

EDITORIAL

- * *Roman Carter, O.P.*

102 CALL AND RESPONSE

MAGISTERIAL WORDS

- * *John Paul II*

105 EUROPÆ ORIENTALIS

109 PASTORES DABO VOBIS

155 LETTER TO PRIESTS
FOR HOLY THURSDAY 1993

159 MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD
DAY OF PRAYER FOR
VOCATIONS

WORDS FOR TODAY

- * *Federation of Asian
Bishops' Conference*

163 FINAL STATEMENT:
FORMATORS' SEMINAR

180 EVANGELIZATION CANNOT
BE CHRIST-LESS

191 LOVE OF CREATION: AN
ASIAN RESPONSE TO THE
ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

WORDS OF THE PAST

- * *Ranhillio C. Aquino*

200 THE THOMAS AQUINAS
MAJOR SEMINARY

- * *Virgilio Probre-Yñigo*

204 THE COLEGIO DE SAN
JACINTO

CONSULTATIVE WORDS

- * *Excelso Garcia, O.P.*

218 CASES AND INQUIRIES

GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW

- * *Roman Carter, O.P.*

224 FESTAL HOMILIES FOR
MAY-JUNE 1993

Call and Response

Roman Carter, O.P.

Towards the end of every academic year high school students often come to our residence to try cornering a priest for an interview. The questions they ask if the interview is granted obviously come from their teachers rather than themselves and, despite the pious phareology employed, show little understanding of priestly or any other vocation. They make it sound as if the ministerial priesthood were just another career or chosen profession, e.g. "When and why did you decide to become a priest?" Silly question! I did not exactly decide. I felt I was called. And I answered the call by offering myself to a particular clerical body within the Church. I was fully aware that an offer, based on an interior sense of call, could either immediately, subsequently or eventually be rejected. The call came. The test was given (a test of years and years of studies and of life in community with fellow aspirants). My superiors deemed me worthy. Then and only then was I presented to a bishop for ordination. Once ordained I had to live out my response on the same two levels, divine and ecclesial if you will, on which I received the call.

What I am calling the divine level involves a large degree of subjectivity. About it one can say: "I feel, I think, I will" as words of response, but they come only on basis of an again subjective attraction to a seemingly unavoidable trial. In this subjective mode one has a vocation. As yet one is not a priest. How does one advance beyond this? By putting himself into the hands of others who tutor,

mold, form and elicit from one an ever more authentic response. The objective side of this response is not in having but in being. So one could say: "I am a seminarian; I am a professed religious; I am a deacon; and, finally, I am, at last, a priest." But that very being someone instead of clinging to something must then be lived out, day by day through as many years of our ministry as God allows and the church admits. And here many since Vatican II have fallen by the wayside, usually by reverting to subjective having and preferring it to objective being.

No one can deny that there is a profound interior mystery in any authentic call from God. But the mystery can only take on a gradually realized reality if it becomes relational. And the relationships involved go outward being inchoate, as it were, at the divinely willed outset and becoming "formed" as we grow in prayer (including liturgical prayer), study and relationship with others, both superiors and members of our peer group. When there is conflict between what is inwardly perceived and what one is able to live outwardly a real crisis can arise. And the crisis can either be a sign of utter lack of vocation or of a vocation needing unusual and highly personalized fostering.

The call to serve God in ministerial priesthood, being as it is a call to conformity with Christ, is a call to mediation. For the priest is a real bridge, link or middle man between God and the priest's community and between that community and God. The mediation involved must draw strength from self-giving or an interior level and sacrificial offering (whether of Christ himself in the Mass or of lesser "things" given by priest and people together). A desire to be mediator unaccompanied by a sense of letting go of one's self cannot be an authentic response either to God or to the human community.

Here we are involved in the deepest sense of and most thorough application of the paschal mystery of Christ himself. Only through his passion and death does he come to the glory of his resurrection. In our living out of the priestly calling we, too, must suffer. We must be continually more and more willing to die to self, to give up the reins of self-interest, to give way to others and their plans. We must, indeed, die to self, so that having nothing we can be all things to all men and women. But this suffering and death, if united to Christ, is also glory. Obviously it is not the fullness of glory. It is but a

foretaste, and yet it shines forth. If we behold the glory which is on the face of our risen Lord we can share the glory of our feeble participation in him. The shared glory is an earthly and objective sign of authentic vocation and authentic response. It becomes, through us as Christ's priests, a true and real manifestation of that "light of the world" call which links us to God and, through his grace, to the world at large.

magisterial words

Europae Orientalis

John Paul II

APOSTOLIC LETTER GIVEN MOTU PROPIO

*The Pontifical Commission for
Russia is changed into a permanent
interdicasterial commission for the Church in Eastern Europe*

Out of concern for the faithful of Eastern Europe, I have hastened to adapt the Commission for Russia to changed circumstances, with the realization that the reasons which led to the founding of this Commission no longer correspond to its original purpose. Indeed, my predecessor Pope Pius XI, of happy memory, exercised great pastoral care for those living in Russia or who had emigrated from their homeland. For this reason in 1925 he established the Commission for Russia, and then gave it *sui iuris* status with the *Motu Proprio Inde ab initio Pontificatu* on 6 April 1930 (cf. AAS, 22 [1930], pp. 153-154). Through this Commission the Apostolic See cared for the Catholics of those areas who were forced to live their faith under persecution, all the while filled with the hope that at a time known to God the Catholic Church would flourish anew in their homeland.

Recent events in Eastern Europe have allowed Catholic communities to be re-established and to expand freely. In these new

circumstances, however, efforts must be made so that those communities are supported and reinforced, take deeper root in their native soil, and establish communion with other Catholic communities throughout the world.

