the world.

The recent Conference of Latin American Bishops, held in Santo Domingo in October, carefully examined the situation in Latin America, and while urgently calling on Christian to undertake the task of the *new evangelization* earnestly invited the faithful and all those committed to justice and righteousness to *serve the cause of man*, without failing to take into account any of his deepest needs. The Bishops spoke of the great mission which must draw together the efforts of everyone: defense of the dignity of the person, commitment to a fair distribution of resources, the harmonious and united promotion of a society in which everyone feels welcomed and loved. It is apparent to all that these are the *indispensable premises for building true peace*.

To say "peace" is really to speak of much more than the simple absence of war. It is to postulate a condition of authentic respect for the dignity and rights of every human being, a condition enabling him to achieve complete fulfillment. The exploitation of the weak and the existence of distressing pockets of poverty and social inequality constitute so many delays and obstacles to the establishment of stable conditions for an authentic peace.

Poverty and peace: at the beginning of the New Year, I would like to invite everyone to reflect together on the many different links between these two realities.

In particular, I would like to call attention to the threat to peace posed by poverty, especially when it becomes destitution. There are millions of men, women and children suffering every day from hunger, insecurity and emargination. These situations constitute a grave affront to human dignity and contribute to social instability.

### **The inhuman choice of war**

2. At the present time, there exists yet another situation which is a source of poverty and destitution: the situation caused by war between nations and by conflicts within a given country. In the face of the tragedies which have caused and are still causing bloodshed, especially for ethnic reasons, in various regions of the world, I feel the duty to recall what I said in my Message for the 1981 World Day of Peace, the theme of which was: "To serve peace, respect freedom." At that time, I emphasized that the indispensable premise for building true peace is respect for the freedom and rights of other individuals and groups. Peace is obtained by promoting free peoples in a world of freedom. The appeal I made then is still valid today: "Respect for the freedom of peoples and nations is an integral part of peace. Wars continue to break out and destruction has fallen upon peoples and whole cultures because the sovereignty of a people or a nation was not respected. Every continent has seen and suffered from wars and struggles caused by one nation's attempts to limit another's autonomy" (n.8).

I went on to say: "Without a willingness to respect the freedom of every people, nation and culture, and without a world-wide consensus on this subject, it will be difficult to create the conditions for peace... This presupposes a conscious public commitment on the part of each nation and its government to renounce claims and designs injurious to other nations. In other words, it presupposes a refusal to accept any doctrine of national or cultural supremacy" (*ibid.*, 9).

The consequences deriving from such a commitment are easy to see, also with regard to economic relations between States. To reject all temptations to secure economic dominance over other nations means to renounce a policy inspired by the prevailing criterion of profit, and to replace it with a policy guided by the criterion of solidarity towards all and especially towards the poorest.

## Poverty as a source of conflict

3. The number of people living in conditions of extreme poverty is enormous. I am thinking, for example, of the tragic situation in *certain countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. There exist vast groups, often whole sectors of the populations, which find themselves on the margins of civil life within their own countries. Among them is a growing number of children who in order to survive can rely on nobody except themselves. Such a situation is not only an affront to human dignity but also represents *a clear threat to peace*. A State, whatever its political organization or economic system, remains fragile and unstable if it does not give constant attention to its weakest members and if it fails to do everything possible to ensure that at least their primary needs are satisfied.

The poorest countries' *right to development* imposes upon the developed countries a clear duty to come to their aid. The Second Vatican Council said in this regard: "Everyone has the right to have a part of the earth's goods that is sufficient for each and his or her dependents... We are obliged to support the poor, and not just from our surplus" (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 69). The Church's admonition is clear, and it is a faithful echo of the voice of Christ: earthly goods are meant for the whole human family and cannot be reserved for the exclusive benefit of a few (cf. Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 31, and 37).

In the interest of the individual - and thus of peace - it is therefore urgently necessary to introduce into the mechanisms of the economy the necessary correctives which will enable those mechanisms to ensure a more just and equitable distribution of goods. By itself the rules of the market are not sufficient to accomplish this; society must accept its own responsibilities (cf. *ibid.*, 48). It must do so by increasing its efforts, which are often already considerable, to eliminate the causes of poverty and their tragic consequences. No country by itself can succeed in such an undertaking. For this very reason it is necessary to work together, with that solidarity demanded by a world which has become ever more interdependent. To allow situations of extreme poverty to persist is to create social conditions ever more exposed to threat of violence and conflict.

All individuals and social groups have a right to live in conditions which enable them to provide for personal and family needs and to

share in the life and progress of the local community. When this right is not recognized, it easily happens that the people concerned feel that they are victims of a structure which does not welcome them, and they react strongly. This is especially the case with young people, who, being, deprived of adequate education and employment opportunities, are most exposed to the risk of being marginalized and exploited. Everybody is aware of the world-wide problem of unemployment, especially among the young, with the consequent impoverishment of an ever greater number of individuals, and whole families. Moreover, unemployment is often the tragic result of the destruction of the economic infrastructure of a country affected by was or internal conflicts.

Here I would like to mention briefly a number of particularly disturbing problems which beset the poor and hence threaten peace.

First of all, there is the problem of foreign debt, which for some countries, and within them for the less well-off social strata, continues to be an intolerable burden, despite efforts made to lighten it by the international community, governments and financial institutions. Is it not the poorest groups in these countries which often have to bear the major burden of repayment? Such an unjust situation can open the door to growing resentment, to a sense of frustration and even desperation. In many cases the governments themselves share the widespread discomfort of their people, and this influences relations with other States. Perhaps the time has come to *re-examine the problem of foreign debt and to give it the priority which it deserves*. The conditions for total or partial repayment need to be reviewed, with an effort to find definitive solutions capable of fully absorbing the burdensome social consequences of adjustment programmes. Furthermore it will be necessary to act on the causes of indebtedness, by making the granting of aid conditional upon concrete commitments on the part of governments to reduce excessive or unnecessary expenditures - here one thinks particularly of expenditures on arms - and to guarantee that subsidies do in fact reach the needy.

Another grave problem is *drugs*. Sadly and tragically, everyone knows of their connection with violence and crime. Similarly, everyone knows that in some parts of the world, because of pressure from drug traffickers, it is precisely the very poor who cultivate the plants for drug-production. The lavish profits promised - which in fact represent



only a tiny part of the profits deriving from this cultivation - are a temptation difficult to resist by those who gain a markedly insufficient income from the production of traditional crops. The first thing to be done in order to help growers to overcome this situation is therefore to offer them adequate means to escape from their poverty.

A further problem stems from the situations of grave economic difficulty in some countries. These situations encourage *mass migrations* to more fortunate countries, in which there then arise tensions which disturb the social order. In order to respond to such reactions of xenophobic violence, it is not enough simply to have recourse to provisional emergency measures. Rather, what is needed is to tackle the causes, by promoting through new forms of international solidarity the progress and development of the countries from which the migrant movements originate.

*Destitution* therefore is a hidden but real threat to peace. By impairing human dignity, it constitutes a serious attack on the value of life and strikes at the heart of the peaceful development of society.

### **Poverty as a result of conflict**

4. In recent years we have witnessed on almost every continent local wars and internal conflicts of savage intensity. Ethnic, tribal and racial violence has destroyed human lives, divided communities that previously lived together in peace and left in its wake anguish and feelings of heated. Recourse to violence, in fact, aggravates existing tensions and creates new ones. *Nothing is resolved by war; on the contrary, everything is placed in jeopardy by war.* The results of this scourge are the suffering and death of innumerable individuals, the disintegration of human relations and the irreparable loss of an immense artistic and environmental patrimony. War worsens the sufferings of the poor; indeed, it creates new poor by destroying means of subsistence, homes, and property, and by eating away at the very fabric of the social environment. Young people see their hopes for the future shattered and too often, as victims, they become irresponsible agents of conflict. Women, children, the elderly, the sick and the wounded are forced to flee and become refugees who have no possessions beyond what they can carry with them. Helpless and defenseless, they seek refuge in other countries or regions often as poor and turbulent as their own.

While acknowledging that the international and humanitarian organizations are doing much to alleviate the tragic fate of the victims of violence, I feel it is my duty *to urge all people of good will to intensify their efforts*. In some instances, in fact, the future of refugees depends entirely on the generosity of people who take them in - people who are as poor, if not poorer, than they are. It is only through the concern and cooperation of the international community that satisfactory solutions will be found.

After so many unnecessary massacres, it is in the final analysis of fundamental importance to recognize, once and for all, that *war never helps the human community*, that violence destroys and never builds up, that the wounds it causes remain long unhealed, and that as a result of conflicts the already grim conditions of the poor deteriorates still further, and new forms of poverty appear. The disturbing spectacle of tragedies caused by war is before the eyes of world public opinion. May the distressing pictures quite recently transmitted by the media at least serve as an effective warning to all - individual, societies and States - and remind everyone that money ought not to be used for war, nor for destroying and killing, but for defending the dignity of man, for improving his life and for building a truly open, free and harmonious society.

### **Spirit of poverty as a source of peace.**

5. In today's industrialized countries people are dominated by the frenzied race for possessing material goods. The consumer society makes the gap separating rich from poor even more obvious, and the uncontrolled search for a comfortable life risks blinding people to the needs of others. In order to promote the social, cultural, spiritual and also economic welfare of all members of society, it is therefore absolutely essential to stem the unrestrained consumption of earthly goods and to control the creation of artificial needs. *Moderation and simplicity ought to become the criteria of our daily lives*. The quantity of goods consumed by a tiny fraction of the world population produces a demand greater than available resources. A reduction of this demand constitutes a first step in alleviating poverty, provided that it is accompanied by effective measures to guarantee a fair distribution of the world's wealth.

In this regard, the Gospel invites believers not to accumulate the goods of this passing world: "Do not lay up for yourselves

treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (*Mt* 6:19-20). This is a duty intrinsic to the Christian vocation, no less than the duty of working to overcome poverty; and it is also a very effective means for succeeding in this task.

Evangelical poverty is very different from socio-economic poverty. While the latter has harsh and often tragic characteristics, since it is experienced as a form of coercion, evangelical poverty is chosen freely by the person who intend in this way to respond to Christ's admonition: "Whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (*Lk* 14:33).

Such evangelical poverty is the source of peace, since through it the individual can establish a proper relationship with God, *with other, and with creation*. The life of the person who puts himself in this situation thus witnesses to humanity's absolute dependence on God who loves all creatures, and material goods come to be recognized for what they are: a gift of God for the good of all.

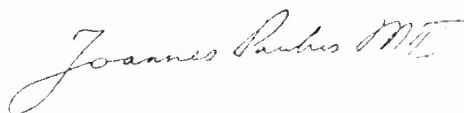
Evangelical poverty is something that transforms those who accept it. They cannot remain indifferent when faced with the suffering of the poor; indeed, they feel impelled to share actively with God his preferential love for them (cf. Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 42). Those who are poor in the Gospel sense are ready to sacrifice their resources and their own selves so that others may live. Their one desire is to live in peace with everyone, offering to others the gift of Jesus' peace (cf. *Jn* 14:27).

The Divine Master has taught us by his life and words the demanding features of this poverty which leads us to true freedom. He "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself, taking the form of servant" (*Ph* 2:6-7). He was born in poverty; as a child he was forced to go into exile with his family in order to escape the cruelty of Herod; he lived as one who had "nowhere to lay his head" (*Mt* 8:20). He was denigrated as a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (*Mt* 11:19) and suffered the death reserved for criminals. He called the poor blessed and assured them that the Kingdom of God belonged to them (cf. *Lk* 6:20). He reminded the rich that the snare of wealth stifles God's words (cf. *Mt* 13:22), and that it is difficult for them to enter the Kingdom of God (cf. *Mt* 10:25).

Christ's example, no less than his words, is normative for Christians. We know that, at the Last Judgment, we shall all be judged, without distinction, on our practical love of our brothers and sisters. Indeed, it will be in the practical love they have shown that, on that day, many will discover that they have in fact met Christ, although without having known him before in an explicit way (cf. *Mt* 25:35-37).

"If you want peace, reach out to the poor!" May rich and poor recognize that they are brothers and sisters; may they share what they have with one another as children of the one God who loves everyone, who wills the good of everyone, and who offers to everyone the gift of peace!

From the Vatican, 8 December 1992

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Johannes Paulus II". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the center of the page.

## Message for Lent 1993

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*I thirst" (Jn 19:28)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. In the holy season of Lent, the Church sets out once again on the path leading to Easter. With Jesus as her guide, and walking in his footsteps, she invites us to cross the desert.

The history of salvation has given the desert a profound religious meaning. Under the leadership of Moses and later, enlightened by other Prophets, the Chosen People were able, amid privations and sufferings, to experience God's faithful presence and his mercy. They fed upon the bread which came down from heaven and quenched their thirst with the water which sprang from the rock. The people of God grew in faith and in hope for the coming of the Messiah who would redeem them.