Wherefore, by my apostolic authority, in consultation with my venerable brother Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, and Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Commission for Russia, *on my own initiative and with certain knowledge*, I am terminating the Pontifical Council for Russia, giving thanks to God for all the good which it has brought to the Church and to the many faithful of Russian descent for nearly 70 years, and also thanking everyone who worked during those many harsh years to fulfil its important function. At the same time, in accord with the norm of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor bonus* (Art. 21, Sec. 2), I am establishing the Permanent Interdicasterial Commission for the Church in Eastern Europe, which will have the following structure and objectives:

— This Commission will be concerned with both the Latin and Oriental-rite Churches in the territories that were once subject to a communist regime, that is, all the nations which belonged to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including Asia, and secondly, the other nations of Eastern Europe, as necessity requires.

— The Commission will be responsible for promoting the apostolic mission of the Catholic Church in all her activities and likewise for fostering ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox and with other Churches of the Eastern tradition. The Commission, therefore, will work in constant contact with the various Catholic institutions that have long assisted the Catholic communities of Eastern Europe so that their efforts may be coordinated and receive new impetus.

— The Cardinal Secretary of State will preside over the Interdicasterial Commission, members of which will be the Secretary of the Section for Relations with States, the Secretaries of the Congregations for the Oriental Churches, for the Clergy, for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Undersecretary of the Section for Relations with States.

Everything that has been established by this Motu Proprio I order to be confirmed and ratified, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on 15 January 1993, the fifteenth year of my Pontificate.

Joannes Paulus II

NEW COMMISSION ESTABLISHED

With the Motu Proprio *Europae orientalis* of 15 January last, Pope John Paul II terminated the work of the Pontifical Commission for Russia and replaced it with the *Permanent Interdicasterial Commission for the Church in Eastern Europe*, in accordance with the Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.

The arrival of communism in Russia and the subsequent persecution of believers created difficult living conditions for the Catholic communities there and forced many Catholics of Russian origin to go into exile. To provide them with special pastoral care, the Cardinal Secretary of State sent a letter dated 20 June 1925 to Cardinal Tacci, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church, announcing Pius XI's decision to establish in that Congregation "a special Commission to expedite the examination and resolution of questions and issues regarding Russians, both those residing in their homeland and those living abroad." With the Motu Proprio *Inde ab initio Pontificatu* of 6 April 1930, Pope Pius XI made the Commission independent of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church and entrusted its direction to Bishop Michel d'Herbigny. His responsibilities were later extended to some territories adjacent to the Soviet Union, to include Ukrainians resident in Poland and all the Catholics of Estonia and the territory of Harbin in Manchuria.

On 21 December 1934, with the Motu Proprio *Quam sollicita*, Pius XI reserved to the Pontifical Commission issues regarding Catholics resident in Russia, joining it to the Congregation for

Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, and had a special section for the pastoral care of Byzantine-rite Russian Catholics established at the Congregation for the Oriental Church.

Now that living conditions in the territories of the former Soviet Union have changed, the fundamental right to religious freedom has been recognized, and thus the Catholic Church has been able to reorganize her communities, so that the reasons behind the creation of the Pontifical Commission for Russia no longer exist.

Nevertheless, the aftermath of atheistic communism in social life and the particular status of the Catholic Church's mission in areas profoundly influenced by the Orthodox tradition require that this same mission take into account the guidelines given by the Second Vatican Council on ecumenism.

Therefore, the new Permanent Interdicasterial Commission for the Church in Eastern Europe has responsibility not only for the territories of the former Soviet Union, but also for the other nations that for years were affected by the historical circumstances resulting from atheistic communism. Its responsibilities concern three areas: 1) helping the local Catholic communities to consolidate their re-establishment after decades of persecution; 2) attending to the Catholic Church's relations with the Orthodox Church and the other Eastern Churches in these territories; and 3) promoting and coordinating the activities of the various institutions that have long assisted the Catholic communities of Eastern Europe.

The membership of the new Commission, under the presidency of the Cardinal Secretary of State, reflects its new responsibilities and includes the Secretary and Undersecretary of the Section for Relations with States, the Secretaries of the Congregations for the Oriental Churches, for the Clergy and for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. (Source: *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 9, 3 March 1993)

Pastores Dabo Vobis

John Paul II

Chapter V

HE APPOINTED TWELVE TO BE WITH HIM

*The formation of candidates
for the priesthood*

Following Christ as the Apostles did.

42. "And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" (*Mk 3:13-15*).

"*To be with him*": it is not difficult to find in these words a reference to Jesus's "accompanying" the Apostles for the sake of their vocation. After calling them and before he sends them out, indeed in order to be able to send them out to preach, Jesus asks them to set aside a "period of time" for formation. The aim of this time is to develop a relationship of deep communion and friendship with himself. In this time they receive the benefit of a catechesis that is deeper than the teaching he gives to the people (cf. *Mt 13:11*); also

he wishes them to be witnesses of his silent prayer to the Father (cf. *Jn* 17:1-26; *Lk* 22:39-45).

In her care for priestly vocations the Church in every age draws her inspiration from Christ's example. There have been, and to some extent there still are, *many different practical forms* according to which the Church has been involved in the pastoral care of vocations. Her task is not only to discern but also to "accompany" priestly vocations. But *the spirit* which must inspire and sustain her *remains the same*: that of bringing to the priesthood only those who have been called, and to bring them adequately trained, namely, with a conscious and free response of adherence and involvement of their whole person with Jesus Christ who calls them to intimacy of life with him and to share in his mission of salvation. In this sense, the "seminary" in its different forms, and analogously the "house" of formation for religious priests, more than a place, a material space, should be a spiritual place, a way of life, an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of formation, so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become, with the Sacrament of Orders, a living image of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church. In their *Final Message* the Synod Fathers have grasped in a direct and deep way the original and specific meaning of the formation of candidates for the priesthood, when they say that "To live in the seminary, which is a school of the Gospel, means to follow Christ as the Apostles did. You are led by Christ into the service of God the Father and of all people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus you become more like Christ the Good Shepherd in order better to serve the Church and the world as a priest. In preparing for the priesthood we learn how to respond from the heart to Christ's basic question: 'Do you love me?' (*Jn* 21:15). For the future priest the answer can only mean total self-giving."¹²²

What needs to be done is to transfer this spirit, which can never be lacking in the Church, to the social, psychological, political and cultural conditions of the world today, conditions which are so varied and complex, as the Synod Fathers have confirmed, bearing in mind the different particular Churches. The Father, with words expressing thoughtful concern but at the same time great hope, have shown

¹²²*Message of the Synod Fathers to the People of God* (28 October 1990), IV: loc.cit.

awareness of and reflected at length on the efforts going on in all their Churches to identify and update methods of training candidates for the priesthood.

This present Exhortation seeks to gather the results of the work of the Synod, setting out some established points, indicating some essential goals, making available to all the wealth of experiences and training programmes which have already been tried and found worthwhile. In this Exhortation we consider "initial" formation and "ongoing" formation separately, but without forgetting that they are closely linked and that as a result they should become one sole organic journey of Christian and priestly living. The Exhortation looks at the different areas of formation – the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral areas – as well as the settings and the persons responsible for the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

I. THE AREAS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION

Human formation, the basis of all priestly formation

43. "The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation."¹²³ This statement by the Synod Fathers expresses not only a fact which reason brings to our consideration every day and which experience confirms, but a requirement which has a deeper and specific motivation in the very nature of the priest and his ministry. The priest, who is called to be a "living image" of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the Incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitudes towards others as we see narrated in the Gospels. The ministry of the priest is, certainly, to proclaim the Word, to celebrate the Sacraments, to guide the Christian community in charity "in the name and in the person of Christ," but all this he does dealing always and only with individual human beings: "Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God" (Heb 5:1). So we see that the human formation of the priest shows its special importance when related to the receivers of the

¹²³Propositio 21.

mission: in order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible, it is important that the priest should mould his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man. It is necessary that, following the example of Jesus who "knew what was in man" (*Jn* 2:25, cf. 8:3-11), the priest should be able to know the depth of the human heart, to perceive difficulties and problems, to make meeting and dialogue easy, to create trust and cooperation, to express serene and objective judgments.

Future priests should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry. These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behavior.¹²⁴ A simple and demanding programme for this human formation can be found in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians: "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (*Ph* 4:8). It is interesting to note that Paul, precisely in these profoundly human qualities, presents himself as a model to his faithful, for he goes on to say: "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do" (*Ph* 4:9).

Of special importance is the capacity to relate to others. This is truly fundamental for a person who is called to be responsible for a community and to be a "man of communion." This demands that the priest not be arrogant, or quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others, and quick to understand, forgive and console¹²⁵ (see also *1 Tm* 3:1-5; *Tt* 1:7-9).

¹²⁴Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 11; Decree on the Ministry and Life of the Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 3; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, (6 January 1970) n. 51; *loc. cit.* 356-357

¹²⁵Cf. *Propositio* 21

People today are often trapped in situations of standardization and loneliness, especially in large urban centers, and they become ever more appreciative of the value of communion. Today this is one of the most eloquent signs and one of the most effective ways for transmitting the Gospel message.

In this context affective maturity, which is the result of an education in true and responsible love, is a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

44. *Affective maturity* presupposes an awareness that love has a central role in human life. In fact, as I have written in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, "Man cannot live without love, He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is meaningless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it."¹²⁶

We are speaking of a love that involves the entire person, in all his aspects, physical, psychic and spiritual, and which is expressed in the "nuptial meaning" of the human body, thanks to which a person gives himself to another and takes the other to himself. A properly understood sexual education leads to understanding and realizing this "truth" about human love. We need to be aware that there is a widespread social and cultural atmosphere which "largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure."¹²⁷ Sometimes the very family situations in which priestly vocations arise will display not a few weaknesses and at times even serious failings.

In such context, an *education for sexuality* becomes more difficult but also more urgent. It should be truly and fully personal and therefore should present chastity in a manner that shows appreciation and love for it as a "virtue that develops a person's authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the 'nuptial meaning' of the body."¹²⁸

¹²⁶Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (4 March 1979), AAS 71 (1979), 274

¹²⁷Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (22 November 1981), n. 37: *loc. cit.* 128.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

Education for responsible love and the affective maturity of the person are totally necessary for those who, like the priest, are called to *celibacy*, that is, to offer with the grace of the Spirit and the free response of one's own will the whole of one's love and care to Jesus Christ and to his Church. In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity should bring to human relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ. As the Synod Fathers have written, "A love for Christ, which overflows into a dedication to everyone, is of the greatest importance in developing affective maturity. Thus the candidate, who is called to celibacy, will find in affective maturity a firm support to live chastity in faithfulness and joy."¹²⁹

Since the charism of celibacy, even when it is genuine and has proved itself, leaves man's affection and his instinctive impulses intact, candidates to the priesthood need an affective maturity which is prudent, able to renounce anything that is a threat to it, vigilant over both body and spirit, and capable of esteem and respect in interpersonal relationships between men and women. A precious help can be given by a suitable education to true *friendship*, following the image of the bonds of fraternal affection which Christ himself lived on earth (cf. *Jn* 11:5).

Human maturity, and in particular affective maturity, requires a clear and strong *training in freedom* which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the "truth" of one's own being, to the "meaning" of one's own existence, that is to the "sincere gift of self" as the way and fundamental content of the authentic realization of self.¹³⁰ Thus understood, freedom requires the person to be truly master of himself, determined to fight and overcome the different forms of selfishness and individualism which threaten the life of each one, ready to open out to others, generous in dedication and service to one's neighbour. This is important for the response that will have to be given to the vocation, and in particular to the priestly vocation, and for faithfulness to it and to the commitments connected with it, even in times of difficulty. On this educational journey towards a

¹²⁹*Propositio* 21.