It was also in the desert that John the Baptist preached, and the crowds came to him in order to receive in the waters of the Jordan the baptism of repentance. The desert was the place for a conversion aimed at welcoming the One who comes to triumph over the sorrow and death which are the wages of sin. Jesus, the Messiah of the poor whom he fills with good things (cf. *Lk* 1:53), began his mission by becoming like those who are hungry and thirsty in the desert.

Dear brothers and sisters, I invite you during this Lent to meditate upon the word of life which Christ left to his Church in order to enlighten the journey of each of her members. Recognize the voice of Jesus who speaks to you, especially during this Lenten season, in the Gospel, in the liturgical celebrations, in the exhortations of your pastors. Listen to the voice of Jesus who, tired and thirsty, says to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well: "Give me a drink" (*Jn* 4:7). Look upon Jesus nailed to the Cross, dying, and listen to his faint voice: "I thirst" (*Jn* 19:28). Today, Christ repeats his request and relives the torments of his Passion in the poorest of our brothers and sisters.

By inviting us through the discipline of Lent to tread the paths of love and hope marked out by Christ, the Church makes us realize that the Christian life involves detachment from superfluous goods, and the acceptance of a poverty which sets us free, and enables us to discover God's presence and to welcome our brothers and sisters with an ever more active solidarity and in an ever wider fellowship.

Call to mind, then, the Lord's words: "Whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (*Mt* 10:42). Take to heart and find hope in these other words: "Come, blessed of my Father,... for I was thirsty and you gave me to drink" (*Mt* 25:34-35).

2. During Lent of 1993, in order to practice in a concrete way the solidarity and fraternal charity associated with the spiritual quest of this special season of the year, I ask the members of the Church to remember particularly the men and women suffering from the tragic desertification of their lands, and those who in too many parts of the world are lacking that basic yet vital good which is water.

Today we are concerned to see the desert expanding to lands which only yesterday were prosperous and fertile. We cannot forget that in many cases man himself has been the cause of the barrenness of lands which have become desert, just as he has caused the pollution of formerly clean waters. When people do not respect the goods of the earth, when they abuse them, they act unjustly, even criminally, because for many of their brothers and sisters their actions result in poverty and death.

We are deeply worried to see that entire peoples, millions of human beings, have been reduced to destitution and are suffering

from hunger and disease because they lack drinking water. In fact, hunger and many diseases are closely linked to drought and water pollution. In places where rain is rare or the sources of water dry up, life becomes more fragile; it fades away to the point of disappearing. Immense areas of Africa are experiencing this scourge, but it is also present in certain areas of Latin America and Australia.

Furthermore, it is quite clear to everyone that uncontrolled industrial development and the use of technologies which disrupt the balance of nature have caused serious damage to the environment and caused grave disasters. We are running the risk of leaving as our heritage to future generations the tragedy of thirst and desertification in many parts of the world.

I earnestly invite you to give generous support to the institutions, organizations and social agencies which are trying to help peoples suffering from shortages of drought and experiencing the difficulties of increasing desertification. I likewise urge you to cooperate with those engaged in scientific analysis of all the causes of desertification and in the quest for solutions to this problem.

May the active generosity of the sons and daughters of the Church, and of all men and women of good will, hasten the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah: "For water shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water" (*Is* 35:6-7)!

With all my heart I bless you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

From the Vatican, September 18th 1992

*Joannes Paulus PP II*

## Work is Truly Universal\*

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Joseph Card. Ratzinger

### 1. The significance of the Holy Father's approval ceremony.

On Thursday morning, 25 June 1992, the Holy Father met with the Members of the Commission and the Editorial Committee of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to express officially his approval of the Catechism text.

A draft (the ninth) of this Catechism was approved unanimously by the Catechism Commission last February, more precisely, on 14 February, the feast of the co-patrons of Europe, Cyril and Methodius, whom the Holy Father called in the Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*, "true models for catechists" (*Slavorum Apostoli*, n. 20). This Commission had been appointed by the Holy Father in 1986, following the request made by the 1985 Synod of Bishops that a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine be prepared.

The draft approved by the Commission was presented last March to the Holy Father for his judgment. After carefully examining it he made some observations on how to improve the formulation of certain sections.

\*On 26 June 1992, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, held a press conference in which he explained the significance of the new Catechism of the Catholic Church and of the approval ceremony which was celebrated on 25 June by the Holy Father. This is a summary of the Cardinal's Italian address as it appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 1 July 1992.



After these directions were received and implemented, the definitive text (the 10th draft since the beginning!) was prepared. It was completed on 30 April 1992, the feast of St. Pius V, the Pope of the so-called "Roman Tridentine Catechism," and given again to the Holy Father for his final judgment.

The simple but important ceremony attests to the special mission of *sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum* which the Pope also fulfills through this Catechism.

In his address the Holy Father thanks everyone who assisted in this difficult undertaking, pointing out that the content of the Catechism, "well organized and corresponding to the directives of the Synod Fathers, faithfully reflect the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and is addressed to the people of today, offering them the integral and complete Christian message. Because to its features and quality, it will provide a sure 'point of reference' in the preparation of national and diocesan catechisms, whose intermediary role must be considered indispensable.

The Pope then returned the text to the member of the Commission so that they might begin translating it into the principal modern languages and printing it. The Pope intends to hold a solemn publication ceremony for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* at a time which he himself hopes is "not too distant."

For the work of translating and printing the text the Catechism Commission has already sought the assistance of the Episcopal Conferences through a "Publication Commission" headed by Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, Secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See.

As you can understand, it will take several months to do the translating and printing. The job of translation is especially long and demanding, since the text has over 450 pages and its doctrinal content requires the greatest fidelity and precision.

During this period, until the official publication of the text in several modern languages, its contents naturally remain *sub secreto*.

## **2. Some features of the text**

Now I would like to point out some features of the text approved by the Holy Father. I would also mention that our meeting does not

concern the content of the Catechism, which remains secret until the text is published. Our discussion concerns rather the nature of the catechism approved by the holy Father, the iter of this preparation and its features.

a) First of all, it is a *catechism*, i.e. a text which contains the essential and basic truths of Catholic faith and morals, formulated in the most complete, clear and concise way possible.

More precisely it belongs to that literary genre of the so-called *catechismus major*, i.e., that tool used above all by those who have responsibility for giving catechesis in the name of the Church: Bishops, parish priests, catechist, editors of catechisms.

b) Thus, this *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is set up as a “point of reference” for national and diocesan catechisms, which belong to the literary genre of the *catechismus minor* and are particularly concerned with proclaiming the one Christian truth to the various categories of those receiving catechesis (children on the primary and elementary levels, teenager, young people, adults and the elderly), in their own psychological and pedagogical context, and in their own socio-cultural, professional and ecclesial surroundings.

This *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, therefore, does not at all intend to exclude, replace or eliminate local catechisms, either those already in use or those which will be. Rather, it necessarily requires their intermediary role, and it needs them in order to achieve its own purpose and to express fully its own features. It looks to them for pedagogical and methodological direction.

c) Therefore, the *intended recipients* of this Catechism are first and foremost the Bishops, insofar as they are primarily and authoritatively responsible for the integral and complete proclamation of God’s word. After them come the editors of catechism, who have the difficult task of presenting in a contemporary manner and in their own surrounding the one Christian truth.

d) The name given to this catechism *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, clearly expresses the ecclesial nature which in many ways characterizes the text:

– it is “of the Catholic Church”, in the sense that it draws abundantly on the Tradition of both the Eastern and Western Church, and is addressed to all the universal Church, particularly to her Bishops;

– it can certainly be said that the Church's diverse elements have shared in its preparations: it was suggested by a Synod of Bishops, desired by the Holy Father, edited by Bishops, the fruit of the entire Episcopate's consultation, completed with the contribution of numerous experts (exegetes, dogmatic and moral theologians, liturgists, catechists, pastoral experts,...), and it was finally approved by the Holy Father, who followed all the phases of the work carefully and continually. In fact, he spoke many times at the collegial meetings, examined the various main drafts and offered observations and suggestions.

– In particular, this Catechism really benefited significantly from the consultation of all the Catholic Bishops.

From the responses received (about 1000, with over 24,000 amendments-remarks made on individual sections), both the need and the urgency of a single catechetical text for the whole Church became apparent, as I have already said on other occasions, one which could serve as a reference for preparing other local catechisms. There was an exceptional abundance of very valuable suggestions.

– The contents of the Catechism faithfully reflect what the Church believes (Part I), celebrates (Part II), lives (Part III) and prays (Part IV).

The faithful have the right to be able to receive the integral and complete message of the Christian faith.

The *short summaries* – concise statements which summarize in a simple and succinct form the more important topics – are *the Church's memory*: by repeating the biblical, liturgical, patristic and magisterial text they try to present the doctrinal core of the faith, thus marking the memorization of its contents easier and encouraging an assured, common language of faith.

### 3. The need and urgency of a catechism for today

In a world marked by "subjectivism," by the fragmentation of different messages; in a world in which realities such as God, the Church, man... seem to be losing their meaning and relevance, on many sides and in many ways a message of Truth is sought which can save the human person and his world, which can instill hope in the stormy course of human history, which can offer an anchor of salvation when various human certitudes are dashed.

There is an ever greater demand for a proclamation of the Christian message which is simple and concise, calm and joyful, purposeful and demanding, all at the same time. A proclamation, which in presenting Christ who is "always the same" in every time and place, reveals to each person, in a unique and original way, the mystery of God the Father's Love, while at the same time revealing to man his own identity in its integral truth and newness.

The Catechism, taking into consideration all its limits and inadequacies, is meant to be a tool, a useful tool, to help quench that thirst for Truth and Certitude which even today bursts forth widely and insistently from the human heart.

## Papal Approval of the Universal Catechism

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*Msgr. Dexter H. Irisari*

John Paul II officially approved The Catechism of the Catholic Church at the Vatican on June 25 (1992). The final text of the new Catechism has now been translated and published.

The Holy Father said that the Catechism will be a valuable tool for the preparation of national and diocesan catechism for the instruction of children, young people and adults and, this, will assist the universal Church in her mission of evangelizing a world in need of the whole and complete Christian message. As he put it: "The present text, whose editing makes it exact, clear and concise, marvelously follows in the wake of the Church's Tradition: it expresses and realizes in a catechetical way the perennial vitality and abundant wealth of that Tradition. Its content, well organized and corresponding to the directives of the Synod Fathers, faithfully reflects the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and is addressed to people today, offering them the integral and complete Christian message. Because of its features and quality, it will be able to provide a sure "point of reference," in the preparation of national and diocesan catechisms, whose intermediary role must be considered indispensable."

The new Catechism was presented to the Pope by some of the Catechism Commission members like Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Joseph

Cardinal Tomko, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; William Cardinal Baum, major penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary; Archbishop Alberto Bovone secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Pope accepted the proposal made by the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops for "a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrines regarding both faith and morals, that it might be, as it were a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in the various regions" and on July 10, 1986 set up the Catechism Commission which represented the bishops of various continent and of the Roman Curia to prepare a draft of such catechism.

The final draft of the Catechism approved by the Holy Father was the 10th draft, said Cardinal Ratzinger, president of the Catechism Commission. The Pope held a solemn publication ceremony for the Catechism last December 8, 1992.

According to Cardinal Ratzinger these are the Catechism's nature, *iter* of its preparation and its features:

- It is a catechism, i.e., a text which contains the essential and basic truths of Catholic faith and morals formulated in the most complete, clear and concise way possible.

- It belongs to that literary genre of the so-called catechisms major, i.e., that tool used above all by those who have responsibility for giving catechesis in the name of the Church's bishops, parish priests, catechists, editors of catechisms.

- It is "of the Catholic Church" in the sense that it draws abundantly on the Tradition of both the Eastern and Western Church, and is addressed to all of the universal Church, particularly to her bishops.

- It can certainly be said that the Church's diverse elements have shared in its preparations: it was suggested by a Synod of Bishops, desired by the Holy Father, edited by bishops, the fruit of the entire Episcopate's consultation, completed with the contribution of numerous experts (exegetes, dogmatic and moral theologians, liturgists, catechists, pastoral experts), and it was

finally approved by the Holy Father, who followed all the phases of the work carefully and continually. In fact, he spoke many times at the collegial meetings, examined the various main drafts and offered observations and suggestions.

- In particular, the Catechism really benefited significantly from the consultation of all the Catholic bishops.

- The contents of the Catechism faithfully reflect what the Church believes (Part I), celebrates (Part II), lives (Part III), and prays (Part IV).

- The short summaries are the Church's memory: by repeating the biblical, liturgical, patristic and magisterial texts they try to present the doctrinal core of the faith, thus making the memorization of its contents easier and encouraging an assured, common language of faith.

Cardinal Ratzinger spoke on the need and urgency of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* at a press conference thus: "In a world marked by 'subjectivism, by the fragmentation of different messages; in a world in which realities such as God, the Church, man... seem to be losing their meaning and relevance, on many sides and in many ways a message of Truth is sought which can save the human person and his world, which can instill hope in the stormy course of human history, which can offer an anchor of salvation when various human certitudes are dashed.'