¹³⁰Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, n.24.

mature, responsible freedom the community life of the Seminary can provide help.¹³¹

Intimately connected with formation to responsible freedom is education of the moral conscience. Such education calls from the depths of one's own "self" obedience to moral obligations and at the same time reveals the deep meaning of such obedience. It is a conscious and free response, and therefore a loving response, to God's demands, to God's love. "The human maturity of the priest – the Synod Fathers write – should include especially the formation of his conscience. In order that the candidate may faithfully meet his obligations with regard to God and the Church and wisely guide the consciences of the faithful, he should become accustomed to listening to the voice of God, who speaks to him in his heart, and to adhere with love and constancy to his will."¹³²

Spiritual Formation:

In communion with God and in search of Christ

45. Human formation, when it is carried out in the context of an anthropology which is open to the full truth regarding man, leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation. Every man, as God's creature who has been redeemed by Christ's blood, is called to reborn "of the water and the Spirit" (*Jn* 3:5) and to become a "son in the Son". In this wonderful plan of God is to be found the basis of the essentially religious dimension of the human person, which moreover can be grasped and recognized by reason itself: man is open to transcendence, to the absolute; he has a heart which is restless until it rests in the Lord.¹³³

The educational process of a spiritual life, seen as a relationship and communion with God, derives and develops from this fundamental and irrepressible religious need. In the light of revelation and Christian experience, spiritual formation possesses the unmistakable originality which derives from evangelical "newness." Indeed, it "is the work of the Holy Spirit and engages a person in his totality. It introduces him to a deep communion with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, and leads to the total submission of one's life to the Spirit,

¹³¹Cf. *Propositio* 21

¹³²*Propositio* 22.

¹³³Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1, 1: *CSEL* 33,1.

in a filial attitude towards the Father and a trustful attachment to the Church. Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the Cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the Paschal Mystery.”¹³⁴

Spiritual formation, as we have just seen, is applicable to all the faithful. Nevertheless, it should be structured according to the meanings and connotations which derive from the identity of the priest and his ministry. And just as for all the faithful spiritual formation is central and unifies their being and living as Christians, that is, as new creatures in Christ who walk in the Spirit, so too for every priest his spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and his acting as a priest. In this context, the Synod Fathers state that “without spiritual formation pastoral formation would be left without foundation”¹³⁵ and that spiritual formation is “an extremely important element of a priest’s education.”¹³⁶

The essential content of spiritual formation specifically leading towards the priesthood is well expressed in the Council’s Decree *Optatam Totius*: “Spiritual formation (...) should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing close to him as friends in every detail of their lives. They should live his Paschal Mystery in such a way that they will know how to initiate into it the people committed to their charge. They should be taught to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office, to seek him in the Bishop by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they are sent, especially the poor, little children, the weak, sinners and unbelievers. With the confidence of sons they should, love and reverence the most Blessed Virgin Mary, who was given as a mother to the disciple by Jesus Christ as he was dying on the Cross.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴Synod of Bishops, 8th Ordinary General Assembly, “The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of Present Day,” *Instrumentum laboris*, n. 30.

¹³⁵*Propositio* 22.

¹³⁶*Propositio* 23.

¹³⁷Decree of Priestly Formation *Optatam totius* n. 8.

46. This text form the Council deserves our careful and loving meditation, out of which we will easily be able to outline some fundamental values and demands of the spiritual path trodden by the candidate for the priesthood.

First, there is the value and demand of *"living intimately united to Jesus Christ"*. Our union with the Lord Jesus, which has its roots in Baptism and is nourished with the Eucharist, has to express itself and be radically renewed each day. Intimate communion with the Blessed Trinity, that is, the new life of grace which makes us children of God, constitutes the "novelty" of the believer, a novelty which involves both his being and his acting. It constitutes the "mystery" of Christian existence which is under the influence of the Spirit: it should, as a result, constitute the ethos of Christian living. Jesus has taught us this marvellous reality of Christian living, which is also the heart of spiritual life, with his allegory of the vine and the branches: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (*Jn* 15:1, 4-5).

The spiritual and religious values present in today's culture, and man, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, cannot help but hunger and thirst for God. However, the Christian religion is often regarded as just one religion among many or reduced to nothing more than a social ethic at the service of man. As a result its amazing novelty in human history is quite often not apparent. It is a "mystery", the event of the coming of the Son of God who becomes man and gives to those who welcome him the "power to become children of God" (*Jn* 1:12). It is the proclamation, nay the gift of a personal covenant of love and life between God and man. Only if future priests, through a suitable spiritual formation, have become deeply aware and have increasingly experienced this "mystery" will they be able to communicate this amazing and blessed message to others (cf. *1 Jn* 1:1-4).

The Council text, while taking account of the absolute transcendence of the Christian mystery, describes the communion of future priests with Jesus in *terms of friendship*. And indeed it is not an absurdity for man to aim at this, for it is the priceless gift of Christ, who said to his Apostles: "No longer do I call you servants,

for the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (*Jn 15:15*).

The Council text then points out a second great spiritual value: the search for Jesus. "They should be taught to seek Christ". This, along with the *quaerere Deum* (the search for God), is a classical theme of Christian spirituality. It has a specific application in the context of the calling of the Apostles. When John tells the story of the way the first two disciples followed Christ, he highlights this "search". It is Jesus himself who asks the question: "What do you seek?" And the two reply: "Rabbi, where are you staying?" The Evangelist continues: "He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day" (*Jn 1:37-39*). In a certain sense, the spiritual life of the person who is preparing for the priesthood is dominated by this search: by it and by the "finding" of the Master, to follow him, to be in communion with him. So inexhaustible is the mystery of the imitation of Christ and the sharing in his life, that this "seeking" will also have to continue throughout the priest's life and ministry. Likewise this "finding" the Master will have to continue, in order to bring him to others, or rather in order to excite in others the desire to seek out the Master. But all this becomes possible if it is proposed to others as a living "experience," an experience that is worthwhile sharing. This was the path followed by Andrew to lead his brother Simon to Jesus. The Evangelist John writes that Andrew "first found his brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ)" and brought him to Jesus (*Jn 1:41-42*). And so Simon too will be called, as an apostle, to follow the Messiah: "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 what does to seek Christ signify in the spiritual life? And, where is he to be found? "Rabbi, where are you staying?" The Decree *Optatam Totius* would seem to indicate a triple path to be covered: a faithful meditation on the word of God, active participation in the Church's holy mysteries and the service of charity to the "little ones." These are three great values and demands which further define the content of the spiritual formation of the candidate to the priesthood.

47. An essential element of spiritual formation is *the prayerful and meditated reading of the word of God (lectio divina)*, a humble

and loving listening of him so speaks. It is in fact by the light and with the strength of the word of God that one's own vocation can be discovered and understood, loved and followed, and one's own mission carried out. So true is this that the person's entire existence finds its unifying and radical meaning in being the terminus of God's word which calls man and the beginning of man's word which answers God. Familiarity with the word of God will make conversion easy, not only in the sense of detaching us from evil so as to adhere to the good, but also in the sense of nourishing our heart with the thoughts of God, so that the faith (as a response to the word) becomes our new basis for judging and evaluating persons and things, events and problems.

Provided that we approach the word of God and listen to it as it really is, it brings us into contact with God himself, God speaking to man. It brings us into contact with Christ, the Word of God, the Truth who is at the same time both the Way and the Life (cf. *Jn* 14:6). It is a matter of reading the "scriptures" by listening to the "words," "the word" of God, as the Council reminds us: "The sacred scriptures contain the word of God and, because they are inspired, are truly the word of God."¹³⁸ The Council also states: "By this revelation, then, the invisible God (Cf. *Col.* 1:15; *1 Tm* 1:7), from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends (cf. *Ex* 33:11; *Jn* 15:14-15), and moves among them (cf. *Ba* 3:38), in order to invite and receive them into his own company."¹³⁹

A loving knowledge of the word of God and a prayerful familiarity with it are specifically important for the prophetic ministry of the priest. They are a fundamental condition for such a ministry to be carried out suitably, especially if we bear in mind the "new evangelization" which the Church today is called to undertake. The Council tells us: "All clerics, particularly priests of Christ and others who, as deacons or catechists, are officially engaged in the ministry of the word, should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant sacred reading and diligent study. For it must not happen that anyone becomes 'an empty preacher of the word of God to others, not being a hearer of the word of God in his own heart' (*St. Augustine, Sermons* 179, 1: *PL* 8:966)."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, n. 24.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, n. 2.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, n. 25.

The first and fundamental manner of responding to the word is *prayer*, which is without any doubt a primary value and demand of spiritual formation. Prayer should lead candidates for the priesthood to get to know and have experience of the *genuine meaning of Christian prayer*, as a living and personal meeting with the Father through the only-begotten Son under the action of the Spirit, a dialogue that becomes a sharing in the filial conversation between Jesus and the Father. One aspect of the priest's mission, and certainly by no means a secondary aspect, is that he is to be a "teacher of prayer." However, the priest will only be able to train others in this school of Jesus at prayer, if he himself has been trained in it and continues to receive its formation. This what people ask of the priest: "The priest is *the man of God*, the one who belongs to God and makes people thing about God. When the *Letter to the Hebrews* speaks of Christ it present him as 'a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God' (Heb 2:17)... Christian expect to find in the priest not only a man who welcomes them, who listens to them gladly and shows a real interest in them, but also and above all *a man who will help them to turn to God*, to rise up to him. And so the priest needs to be trained to have a deep intimacy with God. Those who are preparing for the priesthood should realize that their whole priestly life will have value inasmuch as they are able to give themselves to Christ and, through Christ, to the Father."¹⁴¹

A necessary training in prayer in a context of noise and agitation like that of our society, is an education in the deep human meaning and religious value of silence, as the spiritual atmosphere vital for perceiving God's presence and for allowing oneself by won over by it (cf. 1 K 19:11ff).

48. The high point of Christian prayer is the *Eucharist*, which in its turn is to be seen as the "*summit and source*" of the *sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours*. A totally necessary aspect of the formation of every Christian, and in particular of every priest, is *liturgical formation*, in the full sense of becoming inserted in a living way in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ who died and rose again, and is present and active in the Church's sacraments. Communion with God, which is the hinge on which the whole of the spiritual

¹⁴¹Angelus (4 March 1990), nn. 2-3: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 5-6 March 1990.

life turns, is the gift and fruit of the sacraments. At the same time it is a task and responsibility which the sacraments entrust to the freedom of the believer, so that he may live this same communion, in the decisions, choices, attitudes and actions of his daily existence. In this sense, the "grace" which "renews" Christian living is the grace of Jesus Christ who died and rose again, and continues to pour out his holy and sanctifying Spirit in the sacraments. In the same way, the "new law" which should guide and govern the life of the Christian is written by the sacraments in the "new heart." And it is a law of charity towards God and brethren, as a response and prolonging of the charity of God towards man signified and communicated by the sacraments. It is thus possible to understand straightaway the value of a "full, conscious and active participation"¹⁴² in sacramental celebrations for the gift and task of that "pastoral charity" which is the soul of the priestly ministry.