"There is an ever greater demand for a proclamation of the Christian message which is simple and concise, calm and joyful, purposeful and demanding, all at the same time. A proclamation, which in presenting Christ who is 'always the same' in every time and place, reveals to each person, in a unique and original way, the mystery of God the Father's Love, while at the same time revealing to man his own identity in its integral truth and newness.

"The Catechism, taking into consideration all its limits and inadequacies is meant to be a tool, a useful tool, to help quench that thirst for Truth and Certitude which even today bursts forth widely and insistently from the human heart."

Other Catechism Commission members are Cardinals Bernard Law, D. Simon Lourdasamy, Antonio Innocenti; Archbishops Jan

Schotte, Jerezy Stroba, Felipe Santiago, Benitez Avalos, Guy Paul Noujeim, Isidore de Suoza and Henry Sebastian D'Souza. Editorial Committee members are Archbishops Jose Estepa Llaurens, Jean Honore, Alessandro Maggiolini, Jorge Medina Estevez, David Konstant, Estanislao Karlik, William Levada, and Fr. Jean Corbon. The Secretariat is comprised by Archbishop Alberto Bovone, Bishop Christopher Schonborn, Msgr. Rafaello Martinelli, Miss Ana Fernandez.



## Catechesis: Some Historical Perspectives

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Roman Carter, O.P.

Possibly the earliest and certainly the most central text in scripture that can be dubbed "catechetical" is Deuteronomy 17:18-21. It reads in the Jerusalem Bible;

*"Let these words of mine [probably all 613 commands of the Pentateuch] remain in your heart and in your soul; fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a circlet. Teach them to your children and say them over to them, whether at rest in your house or walking abroad, at your lying down or at your rising. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that you and your children may live long in the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers he would give them for as long as there is a sky above the earth."*

The haunting quality of these words puts them clearly into a tradition. But that tradition is hard to pinpoint as regards its historic origin. Perhaps the Deuteronomic "mental atmosphere" became an Israelite "breathing space" as early as 721 B.C. more likely between then and the end of the sixth century of pre-Christian time. What is certain is that the psychology of religion involved, like that of all good catechesis, stresses the concrete more than the abstract and is more emotive than cerebral.

Catechesis always springs forth from and returns to oral teaching of a direct and personalist sort. But the apparatus of catechesis, what we "teach (our) children and say ... over to them" inevitably becomes literature so that its utility can be more extensive. Turning to the New Testament, again and again in Pauline, Johannine, Petrine and Jacobine epistolary writing we find traces of what must have been catechesis.

The problem of what to teach converts and how to form Christian children is taken up more explicitly in late first century subapostolic writing like the *Didache* and the *Letters of Barnabas*. These throw clearer light on both method and content, not always with the happiest results. For inherent in all catechetical writing is the tendency to reduce the saving truth to fact, mystery to proposition and the global or synthetic to the particular too finely analyzed. As early as the late first century of Christian times we find a predominance of moral over dogmatic teaching, of moralizing over speculating but this is still a tendency resisted by prominences given to the Resurrection and the Eucharist. So we can note this "moral tone" is more significant than truly conclusive.

The catalog of subsequent teachers after these very early periods is immense. Some leading lights are noteworthy, namely: St. Polycarp (ca 65 - ca 155) and his spiritual heir, St. Irenaeus (ca 130 - ca 200) both of whom continued the Johannine tradition and a whole series of second and third century "apologists" such as St. Justin Martyr, St. Athenagoras, St. Theophilus of Antioch and many more who generally take commandments and virtues as strong jumping off points.

The lofty minded Origen, the profound Clement of Alexandria and the somewhat more pragmatic but invaluable St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the East and the great Western doctors Saints Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo vie with more elusive and less reliable writers like the earthy Theodore of Mopsuestia in the next era. More and more Christian teaching is creed and commandment based upon the fluency, narrative colorfulness and time honored (and honoring) aptness of scripture but never its sheer disuse as in some subsequent, much later developments.

St. Gregory the Great was the practical genius who rounded off the patristic period. He died in 604. His strong moral stance and inquisitive methodology gave much to the age that followed.

For in the "Dark Ages" the Apostles of England and Germany, St. Augustine and St. Boniface, like many other monastic evangelizers of the North and East of Europe, will craftily wield catechesis as a missionary tool. For them and their successors the catechist is by no means envisioned as a lone and lonely cleric. Parents, rulers and courtiers are meant to join the ranks of bishops, monks and other scholarly ecclesiastics in the humble work of inculcating truth to pagans and forming new Christians. Sometimes their systems fell down when things were seen too numerically (three of this, seven of that, twelve of something else) and there was an increasing tendency to forget rich scriptural mysteries and substitute bland rote "facts." Nonetheless, the truths of faith and the basic rules of Christian conduct were never completely forgotten in Western society largely thanks to ongoing popular catechesis.

With the rise of the friars' movement and the prestige of both Franciscans and Dominicans in the new Universities of the thirteenth century a switch of emphasis from history and narrative to logic and structure penetrates the world of catechesis. This will lead to a dangerous "objectivization" of the faith and a certain loss of color as well as depth in its exposition.

Martin Luther, in time, will devise a "creed, code, cult" division with overemphasis on "code" to the detriment of vitality and synthesis in a field of endeavor in which he otherwise excelled despite his doctrinal peculiarities (or, if you like, unhappy distortions). Catholics were so challenged both by the method and content of Luther's approach that they imitated the first while bitterly assailing the second. The great leader in all this was the tireless Jesuit, St. Peter Conisius (1521-1597), who from 1555 to his death produced hundreds of editions of various works great and small and set a definite tone for future work. The final result of the upheaval caused by Protestant catechetics for Catholics was the *Roman Catechism* as ordered by the Council of Trent and published in 1566 under St. Pius V and again in 1583 under Gregory XIII. This manual was meant for priest-catechists. It is very Christocentric and requires much subtle correlation of teaching dogmatic and moral to be an effective instrument.

Because some found the official *Roman Catechism* rather unwieldy other publications appeared especially in the French-

speaking world where St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, the Sulpicians and the early La Salle Brothers were among the catechetical leaders. In English the popular "Penny" and "Baltimore" catechisms were largely in line with these French efforts. Spanish and Italian catechisms and the methods of using them deserve study too. It fell the lot of German Catholics to lead a renewal in new directions including restored scriptural and liturgical emphases. We must mention, at least in passing, the immense influence of the exemplary work of the Jesuits, Joseph Deharbe in the nineteenth century and Joseph A. Jungmann in the twentieth.

Our survey leaves out more than it states but we hope our readers appreciate the need at the present time for something new and different which will at once be solid and credible, something adaptable but in no way disruptive of real tradition. We believe that is what the Holy See has given us in its *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Like the Roman Catechism it is a manual for teachers rather than a textbook for students. Its contents represent a dynamic *tour de force* of Christian doctrine.

A rapid survey of the Spanish edition of the new book shows a wide and well-ordered range of topics. Part One on the profession of faith poses man, God, revelation and, in its second section, every article of the Creed. Part Two treats of the Sacraments in great detail. Part Three gives a Christian anthropology and the moral teaching of the Ten Commandments. Finally Part Four is on prayer and, after much general teaching of a very high caliber, takes the petitions and doxology of the Our Father one by one.

Who can use such a book? Any priest should be able to with great profit to his teaching. Any reasonably educated layman or lay woman and any professed religious can use it with, perhaps, a little technical help from a trained theologian. It is hardly bed-time reading or what school children need learn by heart. The teaching of this *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will require extensive cultural and linguistic adaptation before its contents can be made truly popular. But it is, as such, both up-to-date and well thought out and should, if all goes well, usher in a new era of catechesis in the long tradition of teaching with ups and downs but no evasion of central truths.

## **Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity**

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*Fr. Bonifacio Garcia Solis, O.P.*

A new document from the Holy See exclusively dedicated to the problem of refugees was made public last 2nd October 1992. Conjointly prepared by the Pontifical Council Cor Unum and for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People this document was, however, written at the explicit request of the Pope.

On the one hand, this is evidently not the first time that the Church has spoken on the subject. Papal interventions in this regard have, in fact, been frequent. We only have to recall the visit Pope John Paul II paid to the Vietnamese refugees in Morong (Bataan) on the 21st February 1981, when he said that "of all the human tragedies of our day, perhaps the greatest is that of refugees." Then there is his Discourse on 25 June 1982 addressed to the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees (Mr. Paul Hartling), on the occasion of the latter's visit to the Vatican, wherein the Pope speaks of the problem as "shameful wound of our time" (*vraiment une plaie honteuse de notre époque*), a phrase which the present document adopts as the title of its Presentation. Examples are legion.

On the other hand, as Archbishop Cheli says in his discourse to the press, this is the first time that a document of the Holy See treats the problem "exclusively" and with "an effort to systematize the question." On that occasion, Cardinal Etchegaray calls this phenomenon

a "wound which never ceases to expand", to put it relief that the problem is worsening. The document, therefore, aims "to stimulate international solidarity, not only with regards to the effects, but above all to the causes of the tragedy..." (Presentation). The Pope expressed the same idea to the UN High Commission in the above cited Discourse.

Some members will tell us the gravity of the problem: 17 million people qualify as "refugees"<sup>1</sup> according to the strict definition by international law: another 17 million can be classified under the term "displaced"<sup>2</sup> persons. In ex-Yugoslavia alone, there are 2,800.000 people who are either "refugees" or "displaced." And that number is growing everyday. Sadder still is the fact that most of the refugees are found in some of the poorest countries in the world (with the greatest concentration in the Horn of Africa) where there is either no government at all or the government is incapable of providing aid to these people.

The document is composed of four chapters, with a short Presentation and a brief Conclusion. The most salient point in Chapter I, "Refugees Yesterday and Today: A Worsening Problem", is the plea that de facto refugees (so-called "displaced" persons) be also considered as refugees... because they are victims of the same type of violence" (nn. 4 & 5).<sup>3</sup> This point is repeated in Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>A refugee is one who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it". Article 1, A.2 of the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 31 January 1967 of the UN. The p73 function, in fact, of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is confined within this definition. It must be added, however, that this strict definition has been broadened in later UN documents for humanitarian reasons.

<sup>2</sup>A displaced person is, according to this document of the Holy See, one who does not leave his own country and who, nevertheless, is forcibly uprooted from his home. Since he does not qualify as a refugee according to the UN definition, he is not protected by law.

<sup>3</sup>Allocutions and other Documents of the Holy Father seem much earlier to have already preceded this appeal. Cf., for instance, his Discourse in Morong (Bataan), where he identified the "refugees" as "displaced persons". In his cited Discourse to the UN High Commissioner, however, the use of the term "refugees" strictly adheres to the UN definition.

n. 21, in what could be the boldest declaration of this document: intervention of the international community to protect "displaced" persons in their own country is "legitimate" and "cannot be considered as a violation of national sovereignty" (italics ours). It should be noted that this is an official Vatican declaration on a question which is still so much discussed in international conferences and inside Ministries of Foreign Affairs, a proper to the problem in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Chapter II, "Challenges to the International Community," gives us two very relevant points among others, namely: first, "protection is not a simple concession made to the refugee: he is not an object of assistance, but rather of rights and duties"; and, second, a "no to force repatriation." The latter brings to mind the forced repatriation of Vietnamese refugees from Hongkong.

What does the Church offer to alleviate this "wound"? Chapter III, "The Way of solidarity," gives the response. Solidarity is a disposition of the heart which "helps to reverse the tendency to see the world from one's point of view: (n. 16), which "reveals the unacceptable fact that millions of refugees live in inhuman conditions" (n. 20), which "demands on the part of everyone the overcoming of selfishness and of fear of the other..." (n. 24). This last statement is like a sword driven right into the very heart of xenophobia which especially engulfs some Germans (the "Neo-Nazis", the "Skinheads") these days.

Caring for refugees and the displaced is no stranger to the Church's primary concerns, for it is an "essential word" of the Church, says the Pope in the already cited Discourse. Indeed, as Archbishop Cheli says, "before the modern states established international organizations for protection and assistance, the Church had already spoken and worked" in this field. In line with this undying tradition and to adjust it to the present day needs, Chapter IV, "The Love of the Church for the Refugees," outlines some concrete steps by means of which local Churches, parishes, religious institutes and charitable organizations can help to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees.

The Conclusion, "Solidarity is Necessary," clearly indicates the primacy of this virtue in this "century of refugees" (n. 2), for human

solidarity "is a source of hope for the real possibility of living together in fraternity and peace" (n. 37).

Mention might be added as to the gratitude the Church has for all those who work in favor of the refugees and the displaced. The document itself (nn. 18 & 19) and both Presidents of the Pontifical Councils involved in presenting the document to the press, did not fail to give a special tribute to all those who shared their wealth, time and effort on behalf of these people. This salute does not, however, mean that everything is perfectly in place. It is hoped that an "effective network can be organized to deal with emergencies and call immediate attention to the root causes that produce refugees" (n. 33). The coordination of all these efforts rest with the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*, under the President, Cardinal Etchegaray.