This applies above all to sharing in the Eucharist, the memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ and of his glorious Resurrection, the "sacrament of piety, sign of unity, bond of charity,"¹⁴³ the paschal banquet "in which Christ is received, the soul is filled with grace and we are given a pledge of the glory that is to be ours."¹⁴⁴ For priests, as ministers of sacred things, are first and foremost ministers of the Sacrifice of the Mass:¹⁴⁵ the role is utterly irreplaceable, because without the priest there can be no Eucharistic offering.

This explains the essential importance of the Eucharist for the priest's life and ministry and, as a result, in the spiritual formation of candidates for the priesthood. To be utterly frank and clear, I would like to say once again: "it is fitting that seminarians take part *every day* in the Eucharistic celebration, in such a way that afterwards they will take up as a rule of their priestly life this daily celebration. They should moreover be trained to consider the Eucharistic celebration as the *essential moment of their day*, in which they

¹⁴²Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 14.

¹⁴³Saint Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus* 26,13: *loc. cit.*, 266.

¹⁴⁴Liturgy of the Hours, Magnificat Antiphon of Second Vespers of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.

¹⁴⁵Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 13.

will take an active part and which never be satisfied with a merely habitual attendance. Finally, candidates to the priesthood will be trained to share in the intimate dispositions which the Eucharist fosters: gratitude for heavenly benefits received because the Eucharist is thanksgiving; an attitude of self-offering which will impel them to unite the offering of themselves to the Eucharistic offering of Christ; charity nourished by a sacrament which is a sign of unity and sharing; the yearning to contemplate and bow in adoration before Christ who is really present under the Eucharistic species."¹⁴⁶

It is necessary and very urgent to rediscover, within spiritual formation, the *beauty and joy of the Sacrament of Penance*. In a culture which, through renewed and more subtle forms of self-justification, runs the fatal risk of losing the "sense of sin" and, as a result, the consoling joy of the plea for forgiveness (cf. *Ps* 51:14) and of meeting God who is "rich in mercy" (*Ep* 2:4), it is vital to educate future priest to have the virtue of penance, which the Church wisely nourishes in her celebration and in the seasons of the liturgical year, and which finds its fullness in the sacrament of Reconciliation. From it flow the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the Cross. These are elements of the spiritual life which often prove to be particularly arduous for many candidates for the priesthood who have grown up in relatively comfortable and affluent circumstances and have been made less incline and open to these very elements by the models of behaviors and ideals transmitted by the mass media; but this also happens in countries where the conditions of life are poorer and young people live in more austere situations. For this reason, but above all in order to put into practice the "radical self-giving" proper to the priest following the example of Christ the Good Shepherd, the Synod Fathers wrote: "It is necessary to inculcate the meaning of the Cross, which is at the heart of the Paschal Mystery. Through this identification with Christ crucified, as a slave, the world can rediscover the value of austerity, of suffering and also of martyrdom, within the present culture which is imbued with secularism, greed and hedonism."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶*Angelus* (1 July 1990) n. 3: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2-3 July 1990.

¹⁴⁷*Propositio* 23

49. Spiritual formation also involves seeking Christ in people.

The spiritual life is, indeed, an interior life, a life of intimacy with God, a life of prayer and contemplation. But this very meeting with God, and with his fatherly love for everyone, brings us face to face with the need to meet our neighbour, to give ourselves to others, to serve in a humble and disinterested fashion, following the example which Jesus has proposed to everyone as a programme of life when he washed the feet of the apostles: "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (*Jn* 13:15).

Formation which aims at giving oneself generously and freely, which is something helped also by the communal structure which preparation to the priesthood normally takes, is a necessary condition for one who is called to be a manifestation and image of the Good Shepherd who gives life (cf. *Jn* 10:11, 15). From this point of view, spiritual formation has and should develop its own inherent pastoral and charitable dimension, and can profitably make use of a proper devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, one that is both strong and tender. This is a point made by the Synod Fathers: "When we speak of forming future priests in the spirituality of the Heart of the Lord, we mean they should lead lives that are a response to the love and affection of Christ the Priest and Good Shepherd: to his love for the Father in the Holy Spirit, and to his love towards men that was so great as to lead him to give his life in sacrifice for them."¹⁴⁸

The priest is, therefore, a man of charity, and is called to educate others according to Christ's example and the new commandment of brotherly love (cf. *Jn* 15:12). But this demands that he himself allow himself to be constantly trained by the Spirit in the charity of Christ. In this sense preparation for the priesthood must necessarily involve a proper training in charity and particularly in the preferential love for the "poor" in whom our faith discovers Jesus (cf. *Mt* 25:40), and a merciful love for sinners.

In the general context of charity, which consists in the loving gift of oneself, is to be found, in the programme of spiritual formation of the future priest, *education in obedience, celibacy and poverty*.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹*Cf. Ibid.*

The Council offers this invitation: "Students must clearly understand that it no their lot in life to lord it over others and enjoy honours, but to devote themselves completely to the service of God and the pastoral ministry. With special care they should be trained in priestly obedience, poverty and a spirit of self-denial, that they may accustom themselves to living in conformity with the crucified Christ and to give up willingly even those things which are lawful, but not expedient."¹⁵⁰

50. The spiritual formation of one who is called to live celibacy should pay particular attention to preparing the future priest so that he may *know, appreciate, love and live celibacy according to its true nature* and according to its real purposes, that is for evangelical, spiritual and pastoral motives. The virtue of chastity is a premise for this preparation and is its content. It colours all human relations and leads "to experiencing and showing... a sincere, human, fraternal and personal love, one that is capable of sacrifice, following Christ's example, a love for all and for each person."¹⁵¹

The celibacy of priests brings with it certain characteristics, thanks to which they "renounce marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (cf. *Mt* 19:12) and hold fast to their Lord with that undivided love which is profoundly in harmony with the New Covenant; they bear witness to the resurrection in a future life (cf. *Lk* 20:36) and obtain the most useful assistance towards the constant exercise of that perfect charity by which they can become all things to all men in their priestly ministry."¹⁵² And so priestly celibacy should not be considered just as a legal norm, or as a totally external condition for admission to ordination, but rather as a value that is profoundly connected with ordination, whereby a man takes on the likeness of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and Spouse of the Church, and therefore as a choice of a greater and undivided love for Christ and his Church, as a full and joyful availability in his heart for the pastoral ministry. Celibacy is to be considered as a special grace, as a gift, for "not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given" (*Mt* 19:11). Certainly it is a grace which does not

¹⁵⁰Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 9.