In what has been presented we have, fundamental guidelines and sources of inspiration for all those who are directly involved in organizations in favor of refugees and the displaced, for all who care about them in one way or another, for all who truly empathize with their sufferings and anguish. In brief, for all men of goodwill, and for Christian, in particular.



## **CBCP Press Release**

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The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines met for six days at Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay City, from January 20 through January 25.

They issued a pastoral letter on AIDS, a statement on kidnapping, a statement on our indigenous people, and a statement of peace proces in the Philippines.

They wrote a letter to President Ramos, asking him to certify House Bill 595, on the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities, as an administration bill. They issued the first draft of the national catechism on worship and the sacraments, and began the formation of a national pastoral plan to implement the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines.

Sixteen Bishops from the north of Luzon issued a joint pastoral letter on gambling.

Haydee Yorac, Commissioner of Election and Chairperson of the National Unification Commission, came out to Tagaytay with the Secretary of National Defense, General Renato de Villa, who is also a member of the N.U.C. They were invited by Bishop Fernando Capalla, of Iligan, who is the Vice-Chairman of N.U.C. They met with the Bishops for more than two hours.

Part III of the Catholic Faith Catechism of the Philippines was presented to the Catholic Bishops' Conference by Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, O.P., of Nueva Caceres. This is the work of E.C.C.C.E., the Episcopal Commission of Catechesis and Catholic Education. The task was begun nine years ago, with the formation of the national catechetical directory. The catechism implements this directory. The first volume was on the creed. The second volume was on the commandments. This third volume is on worship, on the sacraments, and on prayer.

Archbishop Legaspi stressed the fact that this is only the final draft, and that the work of integration remains to be done. The Philippine catechism is being completed almost simultaneously with the Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church. Both catechisms follow the same structure. The national catechism presents the Catholic faith in the light of our own Philippine culture.

The Bishops spent one full day studying the first draft of the National Pastoral Plan, which is designed to implement the Acts and Decreed of the Second Plenary Council. The final version of the pastoral plan will be presented to the Bishops for their approval when they meet, early in July. It will set the direction of the pastoral work of the Church in the Philippines for the next six years.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting met in Tagaytay, at the same time as the CBCP, but in a different Retreat House -- the retreat house of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Fifty-one of the Bishops attended their meeting, for a full afternoon. The PPCRV formed a statement of their Vision and Mission. The CBCP gave PPCRV recognition and encouragement and, wherever feasible, it can be represented in the Parish Pastoral Council as a distinct apostolate.

Mike Velarde of El Shaddai came to the meeting, upon the invitation of Bishop Ted Bacani, to orient the Bishops on the origins and activities of El Shaddai.

Senator Kit Tatad and his wife, Fenny, met the Bishops to introduce them to the "Save A Family Movement." Attorney Sabino Padilla Jr. briefed the Bishops on the laws which cover the taxation of Church property. General Raul Imperial of the Philippine National Police answered questions on peace and order, far into the night.

Experts from the Central Bank gave a vivid presentation of the foreign debt. And from Aachen in Germany came Father Lucien Schmitt, O.M.I., and Doctor Monika Pankoke-Schenk, who is the first woman in history to become the Secretary General of MISSIO. They discussed the present situation of Catholic funding agencies in Europe, who are now deeply concerned with Eastern Europe, as well as with Africa and Asia.

The annual meeting of the Bishops reflected a tremendous amount of serious study, and of hard work, being done all over the country. The least common denominator, in all the discussions was concern for the poor.

## A Pastoral Letter on AIDS

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### IN THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

*None of us lives for himself,  
and no one dies for oneself (Rm 14:7-8).  
If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it...  
You are Christ's body,  
an individually parts of it (1 Co 12:26-27).*

Our dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The words of St. Paul strongly remind us that we are responsible for one another. They reverberate in the declaration of Vatican II: The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the peoples of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well." (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: Pastoral Constitution on the Church of the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1). More recently the words are echoed by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines in its clarion call for solidarity (PCP-II Acts and Decrees, e.g. n. 295).

Today, the call for mutual caring and solidarity is more urgent than ever as we Filipinos face a threat of potentially more catastrophic proportions than volcanic eruption, floods, and conflicts. The name of this threat - the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) - or HIV-AIDS for short.

### **The AIDS Situation: A Pandemic**

First identified in 1981, the dread disease has swiftly spread in the space of less than ten years to every continent of the world. It is truly a pandemic, ravaging million of lives, the lives of those infected, of their families and other loved ones as well. It cuts across all geographical and cultural boundaries, all classes and ages, although the young generations are particularly hit.

While statistics from 1984 to October 1992 tell us that in the Philippines only 356 had been diagnosed as HIV infected, including 84 AIDS cases, health officials believe that the actual number is hidden behind fear of exposure and ostracism, stigma and shame.

AIDS is transmissible by exposure of HIV-infected blood through transfusions, administration of blood products, organ transplants from infected donors, use of unsterilized, HIV-contaminated needles and other equipment by drug users and in health care facilities. It can also be transmitted from an infected mother to her unborn child.

But the most common means of transmission is through promiscuous sexual behavior.

To date, no known vaccine or cure is available to combat the disease. Those who are infected with HIV will remain infected for life. Although they may live for many years without symptoms, they will eventually develop serious illnesses which will lead to death. The grim image of the Apocalypse come almost inexorable to mind: "I looked, and there was a pale green horse. Its rider was name Death" (*Rv* 6:8).

### **Moral Reflection and Response**

It is clear that the situation demands the pastoral care of the Church. For the Church must continue the mission of Jesus. In announcing the Good News of salvation, in healing the sick, in forgiving sinners, in being compassionate with the multitudes, Jesus showed what the Church must do. God's people must be at the side of those who suffer. Especially for the needy and the suffering of today, the Church must be the Compassion of Jesus.

Our ministry of compassion for the afflicted must overcome fears and prejudices. Jesus has shown us the way, through the manner in which he dealt with lepers, the ostracized and “untouchables” of his time. “Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched the leper, and said to him, ‘I do will it. Be made clean’” (*Mk* 1:41).

For us, an encounter with people infected with HIV-AIDS should be a moment of grace – an opportunity for us to be Christ’s compassionate presence to them as well as to experience His presence in them.

1. Our first attitude must be to serve and minister. Those who contract HIV-AIDS, whether by accident or by consequence of their own actions, carry with them a heavy burden: social stigmatization, ostracism, and condemnation. Let us reach out to them, welcome them, serve them, as Jesus did the sick of his time. To attend to their pain is to attend to the whole Mystical Body, to attend to Christ Himself who is the Head.

If there has been any moral responsibility, we must be ready to say, as Jesus to the sinner: “neither do I condemn you. Go, from now on do not sin anymore” (*Jn* 8:11).

2. To help stem the spread of this dread disease, we as a Church must collaborate with other social agencies in providing factual education about HIV-AIDS. So extensive is the popular ignorance about the disease as to encourage an irresponsible, cavalier and casual attitude to sexual relationships. An too many are the myths surrounding it as to prevent effective pastoral care for those afflicted.
3. Most of all, we need to recognize the moral dimension of the disease. Though medically the cause of the disease can be identified as a virus, our faith tells us that its cause and solution go beyond the physical.

We cannot ignore the possibility that through this pandemic the loving Lord may be calling us, his children, to profound renewal and conversion: “for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges” (*Heb* 12:6; cf. *1Co* 11:32; *Pr* 3:11-12). HIV-AIDS and other calamities that visit us are not necessarily the punishment of a loving and forgiving God for our personal or collective sins. But we know that Nature itself

has often its own unremitting laws of reward and retribution with regard to action we take, freely or not.

4. The moral dimension of the problem of HIV-AIDS urges us to take a sharply negative view of the condom-distribution approach to the problem.

We believe that this approach is simplistic and evasive. It leads to a false sense of complacency on the part of the State, creating an impression that an adequate solution has been arrived at. On the contrary, it simply evades and neglects the heart of the solution, namely, the formation of authentic sexual values.

Moreover, it seeks to escape the consequences of immoral behavior without intending to change the questionable behavior itself. The "safe-sex" proposal would be tantamount to condoning promiscuity and sexual permissiveness and to fostering indifference to the moral demand as long as negative social and pathological consequences can be avoided.

Furthermore, given the trend of the government's family planning program, we have a well-founded anxiety that the drive to promote the acceptability of condom use for the prevention of HIV-AIDS infection is part of the drive to promote the acceptability of condom use for contraception.

For the above reasons we strongly reprobate media advertisements that lure people with the idea of so called safe-sex, through condom-use. As in contraception, so also in preventing HIV-AIDS infection condom use is not a failsafe approach.

5. We cannot emphasize enough the necessity of holding on to our moral beliefs regarding love and human sexuality and faithfully putting them into practice. All these, in order to prevent the spread of the disease and to provide the foundations for effective and compassionate pastoral care of those afflicted.

Among these moral beliefs is the beauty, mystery and sacredness of God's gift of human love. It reflects the very love of God, faithful and life-giving. This marvelous gift is also a tremendous responsibility. For sexual love must be faithful, not promiscuous. It must be committed, open to life, life-long and not casual. This is why the full sexual expression of human love is reserved to husband and wife within marriage.

Monogamous fidelity and chastity within marriage – these are ethical demands, flowing from human love as gift and responsibility for the married.

As for all those who are not married, we will not cease enjoining fidelity to the same moral beliefs. Our secularistic era may scoff at them as old-fashioned. But modernity and its worldly values do not abolish the continuing validity of St. Paul's words – "Your life is hidden with Christ in God... Put to death then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry" (Col 3:3-5).

When one lives by faith, as all followers of Christ must, one is convinced that chastity and the refusal to engage in extra-marital sexual activity are the best protection against HIV-AIDS.

To our beloved Priest, Religious and other faithful who have committed themselves to a life of celibacy, we say "You are a sign for others that chastity lived for the Kingdom of God and a well integrated and ordered sexuality are not only possible but are actually being lived.

6. In the face of the rapidly spreading scourge of HIV-AIDS, we cannot overstate the need for a profound moral renewal of our people. This was the call of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines for the transformation of our society (PCP II Acts and Decrees, e.g., no. 32). This, too, is our call for the radical prevention of the HIV-AIDS disease. Nothing short of this can effectively respond to the deep-rooted moral cause of the problem. It is at depth a moral issue. We must not, therefore, forget the absolute imperative of moral renewal, while continuing to search for the medical solution.

## Conclusion

We invite all person of good will to be in solidarity with HIV-AIDS patients. They are our sisters and brothers. We see in their faces the suffering image of Jesus himself: What you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it to me (cf. Mt 25:40).

As we minister to the afflicted, we proclaim to all the infinite compassion of God and the redeeming passion and death of Christ, the Savior of all.



May our Blessed Virgin Mary who we invoke as Mother, "Health of the Sick" and "Comfort of the Afflicted" accompany us through this passion of modern times.

For and in the name of the  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of  
the Philippines,

(Sgd.) + Carmelo D.F. Morelos, D.D.  
President

Betania Retreat House  
Tagaytay City  
January 23, 1993.

## **1993 Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

On the occasion of the celebration of the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES proclaimed on December 10 of last year by the United Nations Organization, the Church of the Philippines wishes to reiterate its solidarity with the nation's indigenous cultural communities in their struggle to be recognized as distinct peoples - yet as Filipinos. These communities are found in the hinterlands of Mindanao and Luzon (the Cordilleras especially), in the island of Mindoro and parts of the Visayas.

Their cultures antedate the coming to our shores of Islam and Christianity and the establishment of the Philippine State.

In their world view, they look at themselves as one with the land, one with their ancestral domain. This domain includes burial sites, forests, rivers, pasture lands, not only fields and residential sites.

Basic to the notion of ancestral domain is the communal ownership of land, a system of land holding which is based on usufructuary rights. Working on the land not only establishes legal and spiritual relationships with it but also creates obligations which ensure the protection of the land for future generations.

Swidden farming, the common mode of agriculture among them, is often looked at as destructive and wasteful of land

resources. But when practiced with all its traditional safeguards, it actually is most conducive to ecological balance and sustainable development.

The Church deplores and condemns the present treatment by government and big business of the indigenous peoples in their disregard of the latter's rights to their ancestral domain. It borders at time on the dehumanizing.

Thus, the imposition without exception of the system of private ownership of land through the Torrens Title destroys their tradition of—and right to—communal ownership. It is a form of land-grabbing. So are the establishment of mines and geothermal plants, the building of dams, timber concessions, agri-business, in once forested areas. Under the guise of progress and development, their intrusion into the indigenous peoples' ancestral domain forcibly erodes their sacred traditions and cultures.