¹⁵¹Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotialis* (6 January 19970), loc. cit. 354.

¹⁵²Second Vatican Council, Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

dispense with, but counts most definitely on a conscious and free response on the part of the receiver. This charism of the Spirit also brings with it the grace for the receiver to remain faithful to it for all his life and be able to carry out generously and joyfully its concomitant commitments. Formation in priestly celibacy should also include helping people to be aware of the "precious gift of God,"¹⁵³ which will lead to prayer and to vigilance in guarding the gift from anything which could put it under threat.

Through his celibate life, the priest will be able to fulfil better his ministry on behalf of the People of God. In particular, as he witnesses to the evangelical value of virginity, he will be able to aid Christian spouses to live fully the "great sacrament" of the love of Christ the Bridegroom for his Spouse the Church, just as his own faithfulness to celibacy will help them to be faithful to each other as husband and wife.¹⁵⁴

The importance of a careful preparation for priestly celibacy, especially in the social and cultural situations that we see today, led the Synod Fathers to make a series of requests which have a permanent value, as the wisdom of our Mother the Church confirms. I authoritatively set them down again as criteria to be followed in formation for chastity in celibacy: "Let the Bishops together with the rectors and spiritual directors of the seminaries establish principles, offer criteria and give assistance for discernment in this matter. Of the greatest importance for formation for chastity in celibacy are the Bishop's concern and fraternal life among priest. In the seminary, that is in the programme of formation, celibacy should be presented clearly, without any ambiguities and in a positive fashion. The seminarian should have a sufficient degree of physiological and sexual maturity as well as an assiduous and authentic life of prayer, and he should put himself under the direction of a spiritual father. The spiritual director should help the seminarian so that he himself reaches a mature and free decision, which is built on esteem for priestly friendship and self-discipline, as well as on the acceptance of solitude and on a physically and psychologically sound personal state. Therefore, seminarians should have a good knowledge of the

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴*Letter to all the Priests of the Church on Holy Thursday 1979 (8 April 1979): Insegnamenti II/1 (1979), 841-862.*

teaching of the Second Vatican Council, of the Encyclical *Sacerdotalis Coelibatus* and the "Instruction for Formation in Priestly Celibacy" published by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1974. In order that the seminarian may be able to embrace priestly celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven with a free decision, he needs to know the Christian and truly human nature and purpose of sexuality in marriage and in celibacy. It is necessary also to instruct and educate the lay faithful regarding the evangelical, spiritual and pastoral reason proper to priestly celibacy, so that they will help priest with their friendships, understanding and cooperation."¹⁵⁵

Intellectual Formation: Understanding the Faith

51. Intellectual formation has its own characteristics but it is also deeply connected with, and indeed can be seen as a necessary expression of, both human and spiritual formation: it is a fundamental demand of man's intelligence by which he "participates in the light of God's mind" and seeks to acquire a wisdom which in turn opens to and is directed towards knowing and adhering to God.¹⁵⁶

The intellectual formation of candidates for the priesthood finds its specific justification in the very nature of the ordained ministry, and the challenge of the "new evangelization" to which our Lord is calling the Church on the threshold of the third millennium shows just how important this formation is. "If we expect every Christian – the Synod Fathers write – to be prepared to make a defense of the faith and to account for the hope that is in us (cf. *1 Pt 3:15*), then all the more should candidates for the priesthood and priests have diligent care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their education and pastoral activity. For the salvation of their brothers and sisters they should seek and every deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries."¹⁵⁷ The present situation is heavily marked by religious indifference, by a widespread mistrust regarding the real capacity of reason to reach objective and universal truth, and by fresh problems and questions brought up by scientific and technological discoveries. It strongly demands a high level of intellectual formation, such as will enable priest to proclaim, in a context like this, the

¹⁵⁵*Propositio 24.*

¹⁵⁶Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, n.15.

¹⁵⁷*Propositio 26.*

changeless Gospel of Christ and to make it credible to the legitimate demands of human reason. Moreover, there is the present phenomenon of pluralism which is very marked in the field not only of human society but also of community of the Church herself. It demands special attention to critical discernment: it is a further reason showing the need for an extremely rigorous intellectual formation.

These "pastoral" reasons for intellectual formation reconfirm what has been said above concerning the unity of the educational process in its diverse aspect. The commitment to study, which takes up no small part of the time of those preparing for the priesthood, is not in fact an external and secondary dimension of their human, Christian, spiritual and vocational growth. In reality, through study, especially the study of theology, the future priest assents to the word of God, grows in his spiritual life and prepares himself to fulfill his pastoral ministry. This is the many-sided and unifying scope of the theological study indicated by the Council¹⁵⁸ and repropounded by the Synod's *Instrumentum Laboris*: "To be pastorally effective, intellectual formation is to be integrated with a spirituality marked by a personal experience of God. In this way a purely abstract approach to knowledge is overcome in favour of that intelligence of heart which knows how 'to look beyond,' and then is in a position to communicate the mystery of God to the people."¹⁵⁹

52. A crucial stage of intellectual formation is the study of *philosophy*, which leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, and of the person's freedom and relationships with the world and with God. A proper philosophical training is vital, not only because of the links between the great philosophical question and the mysteries of salvations which are studied in theology under the guidance of the higher light of faith,¹⁶⁰ but also vis-à-vis an extremely widespread cultural situation which emphasizes subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth: only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the

¹⁵⁸Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatum totius*, n. 16.