Their right to autonomy and self-determination within the sovereignty of the Philippine State must be honored. The Church hence deplores the inaction of Congress in passing adequate legislation (like House Bill no. 33881) that respects and protects this right.

The Church assures the indigenous peoples of the Philippines that in its evangelizing work among them it will strive to respect their cultures and traditions, learn from their values in regard to harmony with them for a form and mode of development that will preserve and enhance their human dignity and cultural identity (cf. PCP-II, *Acts and Decrees*, no. 379).

The Church, finally, urges legislators and development planners in drawing up policies and programs, to always keep in mind the promotion and protection of the interests of our indigenous peoples in the area of economic development, cultural preservation, and participation in political decisions.

For and in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

(Sgd.) +Carmelo D.F. Morelos, D.D.  
*Bishop of Butuan*  
*President, CBCP*

Tagaytay City, January 25, 1993.

## Pastoral Statement on Kidnapping

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The kidnapping of innocent persons is one of the most disturbing facts of the present times, and one that has done incalculable harm not only to individuals but to the whole country. Hardly a day passes by without news of some kidnapping. Victims vary – children, adults, Chinese, Filipinos, Americans, and now Spanish nationals, married people, religious priests, sisters or a brother. Places vary: urban and rural areas, crowded streets and beaches. The only unvarying element is the demand for ransom money in exchange for the safe return of the victims.

Sometimes kidnappings happen in broad daylight, in crowded places, in open defiance of the law enforcers who more often than not are exposed as incapable of retrieving safely the victims. Worse even, many people have lost their trust in the law enforcers who have been entrusted with the duty to protect them but who are suspected to be in connivance with the kidnappers.

We condemn unreservedly these kidnappings even as we sympathize with the victims and their families and beg the Lord to touch the hearts of the kidnappers.

We appeal to the kidnappers: “release your victims. Mend your ways. Kidnapping is a despicable crime, a violation of the human dignity of the victims, a traffic in human beings, robbery of the first

magnitude. It causes untold anguish to the victims and their families. It sabotages our economy and destabilizes society. You will pay dearly for this crime. You may evade the police but not the justice of God. 'Vengeance is mine' (*Rm 12:19*), says the Lord. It will be terrible for you to fall into the hands of the living God (*Heb 10:31*).

We appeal to our government authorities to do all in their power to render our society safe from kidnapers and other disturbers of the peace. We ask for more effective enforcement of the law and a speedy execution of justice, especially in kidnapping cases. We ask for the full protection of witnesses so that they may not fear to come forward. We also ask that all efforts be made to restore the confidence of the people in the integrity and capability of our law enforcers. To this end we ask that resolute action be done to weed out and prosecute those suspected of masterminding or protecting kidnapers.

We appeal to our law enforcers in the PNP and in the military: "Cleanse your ranks of kidnapper accomplices or masterminds and improve your own competence in dealing with kidnapers. No one can restore the confidence of the people in you if you do not do so yourselves."

We appeal to the different insurgent groups to exert their influence on member of their groups or of other armed groups in order to stop kidnappings and to obtain the release of kidnap victims. Such action will certainly contribute to the atmosphere of trust necessary for peace-building.

And we appeal to you, our fellow citizens. Immediately report any kidnappings you may know of and any details which can lead to the speedy arrest and conviction of kidnapers. By common action with others, express your indignation against all kidnappings. And pray that our society will be cleansed of this scourge. Kidnapers are the instruments of evil powers greater than themselves which can be overcome only by prayer and penance.

While we sympathize with the victims of kidnapers and with their families, we wish to point out that the payment of ransom encourages further kidnappings.

Let us implore our Almighty Father who loves us to save from harm all His children and to mete out justice to all kidnapers.

May Mary Help of Christians obtain from her Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, solace and hope for the families of kidnapping victims and the grace of security and peace for all of us.

For and in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

(Sgd.) Carmelo D.F. Morelos, D.D.  
*Bishop of Butuan*  
*President, CBCP*

Tagaytay City, January 25, 1993.

## **Pastoral Statement on Peace-Building**

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**Dearly beloved countrymen:**

**Peace be with you all!**

We are fully aware that as we wish you peace, there is no peace in our land. That is why we pray for this peace upon you and upon us all.

Even as we write to you the armed conflict between the government and insurgent groups continues. Political factions and feuding families engage in their own wars of attrition. Added to this are the almost daily reports of kidnappings for ransom, and crimes of unimaginable cruelty. The words of the prophet Jeremiah ring true today: "We wait for peace, to no avail; for a time of healing, but terror comes instead." (*Jr* 14:19).

But some bright rays of hope have shown on the horizon. The National Unification Commission established by the President of the Republic has succeeded in making contacts of varying degrees with different rebel groups.

We express our whole-hearted support for the work and impartiality of this commission.

We now feel there is real hope for the cessation of hostilities at least in some fronts.

We must nurture this hope. We must decide for peace, work for peace together as Filipinos.

In a way we have no other choice but this if we want to survive as a nation and progress as a people. Either peace, or we perish.

For without peace we cannot remain as one. Without peace we will continue to be left behind by our neighbors who are making giant strides on the way to economic progress. Peace is the most important element of the common good, which is the good of each one and of all.

Because of this, peace must also be the work of all. No one is exempted from making peace. Each one and all together must be peace-makers.

The peace we must work for is not only the cessation of armed conflict. The parties in the peace discussions being conducted by the National Unification Commission are convinced that even if the present protagonists were to stop fighting today, other armed conflicts would arise unless the more fundamental issues of poverty and injustice, the inequitable distribution of wealth, and the abuse of power, are addressed radically. Pope John Paul II is certainly correct when he tells us, "If you want peace, reach out to the poor" (*Message on the World Day of Prayer for Peace*, January 1, 1993).

Only all of us together can address these issues and the armed conflicts they spawn. Peace cannot be the work only of the conflicting parties but must be the work of all of us. In the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines we on our part directed the concrete implementation of the 10-point Agenda for Peace elaborated in our pastoral letter, "Seek Peace, Pursue It" (January, 1990).

But we ask you:

1. Let us singly or in assemblies make known clearly and loudly to the conflicting parties our collective desire that all armed conflicts should stop, and that negotiations for peace be carried out at the dialogue table. Let us shout: "No more armed conflicts! No more!"
2. Let all armed groups who have not done so yet come forward to the negotiating table with the sole motive of doing what is good for our own people and for peace, forgetting their own vested interests.
3. Let each person respect the right of every other human being be he employee or employer, worker or capitalist, tiller or



poor or rich, female or male, child or adult. Let none do to another what one would not want done to oneself.

4. Let everyone do his/her duty as a citizen and observe the just laws of the land from obeying traffic signals to paying correct taxes. Let each one ask, "What can I do for my country?"

5. Let everyone who is invited participate in the different provincial or regional consultations sponsored by the NUC in order to make known to the NUC and all conflicting parties the genuine mind of the people regarding the things that make for peace. We ask the convenors of these assemblies to make a special effort to obtain the participation of the voiceless and the powerless in our society. We pledge to do our share to make these assemblies real fora for knowing the people's mind and for achieving consensus.

6. Let all those who cannot participate directly in these assemblies make their opinions known either to the participants or to the NUC directly.

7. We ask all persons in authority and in government to create an ambience of peace by disinterested and competent service of the people's genuine interests, and to courageously resist those who work against the common good. Peace will go a long way if the government agencies simply carry out their duties with competence and honesty, and if government officials and personnel resist temptations to graft and corruption.

But most importantly, let us all pray for peace, singly in our hearts, and together in our homes, churches and public assemblies. Peace is God's gift to us even before it is our task. He wants to give it to us. We open our hearts to this gift of peace in prayer. Let us all pray for peace. A people at prayer will be a people at peace.

We must add to prayer acts of penance for peace especially during this coming Lenten season.

This prayer and acts of penance will be both a sign and an incentive of that fundamental turning to God without which there can be no peace. All human conflicts begin with the turning away from God in the hearts of persons. Peace begins with the turning to God in those same hearts. Hence, our Lord Jesus summons us, "The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good

News" (Mk 1:15)! *Repent: "magbalik-loob kayo sa Diyos at gawin ninyo ang kalooban ng Diyos!"* For in God's will is our peace.

We have the Lord's assurance: "...then if my people who bear my name humbled themselves, and pray and seek my presence and turn from their wicked ways, I myself will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and restore their land" (2 Ch 7:14).

May Jesus, the Prince of Peace, "give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, and ... guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk 1:79). May Mary, His Mother, Queen of Peace, obtain this most precious grace for us.

For and in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

(Sgd.) +Carmelo D.F. Morelos, D.D.  
*Bishop of Butuan*  
*President, CBCP*

Tagaytay City, January 25, 1993.

# **A Joint Pastoral Letter on Gambling**

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*Northern Luzon Bishops*

## **MAKE A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT**

**Beloved People of God in Northern Luzon:**

As a result of our pastoral reflection in Laoag City, from December 9-11, 1992, the exhortation of St. Paul comes to our mind: "Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them..." (Ep 5:11). And so, aware of our sacred duty as your Pastors to teach and instruct on matters of faith and morals, we write you this letter on an issue of grave importance.

The issue is rampant gambling in Northern Luzon, particularly in the form of *jueteng*.

As we listened to reports from various northern Luzon dioceses we came to realize more than ever before how widespread and insidious rampant gambling is in our northern region.

### **The Situation of Gambling in the North: A Social Cancer**

It is rampant not only in cities and big towns but also in the **barangays** and **sitios** of almost every province. Gambling agents are **everywhere**, at street corners, in front of school gates, near churches, **and in markets**. They go from house to house, from office to office.

People from all classes of society, from various professions, and the poorest of the poor contribute some of their income to the gambling

till, for a chance at winning. Even school children with their meager daily allowance for the day are not spared from the temptations of gambling. In many places the cycle of gambling is at least 3 times a day, everyday of the year.

Its operations are managed by powerful people whose profits are untaxed. It hires thousands whose earnings are a mere pittance, compared to the gargantuan illegal profits that the operators and maintainers get. It is the way of easy money. Its clientele are thousands upon thousands of citizens, most of them very poor people, who dream of a "pot of gold at the end of a rainbow."

Unprecedented in its frequency, widespread in its coverage, its profits are so incalculable. Popular estimates of gross income per day per province in our northern region runs into millions of pesos. Billions of pesos are lost every year by our people – and pocketed by gambling operators.

### **The Evils of Rampant Gambling**

The moral evil of such large-scale, systematic gambling is not simply because it is illegal. It is truly immoral under the circumstances that it operates and in the evil effects that it has spawned.

Today, gambling is, indeed, a social cancer, gradually and surely destroying a great many of our positive social and moral values. It is a social scourge that is debilitating even our moral sense, infecting us as a people.

Rampant gambling, particularly in its form of jueteng, has become a way of life for many. People no longer care or dare to condemn it because: a) no effective action against gambling has ever been taken by our political and police authorities, except through some token occasional raids against small-time gambling operators; and b) very powerful people operate gambling.

Yet, if we still have a modicum of moral sense, we have to be appalled by the callousness of big-time gambling operators, by the blatant openness with which they conduct their illegal operations, and by the shockingly huge amounts of money that are involved. 83

The truth is: The victims of gambling are the many thousands of credulous and generally poor people who risk their hard earned incomes to face odds that are heavily stacked against them. The

situation is even aggravated, according to popular belief, given the secrecy with which winning number are often determined.

The whole racket constitutes a systematic fleecing of the poor. Whether the victims are willing or not, the end result is the same – objective exploitation of the poor by the powerful. As in our economic system in general, so in jueteng: the rich, powerful and apparently untouchable operators get richer while the thousands of poor bettors get poorer. A situation which recalls the social evil condemned by the prophet Amos: “They trample the heads of the weak into the dust of the earth and they force the lowly out of the way” (*Am* 2:7).

For such social and moral evil to exist, can graft and corruption be far behind?

The popular belief has never been disproved that protection money is handed down in liberal proportions to police, military, and political officials. It is even said that the control and operation of gambling are in the hands of some politicians. If what many people say are true, and there seems to be no solid reason to disagree, then we have in the North a social plague of unrivaled scale.

The fact that gambling operation empty some thousands of people in the whole North has become an excuse for government officials not to abolish gambling. They stop searching for alternative and productive sources of employment.

Furthermore the popular belief remains that jueteng profits serve as bottomless “election war chests” from which unaccountable amount of money are freely withdrawn to support political candidacies. Again, whether true or not, such a belief among ordinary people points to the values that have grown out of the vice of gambling.

Through jueteng and other forms of rampant gambling, values are distorted. Hard work, rational reflection and planning that are trademarks of responsible human work are substituted by irresponsible risk-taking. Laziness is promoted while the dream of easy money becomes an obsession. The poor are exploited. Power and money are used to protect – as well as to enforce submission to – the system. The values of the Gospel and of the Kingdom of God are put aside for the sake of profit. So long have we complained about the disappearance of such values as industry, thrift, truth, honesty and integrity, and justice.

Such a terrible situation is hardly to be helped by casinos. In fact, casinos give even more occasions to lose more money. Businesses have collapsed because of casino gambling. Jobs have been lost. Families have been broken. And in some cases, deaths and suicides have resulted.

We must moreover open our eyes to the close connection between the poor values promoted by rampant gambling and the disvalues (or lack of values) in public and private lives, that have wreaked great havoc on our country. A liberal attitude towards rampant gambling is linked to a permissive attitude towards graft and corruption. Because we do not act against one social vice, we tend not to act on other vices as well.

### **Declarations Related to Gambling**

In the light of such a deplorable social situation we recall the strong words of the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel:

I will judge you... each one according to his ways, says the Lord... Cast away from you all the evils you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit... Return and live! (*Ez 18:30-32*).

Therefore, as Bishops of Northern Luzon, we jointly make the following string declarations:

1. We condemn all rampant gambling, especially in its form of jueteng, as destructive of the moral values of our people.
2. We urgently call upon our government officials to dismantle all gambling operations, including casinos.
3. We call for the immediate prosecution of all persons who operate illegal gambling, especially those that are known as big-time gambling operators.
4. We urge government officials to create and promote alternative sources of gainful employment for people displaced by dismantled gambling operations.
5. We call upon educational institutions, churches, and social agencies to institute moral renewal programs to repair the great damage done by rampant gambling on our moral values.

In the days of old, the prophets of God in Sacred Scriptures regularly called the people and their leaders to turn away from their evil paths and unto the way of the God. Today, we call the people of God to a way of renewal and conversion, of holiness and righteousness. "Live as children of the light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ep 5:9).

May everyone hear and heed this call to renewal. "Let us not grow tired of doing good..." (Ga 7:9). We call upon you, beloved sisters and brothers, to reflect, pray, and act together in solidarity to dismantle structures of death and build up structures of life.

May the strength, the power and love of the Lord be with us in this sacred crusade toward His kingdom of truth and justice, of peace and love.

Sgd. Edmundo M. Abaya, D.D.  
*Bishop of Laoag*

Sofio G. Balce, D.D.  
*Bishop of Cabanatuan*

Jesus E. Cabrera, D.D.  
*Bishop of Alaminos*

Carlito J. Cenzon, CICM, D.D.  
*Apostolic Vicar of Tabuk*

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Leo Drona, SDB, D.D.  
*Bishop of San Jose, N.E.*

Jesus C Galang, D.D.  
*Bishop of Urdaneta*

Brigido A. Galasgas, D.D.  
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*Bishop of San Fernando, L.U.*

Miguel C. Purugganan, D.D.  
*Bishop of Ilagan*

Orlando Quevedo, OMI, D.D.  
*Archbishop of Nueva Segovia*

Cesar Raval, SVD, D.D.  
*Former Bishop of Bangued*

James Risse, S.V.D.  
*Apostolic Administrator  
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Ernesto Salgado, D.D.  
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Diosdado A. Talamayan, D.D.  
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*Bishop of Bayombong*

Betania Retreat House  
Tagaytay City  
January 24, 1993

## Cases and Inquiries

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Excelso Garcia, O.P.

### Non-Catholic Professors and Catholic Schools

*I should like to know why in a certain Catholic school non-Catholic students are admitted while non-Catholic teachers or professors are rejected for posts. I knew recently that there was a vacancy in teaching History in the College in question, where I myself am teaching. Thus, I told a friend of mine, a non-Catholic, to apply for the position. He was qualified for the post with the corresponding degree. His application, however, was turned down and another professor, a Catholic, was admitted instead. I do not understand the reason for this discrimination. The well known saying or principle "first come first served" was not followed, the second application was honored while the first one was refused. Both applicants had the same qualifications for teaching History. In the case of students, however, all are admitted, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. There is no discrimination whatsoever, as long as they are qualified for admission and pay their tuition fee. In the case of professors the discrimination is obvious. Is it perhaps that the school administration (or some influential individuals) wanted to help the second applicant, due to his being a Catholic, (or perhaps a close friend), or is there another reason justifying the refusal of the non-Catholic applicant and the admission of the Catholic one?*

*A Catholic Professor*



I am glad to have this opportunity to clarify and explain the reason for the apparently discriminatory procedure mentioned by our consultant. I presume the data given by him are correct and no other facts are hidden or concealed.

In the case to be clarified there are three intimately connected problems to be borne in mind, namely: the real concept of a Catholic school, the basic difference between students and teachers or professors, and the guide lines to be followed by the administration of any Catholic school.

1. *Concept of a Catholic school.* For a school to be truly Catholic "it is necessary that all, the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks in every branch be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions as well." These are the words of Pope Pius XI in his famous Encyclical Letter on Catholic Education *Divini Illius Magistri* of December 31, 1929. And before Pius XI, the great Pope Leo XIII had said: "It is necessary to teach religion to children, but not only at specified times. All their teaching should occur in an atmosphere of Christian piety. If it is otherwise, if this sacred inspiration does not penetrate the spirits of the teachers and of the students, the instruction will produce only little fruit and will often have seriously harmful consequences" (Epist. Encycl. *Militantis Ecclesiae*, of August 1, 1897).

From the two foregoing quotations our consultant Catholic Professor can conclude that the administration of a Catholic school cannot overlook the religion of its professors. They should all be Catholics. The whole atmosphere of the school is to be Catholic. This does not mean that the qualification of the consultant's friend, the non-Catholic, was disregarded; far from it. The mere fact of his being non-Catholic was enough reason not to accept him among the teaching staff of the Catholic school. Hence there was no discrimination. The principle invoked by our consultant "first come first served" does not apply in our case. Being Catholic is a requirement to be admitted in the Catholic school as a professor. Moreover, our consultant knows that History, the specialty of both applicants, is intimately connected

with religion. Many historical facts or events cannot be properly explained to Catholic students unless such connection is fully pointed out. Two different historians will interpret the same historical event as related to religion in two different ways.

2. *Basic difference between students and professors.* Students go to school to be instructed, to be educated, to be formed and develop their whole personality. Professors are hired by the school to instruct, to educate, to form fully the personality of students. This means that while students absorb knowledge and education, and are helped in developing their own personality, the professors are their instructors, educators, and formators. In other words, professors are the active element in molding students into mature men or women, while students are passive recipients of the education imparted. Students are, so to say, human wax on which knowledge imparted by the professors leaves its image or printing. Non-Catholic professors cannot contribute in a positive way in giving Catholic education to Catholic students. As the philosophers say "nobody can give what he does not have."

The foregoing difference between professors and students being real and the majority of students in Catholic school being Catholic students, it is but natural that the administration of a Catholic school accepts qualified professors only. On the other hand, the education imparted being truly Catholic, non-Catholic students are also welcome. The religious truth absorbed and assimilated by non-Catholic students can do no harm to them, rather it will prepare their minds to accept the whole Christian truth in due time according to God's design and plan.

3. *Guidelines to be followed by all Catholic schools.* The problem of admitting non-Catholic students in Catholic schools is not new. There are some guidelines given by the Holy See in the past that should be followed, as the case may be. The basic principle is that "the admission of non-Catholic students should not constitute in any way a proximate danger for the faith and perversion of morals of Catholic students." This precaution was stated clearly in an Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide of October 18, 1883. The same Congregation had previously answered on April 25, 1868, an inquiry on the matter, saying that "non-Catholic students should not be admitted in Catholic schools when they are not of good

character and disposition." There is a third Instruction of the Holy Office of August 22, 1890, stating that "Catholic schools admitting non-Catholic students should always maintain their character of being Catholic in their discipline and programs. Moreover, in no case should non-Catholic teachers be hired to teach religion or subjects related to religion."

## Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

*I have observed that the Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament is performed in different ways in different churches: the number of candles is not the same and incense is sometimes used, other times is not. Is there no rule about this?*

*A Religious Sister*

Of course, there is a rule, in order to regulate and keep uniformity in performing this most solemn act of worship. The Ritual for Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside the Mass n. 85 gives us the following norm:

*"For the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with the monstrance there are four or six candles, of the type used for the Holy Mass, and incense should be used. For the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with the ciborium there are at least two candles and incense can be used."*

## **Festal Homilies for March and April 1993**

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*Roman Carter, O.P.*

### **SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

**March 7, 1993**

Readings: *Gn 12:1-4*  
*2 Tm 1:8-10*  
*Mt 17:1-9*

"Two calls and an acknowledgment" might be used to give titles to today's readings, but the summing up is a bit too glib to provide a basis for their analysis. It seems better to approach these texts from their given positions in salvation history and show how God deals with man differently but still typically when variants of time, place and circumstances come into play.

The call of Abraham in Genesis 12 is both initial and normative. In it God appeals to a reaction of faith in a novel way. But the way once ventured upon by "our father in faith" will constitute a means of valid response until the end of time. Largely within the Yahwist tradition with some effective touching up from the Priestly, our passage shows nomadic wondering lifted to the level of divine direction. Abram (as he is still called here) going forth is anything but haphazard. The whole initiative comes from God but the outcome will be to insert Abram and his family into the sacred space the human author cherishes and reveres as the proper site of cult. Blessing is available if God is acknowledged and this will not happen in polytheistic Mesopotamia. And, yet, curiously the blessing is universal. If it

extends to all it is as much for those Abram has left as for those to whom he will come or who will come after him. Now the "name" of Abram is the power of his faith. That power is productive, promising and dangerous (for it can turn to curse). And faith is decisive. It can always be recognized for it is the basis of directional happening. In sacred history all good acts are made in faith and all evil can be reduced to the rejection of God.

On the surface nothing could seem farther from Paul's admonitions to Timothy than the stark solitude of Abram's call. For the context of the Pastoral Epistles is communitarian to the extent of being protohierarchical. Christ's redemption is achieved, and the Church is established as an inalienable reality. Timothy must fit the Judaic lore of his culture and even the personalism of his relationship with St. Paul into an ecclesial structure. But that is all on the surface. Deep within the call is to holiness and the life of its matrix is grace. Christ is not the founder of an organization. Rather his is the epiphany of a new immortality poised diacritically over against deathly human routine. So the call of Timothy considered in depth is the call of Abram and of all believers. It is as it must ever be a call "from darkness into wonderful light."

Nothing could be brighter this side of eternity than the "uncreated light" of the Transfiguration as proclaimed in its Matthaean recension as today's Gospel. After six days we come to the very Sabbath of God and herein Jesus is declared once again to be what he is, the Son of the Eternal Father. Veils are cast aside and the Sacred Humanity is seen in the very glory of the Person who has assumed it. However, the acknowledgment points beyond itself to the culmination of that paschal mystery for which it prepares us. Happy, indeed, are we to have so telling a preparation this early in Lent!

Each of us is called like Abraham who was once Abram to newness of life. The call comes from God. It is mediated through change. The change is not necessarily geographic. It is more likely to be interior. God's call to change is a call for faith. God really wants us to trust him so that he can bless us. And the deeper and more real our trust the wider will his blessing extend through us. For faith can become a style of life in which what has occurred deep within our hearts can be projected outwards and given to others by our deeds.

Each of us like Timothy has a real place in the people of God. This place may not be noticeably hierarchical but it is in a context, as

his place was, of grace and holiness. What we are called to as Christians is already fulfilled in Christ. But it needs fulfillment in each of us if we are to evangelize the world. Others must see that we have passed from death to life, from fatalism to immortal hope, from darkness to light. They can see this if God's purpose is being fulfilled in us, if our lives are exemplary because they are holy.

Jesus invites us like Peter, James and John to ascend the mountain. He wants to clarify his relationship with Moses and Elijah, law and prophet, old norms and new possibilities for us. He wants us to see the uncreated light and know who he is in reality. And he wants this not for himself but for us so that we can become transfigured, aglow, recognized by the Father and like him.

Amid our increasing Lenten austerities, our self-denial, our prayerfulness and our increasingly manifest love for the poor let us listen to the sound of God calling us to rise up and venture forth in faith. Amid greater and ever more cheerfully assumed responsibilities let us savor God's grace and grow in holiness. And as we ascend the mountain of God's prevailing will let us fix our gaze on Jesus, our transfigured Lord. Let us see him, hear the father's voice and abide in the glory revealed until on Easter we can shout with joy, "The Lord is risen. Yes, he is risen, indeed!"

### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

March 14, 1993

Readings: *Ex 17:3-7*

*Rm 5:1-2, 5-8*

*Jn 4:5-42*

Two of today's readings deal with water and the third with faith, hope and love. It would be a mistake, however, to take the image of water in too concrete or obvious a sense and an even greater mistake to think that Christian virtues are abstractions. In every case our texts make clear that we are dealing with human lacks and divine provision which supplies efficacious and endless remedies for them. Certainly each reading differs greatly from the other two both in context and in initial impact, yet all three leave us with an overwhelming sense of God's providential goodness.

Let us look more closely at the water images and at the Pauline analysis of virtues in order to see both the depth of the individual texts and, if possible, their interconnection. In Exodus 17 the

wandering Israelites have come to a common enough desert impasse. They know where they have come from and how they have arrived at where they are. They have been given food from heaven but now they are thirsty, the most obvious but worst complaint of desert travel. "Quarrel" and "test," hence "Meriba" and "Massa" ensue. "Horeb" is a textual intrusion. But Moses in striking the rock is following not the will of the complainers nor the resources of his own imagination. He is obeying God and has the elders of Israel for witnesses. And so the water comes despite the popular complaints not because of them. But God will remember the irksomeness of the position of the distrustful and so will Israel and the Church in reading and psalmody down through the ages. Moses obeys God. The people "who never shall enter his rest" continue to defy and challenge him. And it is all over water and thirst.

Water and thirst come into today's rather long Gospel, too. But here the thirst is both Christ's and the Samaritan woman's. The story is one of the most complicated and moving in the entire Bible. The interplay of moral, liturgical and messianic questions is so intricate as almost to defy analysis. Here is Christ, Word made flesh, present to and in pleasant discourse with apostasy, sexual laxity and inward longing for a never achieved fulfillment, all "incarnate," as it were, in the poor, lonely woman who comes friendless to the Well of Jacob at high noon. Only real necessity could drive a householder to the source of running water at such a time of day! The whole dialogue which ensues is as strange as are the interlocutions. John makes the extremes meet in order to proclaim the Good News. And "water" ceases to be "living" in the sense of material running. It becomes, rather, the water of the life-giving Spirit, who, once received, keeps us all from further thirst. But to receive the Spirit we must receive Christ and to receive him truly is to proclaim him to others. Thus, the "challenge" of this story, unlike that of the first reading, is not one of sin and questioning. For such things are transcended in the forgiving answers of Christ here present. Rather, the challenge is that of faith. When we realize who Christ is and what he has to give, we both believe and proclaim him as the woman did. And the lives of others are affected for good.

Faith in the perspective of Romans 5 certainly has other facets and nuances which differ from those brought out in the Gospel or the first reading. For what is at stake is the completed work of salvation

rather than mere initial experience, however salvific its underlying messianic implications. Faith is given for a new and thorough goodness. This comes from God as hope for glory because hope like this is based on love. Only love can reconcile the grievous sinner (any man or woman) and the righteous God (who alone is holy). The reconciliation is, of course, effected by the voluntary death of Jesus. He alone could ever be the "Christ who died for us while we were still sinners."

People grumble a great deal in the world around us. They tell us they are "disappointed with God" for he has not quenched their thirst for money, fame and prestige. Only the Moseses of this world seem willing to obey him, not to get what they want but to accomplish what he wills. There are "Samaritan women" (many of them men) all over the place. Families are broken by spouses away overseas, by clandestine relationships adulterous in nature, by gambling, drugs, drink and a host of bad habits. Christ can enter these messes and clean things up by the power of the Holy Spirit working within truly converted persons.

If we truly have a faith that completely trusts God, we shall be judged righteous and at peace with him. That is reconciliation. If we set our sights on eternal glory we shall have hope. This is beyond our own powers but sustains us in confidence. Greater than faith in this sense or hope with its futuristic aspect, however, is love. This is not mere Mosaic obedience or Samaritan change of life style. Such might be our love for God. What counts, rather, is God's love for us poured into our hearts as an effect of Christ's death and resurrection. May that love abide with us throughout Lent and forevermore. Amen!

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (*Laetare*)**

**March 21, 1993**

Readings: 1 Sam 16:1 & 6-7 & 10-13

*Ep 5:8-14*

*Jn 9:1-41*

The antiphons and prayers of this Sunday retain the themes of joy and refreshment which Laetere Sunday has had for centuries in the Roman Rite. The readings of this year, however, have themes of anointing and light which are meant to prepare us for the "unexpected" and, therefore, "surprising" death and resurrection of



our Lord. For each Lent is a liturgical attempt to re-enact the drama of Christ's suffering and glory in such a way as to apply this drama to our own lives.

Today's first reading recalls the anointing of David by Samuel at Bethlehem long before David's reign over Judah or Israel has its historic beginning. Samuel is filled with remorse that, pushed on by popular demands, he has anointed a madman, Saul, as King over Israel. Both saints and historians will agree this was a false and dangerous move. We all make mistakes, but some mistakes are more perilous than others. Saul has proved to be a "bad egg" and he will get worse. Now, moved by God's Spirit, Samuel sets out a great personal risk to rectify his error. This time no human beings will be allowed to coerce the prophet into further folly. He is ready to listen to God speaking within his heart and to God alone. Thus it is that the youngest son of Jesse receives the anointing from Samuel's oil horn, and salvation history takes a decisive turn for the better.

In an unusual manner today's second reading acts as an introduction both doctrinal and pastoral to today's Gospel. St. Paul posits all who read or hear him in the context of their own, individual salvation histories. Whatever may have been dark in the past is over. Now we are children of light. The light is complete, fulfilled in itself and eminently attractive. As we approach it we become lit up by it. We awaken from sleep and, even, arise from the dead. For this light is, of course, Christ, sole source of true illumination.

The Gospel shows Christ as light bringing sight to the blind man. The passage is both humanly moving and doctrinally superb. This sixth Johannine "sign" of Jesus as Light of the world contrasts not only blindness and sight but true vision and spiritual mist. Our Lord does not give solutions to abstract problems. Rather he brings concrete help to the needy. Much in the narrative is symbolic, even sacramental, but we need not pause there, for what is truly said is of a deeper order and has to do with faith.

Every mistake we make in judgment or action can, no doubt, in time cripple us. But we would be poor Christians to assume lameness when God gives us strength. Like Samuel very often we just must revise our plans. that is what true repentance involves: not being sorry for ourselves but being sorry for our sins. We show true contrition in our resolve to do good. God's will for now and the future

is what we must decide to do. God will give us oil and horn and point out as he alone can the right companions for new life.

When we look forward and see light and look backward and see darkness we should let the light dazzle and draw us forward. Looking back does no good. The light of Christ can surround and penetrate us. As we grow in grace we can become truly transparent to it. And that is what God wills. For he wants to use each and every one of us to bring his light to all other human beings whom we see and touch.

in the life of the world. Faith means trusting and obeying Jesus even in situations that are hard to understand. If we trust and obey our own credibility will lead others to discern and to believe. The sight Christ gives is neither imaginary nor pretensions. It is a humble acknowledgment of the source of light. And it gives great joy. May that joy be ours from now till Easter and forever!

## **FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**March 28, 1993**

Readings: *Ez 37:12-14*

*Rm 8:8-11*

*Jn 11:1-45*

The themes of Spirit, resurrection and life which run through today's readings are a sure indication of the proximity of Easter and how the Church wills to turn our minds from more general ascetic preoccupations to the proximate preparation she wants us to have for the Feast of Feasts. The word of God is, of course, both living and true. What was "alive" for a sacred author, comes alive for us whenever the word is rightly proclaimed. What Ezekiel had to say to Babylonian exiles (whose lot he partly shared from time to time towards the end of the sixth century before Christ), what Paul had to say to the primitive Roman community and what John tells us Jesus said and did at Bethany as "seventh sign" all spoke to then contemporary men and women about then contemporary realities. But the timeless quality of each message brings these texts into a certain "now" accessible to us, and our minds and hearts are moved to greater love for God and neighbor from what we hear, proclaim and try to live out in our contemporaneity.

Ezekiel uses death and burial as metaphors for exile and spiritual listlessness. He uses resurrection as a symbol of return to

the land of Israel and makes life-giving a function of the Spirit of God. He modestly down plays his own role as prophet. Without Ezekiel the people would never have known God's plan. Without Ezekiel they might have given up all hope of returning to the land of their fathers. for without Ezekiel how could they know the Lord had spoken or what he had said? What God can (and even should) do is made known in prophecy but the prophecy has a more universal application than the prophet knew.

St. Paul's Roman readers are, no doubt, more sophisticated than Ezekiel's audience. Moreover, both in doctrine and imagery Paul can afford to be more explicit. For him the Spirit is not just life-giving and, as it were, resuscitating. The Spirit is both "Spirit of God" (the Father) and "Spirit of Christ" (the raised up Son). Because what the Holy Spirit accomplished in Christ we who are identified with Christ can discover in ourselves just as our Christian ancestors discovered it through Paul's teaching and writing way back in the first century of our faith.

The raising of Lazarus as told at length in today's Gospel is not just a tale of superabundant compassion on the part of Christ and wondrous blessing to be gleaned by his followers. Rather it is an authentic Johannine sign, a given surface reality in the context of historic narrative which points to something deeper, more lasting, more extensive in implication and more intensive in signaled reality. For the sign points to nothing less than the mystery of Christ's own resurrection from among the dead.

No one likes the thought of being dead or in a spiritual grave. Still we and our contemporaries (if we are honest) must often evaluate ourselves thus. Everyone prefers homecoming to exile, but, except for a few saintly souls among us, hardly anyone knows how to start on the homeward journey. Only divine initiative, only a work of the Spirit can stir us in our malaise.

Of course the Holy Spirit is as available today as he was in the days of ancient Rome. But justification now as then is only found where admission of death is conceded. God's Spirit, Christ's life, cannot raise my body unless I admit my body to be mortal. God cannot forgive my sins unless I acknowledge them to be deathly. But the moment I let the Spirit live in me, he becomes the source of newness of life and this life is "spiritual" for it is real and perduring, whereas

what leads to death is "carnal" for it is transitory, debilitating and unpleasant in God's sight. And so through a strange mixture of personal option and divine grace I can find, as Paul found and taught the Romans to find, resurrection and new life.

But what if it is already the fourth day? What if the corruption of our sin is likely to infect others with its stench if the tombs of our consciences are opened? The answer to the questions will differ if we are beset with grave vandals or if we are blessed by the late coming (so it seems) but all comforting presence of Christ. We can be brought back to life not through some psychological poking at our memories or questioning of our motives in order to blame or to excuse ourselves as regards sin but through divine intervention. In the power of the Spirit, used by Christ to raise Lazarus at a word, words can sound in our ears which tell of resurrection and life and actually accomplish what they bespeak. In our reconciliation with the Father, with the Church and with one another we become as much objects of the prayer of Jesus as Lazarus was. For Jesus is the resurrection and he is life itself. We live. We believe. And our faith transcends any and every species of death of whatever order. So we, like the witness at Bethany, can see and believe, can live anew and walk forward to eternal life with the risen Lord who has rescued us from death.

Let us use the rest of Lent for incessant invocation of the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life. Let us pray for freedom from earthboundness and return to our heavenly home. Let us give God the chance the work in our lives so that when Easter comes we can worship resurrection for we have been raised up, too.

## **PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION**

**April 4, 1993**

Readings: *Mt 21:1-11*

*Is 50:4-7*

*Ph 2:6-11*

*Mt 26:14-27, 66*

The Entrance Gospel and the Passion this year are taken from Matthew, but the first and second readings are invariable, being read each year of the cycle. Therefore, let us look at the Isaian and Pauline texts first for a initial focus on Passiontide, the days leading up to the Great Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. All our Lenten preparation now finds its final, lowest notes in the

foretelling of and reflection upon the sufferings of Christ seen of course at their dynamic and graphic best in the gospel narratives.

The passage from Isaiah 50 not only represents the Deutero-Isaian tradition but that sequence of writings at its lowest ebb. The passage used as text for our first reading is from the hymn on Israel in darkness, a darkness indicating not just resignation but reproach. While in this Third Song of the Suffering Servant God is seen as giving a word which always issues in salvation, man (whether the Servant or his enemies) is portrayed in weakness. The Servant stammers and is tired and slow to awaken. His enemies greet him with indifference first and, then maltreatment. The word of prophecy is generally scorned though some can hear it. Closed mindedness and disgrace fall the Servant's lot and only the grace of a "flinty face" saves him from being overwhelmed.

In Philippians 2 Jesus himself is shown in the extreme of his humility. God by nature he undergoes both incarnation and death, but he is lifted above all such things and triumphs as both Risen Lord and, amazing as it may seem, human object of universal adoration, secure forever in his Lordship. But the process is devastating for the examination is complete. No one has ever sunk lower, and no one has ever risen higher. Here is the point of the whole of Holy Week and, indeed, of all real Christianity. Without plumbing the depths the heights can never be attained.

Of course Matthew's treatment of the Entrance into Jerusalem and of the Passion and Death of Christ had to be written neither as prophecy nor as hymn of adulation but as Good News. The evangelist musters all his skill to show both how triumph can be short-lived and how disaster can be fruitful. For Matthew prophecy can be and is fulfilled in the Messiah. But he is more concerned with narrative than discourse and almost oblivious to theological exposition in these passages. Nonetheless in considering the Entrance Gospel we do well to keep in mind that Jesus for Matthew is Messiah for all: Jews and Gentiles, symbolized by colt (untamed) and ass (matured); that Zechariah 9:9 is thus fulfilled; that the King personifies the Kingdom; that one already rejected by the majority is accepted by some with Hosanna cries uniting themes of salvation and praise; that the "Son of David" of previous passages is now just a famous Rabbi. For in the very midst of triumph disaster looms.

The Passion is, of course, long and intricate. It requires a more detailed study than can be given here. Nonetheless, a few summary thoughts may be helpful. First of all it is noteworthy that compared with all other Matthaean narratives the Passion seems disproportionately long and the discursive interruptions are more consonant with liturgical recitations to be done by three or more lectors than real, recorded speeches of Jesus or others. An air of solemnity and grandeur pervades the parts up to the prediction of Peter's denial. This is succeeded by an atmosphere of increased helplessness leading to doom. Finally, mockery prevails, and Jesus dies scorned and supposedly defeated. Of course we can best appreciate Matthew's literary skill and enhance our own experience of participation in his drama if we follow his "script" and utilize deacon, lector and crowd while the celebrant plays Christus. When this is done well the blend of glory and pathos which radiates from the text can be well nigh overwhelming for the emotion of the devout.

Palm Sunday is a great day, "heavy" in liturgy and centered unquestionably in Christ. May it usher in a Holy Week well spent and, thus, help to lead us not only to another Easter here below but to the Paschal Feast of heaven itself!

## SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

April 11, 1993

Readings: Ac 10:34 & 37-43

Col 3:1-4 Jn 20:1-9

(Lk 24:13-35 Evening Masses)

A pagan hearing our readings could accuse us of celebrating nothing on Easter. For we speak of an Empty Tomb, of an other-worldly life and of eating and drinking with a man who has died. This sounds like disillusion, fantasy and sheer folly. And all this bears heavily on the sort of faith we must have if today's readings and today's feast are to make much sense.

Of course the Gospel as read is not the last word on the Risen Christ. Rather it is, for John, the first decisive word of subsequent eyewitnesses. They will come to see precisely because they have seen *not*. *Glorification for John is a process, not an isolated happening. It involves an event as grim as the Crucifixion and one as glorious as seeing the Lord arisen. But in between the initial suffering and the final glory there are many illusive stages which only faith can grasp.*

In some of them at least we find the Evangelist eliciting from the witnesses and from us what once must have been his own position, "I believe because there is no one there, nothing to which I can cling."

On the other hand even daily prayer, dry and routine as it may be and all too often is, has an uplifting quality. It takes us out of ourselves, above ourselves, to a "place" St. Paul can only call "heaven" for the Colossians or for us. This involves us in a process of our own. It "brings back to life" or resurrects an area of our being ordinarily entombed in the "death" of busy-ness or indifference. This area is the land of our real Self where we share more than we can at present apprehend with Christ.

Impetuous Peter is all on fire in Acts 10, preaching as he is about his favorite Person who (for him at least) was a concrete personality and inescapable one, not that Peter never tried to escape from him. But the point is that Jesus really lived and did things, really died and rose again, and that Peter and his companions not only saw and heard this Risen Lord. They actually ate and drank with him knowing perfectly well he had died and believing beyond doubt in him as risen.

Who then is the Risen Lord to us? He is the Lord of absence very often. We know he must transcend our mundane circumstances because we can't find him in our ordinary life. For our ordinary life is an empty tomb! Nor can we contact him in prayer unless we know where he is. We cannot have a telephone conversation with a friend if we dial the wrong number. Calling Iloilo will never get us Cebu. True prayer has to take place in heaven, and people with no resurrection, no newness of life can't make the connection. Only faith can take us to the right hand of God just as only faith can make us see in apparent emptiness divine fullness. Only faith can "hide us in God."

Of course we may like to make a lot of noise about our experience of Christ if we think it is real. And it may be. It most probably is. However, the things we recall about the Lord are only real for people with analogous experiences. The power of God remains hidden for those who cannot perceive good deeds and talk of eating and drinking makes such persons think we are befuddled fanatics.

What is Christian reality? Jesus Christ risen from the dead comes to us at this Mass. He feeds us with his glorious body and quenches our thirst with his blood, both sacramentally present. And

he does something more. He reassures us beyond what seems empty that he is alive. He takes our dying to self and rising in him and makes them prayer. Best of all he brings us from the depth of hidden self to the high place of proclamation. May each of us then be able to say on this Easter day, "Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed" for the truth of our own experience both as Church and as individuals constantly shows it forth.

N.B. For our reflections on the Gospel for Evening Masses (*Lk* 24:13-35) see below under "Third Sunday of Easter."

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 18, 1993

*Readings: Ac 2:42-47*

*1 Pt 1:3-9*

*Jn 20:19-31*

The first and second readings today and next Sunday are taken from Acts and First Letter of Peter in this first year of the cycle. The Gospel on this Second Sunday is invariable, year to year. An interplay of communitarian and individual response to the Resurrection mystery and its implications binds together today's readings each of which merits more than the brief comment we are able to give. Retreat masters often spend an hour or more expounding each one according to the scriptural context they choose for their work.

The reading from Acts which is our first is a Lukan summary. Frs. Dillon and Fitzmyer in the *Jerome* warn us that this means both that it is a gap-filler and is meant to be a reflection on what was "usual, typical and continued" in the primitive community. One salient characteristic is Luke's idealizing of the supposedly normal features of the Church's life: common apostolic teaching, impressive but hardly rare charisms, common ownership, meals and worship sound almost too good to be true. But it is the Lord who gives the increase and so Luke saves himself from the questionability of his own ideals. If what happens to us is the result of the Lord working in us, and the Lord is risen from the dead, just about anything is possible and nothing is far-fetched.

The first letter of Peter is rather different literature. In it the apostle (or his scribe) waxes eloquent in blessing the readers. Like



Luke he sees them as a close-knit community rather than as scattered individuals who meet from time to time. What they share, however, is not just life here and now on as Christian a basis as might be but life to come, the common hope of stored up treasure. All of this comes from Christ specifically honored as Risen Lord. Unlike any earthly heritage what the community looks forward to is imperishable. It is guarded by the power that comes from faith. It makes for present joy but does not exclude trials. For trials will prove that our inheritance is both more precious and more durable than gold. The constancy of faith is by no means limited to what is hoped for except in the sense of full fruition. Our joy is glorious already because Christ, unseen and risen, makes salvation sure even in its foretaste.

Today's Gospel is one of the most telling and least understood narratives of the whole New Testament. John imbues the Risen Lord with sheer reality in his encounter with Thomas.

The point often missed is that this is an encounter of the most formed and formal faith conceivable and it issues forth in the most superlative confession in the entire Bible. Prefixed by an Easter account the main part of the related discourse takes place a week later on what we have come to call "Low Sunday," once the day of return to ordinary dress for the newly baptized, still the day of our return to ordinary life in time and space. Only a confession of "my Lord and my God" directed towards Jesus can give a touch of glory to the ordinary and make our lives be lives of faith.

What is the way out of my doubts and fears (if I have any)? How can my individuality cease to imprison me (if it seems to)? Only by my real belonging in Christ to his body on earth. Unless the community ideals of Acts play some part in my life, my life is mere selfishness. Unless I know I have inherited something rich and enduring in Christ what little money and goods I have will be dissipated and ephemeral. The confession of Thomas takes him from seer to believer, from those who insist on being shown to the company of those who rely on One Unseen. The same can be true today for you and me. God can mold and make, renew and revitalize us into the community of his true believers. We can become (over and over again, starting today) what he has always wanted us to be: Catholic Church and heirs of his Kingdom!

## THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 25, 1993

*Readings: Ac 2:14 & 22-23*

*1 Pt 1:17-21*

*Lk 24:13-35*

Dealing with evil, whether it be in the realm of our daily lives and petty (or enormous) sins or on the comic level of redemption of the race, is no easy task. It takes a great deal of admission of guilt and identification with those areas of individual and world experience we would all too often like to gloss over or simply forget. And yet all three readings today show how Christ and dealt with evil and what power we have from him to do likewise.

The first reading gives part of Peter's first sermon in Acts, the worst part. It is not "worst" because of style but because its content in the dire truth of man's guilt. The world today hates words like "guilt" and people spend huge sums of money for lawyers and psychiatrists to assure them they are not "guilty" though judges and their own consciences might rightly find them so. St. Peter according to Luke had no such qualms. His "calling a spade a spade" means saying to the Jews on Pentecost (and to all of us every day), "You killed him." But his psalmodic knowledge is great enough (as was that of his audience) to be able to state that God's holy one would never suffer corruption, that knowledge of God's way and gladness in his presence were eternally his.

In Peter's first letter judgment to be dealt and ransom already paid are linked inexorably with faith and resurrection. Peter's whole outlook on Christian life makes the mysteries of faith appear as if "current events," which of course they were in apostolic times. Often our most pressing difficulty is to recapture such a spirit of freshness as we wrestle with cynicism and a trying contemporary sense of "boredom with things holy" which gnaws at the very roots of faith and hope and makes love grow cold.

Hardest to deal with of all today's readings is the story of Emmaus. It is hard to know if Luke is giving us a sort of liturgy of word and sacrament in graphic outline or really recounting a happening both singular and historic involving Christ as risen and his rather woebegone followers. What may be involved is a presentation of the first sort giving a scriptural explanation along the way and a

Eucharistic encounter in the house which is based in turn on a real happening involving otherwise unknown and seemingly obscure disciples of Jesus. Some traditions tell us we are dealing with an uncle and a cousin of the Lord, hence his "brethren" who now have come to believe. Where "Emmaus" was, who these people really are and exactly what the Risen Lord told them remain fairly cloudy in the account. What is most important, however, is that their faith leads them to recognition and, once recognized, Jesus disappears.

How can we deal with guilt as Catholic Christians loyal to the teaching and practice of the Church? Succinctly, by admitting our wrong doing as truly offensive to God, so offensive as to cause the death of his Son. This admission leads to conversion. But it must be sincere: neither a false self-accusation nor a confession modified by rationalization and excusing ourselves from our sins or their consequences. In practice this means being stern without falling into scrupulosity and being too candid to admit even a grain of self-pity.

How can the stored up treasure of Christ become guaranteed reality in our lives? Only if we look to their source and cause, Jesus himself in his saving death and glorious resurrection. Peter's own expression (canonized by pious usage down the ages) is "precious blood," and a real devotion to the blood of Christ in and with all its implication stands us in good stead in day-to-day Christian life.

Finally, and most difficult of all, how can we meet our Risen Lord? By walking with him even when he seems absent. By asking him questions and listening to his scripture based replies. Most and best of all by sharing him with one another as the broken, Eucharistic Bread he is. It is true he may seem after Mass to "disappear" as we return to an almost inevitable tedium but our encounter (if it is real) can never be forgotten. Once we have truly met the Lord and heard his voice, once we have eaten and drunk what truly pleases him (for he is found there) our hearts will, indeed, burn within us. And our Easter joy can be shared for it remains forever at the center of our lives!

## CHANGE IN THE EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Mariano Gaviola of Lipa. It was presented in conformity with canon 401, § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (30 December 1992).

The Holy Father appointed as Archbishop of Lipa, Bishop Gaudencio Rosales of Malaybalay.

Archbishop Rosales, 60, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Lipa in 1958. He served as Rector of the minor seminary and the Legion of Mary. He was appointed Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Manila in 1974. In 1982 he was named Coadjutor of Malaybalay and succeeded to the See in 1984.

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## CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

At its plenary assembly last July 1991 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines unanimously approved the *Roman Order of Mass for the Dioceses of the Philippines*, also known as *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, and the new Tagalog *Eucharistic Prayer for Marriage* be submitted to the Holy See for its consent. On January 30, 1992 the new Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy, Archbishop Onesimo Gordoncillo, submitted both projects to the Congregation for Divine Worship.

### Misa ng Bayang Pilipino

The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, prepared in 1975 by a team headed by Fr. Anscar Chupungco, OSB, and revised in 1980, is an adaptation of the 1970 Roman Order of mass to the culture and traditions of Filipino Catholics. This adaptation aims above all to express more fully the doctrinal and spiritual contents of the Roman Order of mass through such type of language, gestures, and symbols as is consonant with Filipino culture and religiosity. The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* has an original Eucharistic prayer in long and short forms. The proposed Filipino Order of mass is not meant to replace the Roman. It is intended for special occasions at the discretion of the local Ordinary. Its occasional celebration can help the faithful to understand and appreciate more fully the riches of the Roman Mass.

### Eucharistic Prayer for Marriage

The *Eucharistic Prayer for Marriage* was drafted by Fr. Anscar Chupungco, OSB, in 1985 at the request of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy. It will be remembered that on April 20, 1983 the Congregation for Divine Worship approved the inculturated Tagalog rite of marriage, *Pagdiriwang ng Pag-iisang Dibdib*. The proposed *Eucharistic Prayer*, which is in Tagalog and English, incorporates into this prayer the doctrine and values held by the Church on the sacrament of marriage and married life. It does this through inclusion of traditional Filipino expressions regarding the sanctity and seriousness of marriage.