¹⁵⁹"The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day," *Instrumentum laboris*, n.39.

¹⁶⁰Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Letter to Bishops *De necessitate Philosophiae studia in Seminariis intensius promovendi* (20 January 1972).

human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ. Nor must one underestimate the importance of philosophy as a guarantee of that "certainty of truth" which is the only firm basis for a total giving of oneself to Jesus and to the Church. It is not difficult to see that some very specific questions, such as that concerning the priest's identity and his apostolic and missionary commitment, are closely linked to the question about the nature of truth, which is anything but an abstract question: if we are not certain about the truth, how can we put our whole life on the line, how can we have the strength to challenge others' way of living?

Philosophy greatly helps the candidate to enrich his intellectual formation in the "cult of truth," namely, in a kind of *loving veneration of the truth*, which leads one to recognize that the truth is not created or measured by man but is given to man as a gift by the supreme Truth, God; that albeit in a limited way and often with difficulty, human reason can reach objective and universal truth, even that relating to God and the radical meaning of existence; and that faith itself cannot do without reason and the effort of "thinking through" its contents, as that great mind Augustine bore witness: "I wished to see with my mind what I have believed, and I have argued and laboured greatly."¹⁶¹

For a deeper understanding of man and the phenomena and lines of development of society, in relation to a pastoral ministry which is as "incarnate" as possible, the so-called "*human sciences*" can be of considerable use, sciences such as sociology, psychology, education, economics and politics, and the science of social communication. Also in the precise field of the positive or descriptive sciences, these can help the future priest prolong the living "contemporaneity" of Christ. As Paul VI once said, "Christ became the contemporary of some men and spoke their language. Our faithfulness to him demands that this contemporaneity should be maintained."¹⁶²

53. The intellectual formation of the future priest is based and built above all on the study of *sacred doctrine*, of theology. The value and genuineness of this theological formation depend on maintaining

¹⁶¹"*Desideravi intellectu videre quod credidi, et multum disputavi et laboravi*" *De Trinitate* XV 28: CCL 50/A, 534.

¹⁶²Paul VI, *Address to the participants in the 21st Italian Biblical Week* (25 September 1970): AAS 62 (1970), 618.

a scrupulous respect for the nature of theology. The Synod Fathers summarized this as follows: "True theology proceeds from the faith and aims at leading to the faith."¹⁶³ This is the conception of theology which has always been put forward by the Church and, specifically, by the Magisterium. This is the line followed by the great theologians who have enriched the Church's thinking down the ages. Saint Thomas is extremely clear when he affirms that the faith is as it were the habitus of theology, that is, its permanent principle of operation,¹⁶⁴ and that the whole of theology is ordered to nourishing the faith.¹⁶⁵

The theologian is therefore, first and foremost, a believer, a man of faith. But he is a believer who asks himself questions about his own faith (*fides quaerens intellectum*), with the aim of reaching a deeper understanding of the faith itself. The two aspects (of faith and mature reflection) are intimately connected, intertwined: their intimate coordination and interpenetration are what makes for true theology, and as a result decide the contents, modalities and spirit according to which sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrina*) is elaborated and studied.

Moreover, since the faith, which is the point of departure and the point of arrival of theology, brings about a personal relationship between the believer and Jesus Christ in the Church, theology also has intrinsic Christological and ecclesial connotations, which the candidate to the priesthood should take up consciously, not only because of what they imply for his personal life but also inasmuch as they affect his pastoral ministry. If our faith truly welcomes the word of God, it will lead to a radical "yes" on the part of the believer to Jesus Christ, who is the full and definitive Word of God to the world (cf. *Heb* 1:1ff.). As a result, theological reflection is centered on adherence to Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God: mature reflection has to be described as a sharing in the "thinking" of Christ (cf. *1 Co* 2:16) in the human form of a science (*scientia fidei*). At the same time, faith inserts the believer in the Church as makes him partake in the life of the Church as a community of faith. Hence theology has an ecclesial

¹⁶³*Propositio* 26.

¹⁶⁴*Fides, quae est quasi habitus theologiae*: in *Lib. Boethii de Trinitate*, V. 4 ad 8.

¹⁶⁵Cf. Saint Thomas, *In 1 Sentent.*, Prolog., q. I, a. 1-5.

dimension, because it is a mature reflection on the faith of the Church by the theologian who is a member of the Church.¹⁶⁶

These Christological and ecclesial dimensions which are con-natural to theology, while they help candidates for the priesthood grow in scientific precision, will also help them develop a great and living love for Jesus Christ and for his Church. This love will both nourish their spiritual life and guide them to carry out their ministry with a generous spirit. This was what the Second Vatican Council had in mind when it called for a revision of ecclesiastical studies, with a view to "a more effective coordination of philosophy and theology so that they supplement one another in revealing to the minds of the students with ever increasing clarity the Mystery of Christ, which affects the whole course of human history, exercises an unceasing influence on the Church, and operates mainly through the ministry of the priest."¹⁶⁷

Intellectual formation in theology and formation in the spiritual life, in particular the life of prayer, meet and strengthen each other, without detracting in any way from the soundness of research or from the spiritual tenor of prayer. Saint Bonaventure reminds us: "Let no one think that it is enough for him to read if he lacks devotion, or engage in speculation without spiritual joy, or to be active if he has no piety, or to have knowledge without charity, or intelligence without humility, or study without God's grace, or to expect to know himself if he is lacking the infused wisdom of God."¹⁶⁸

54. Theological formation is both complex and demanding. It should lead the candidate for the priesthood to a *complete and unified vision* of the truths which God has revealed in Jesus Christ and of the Church's experience of faith. Hence the need both to know "all" the Christian truths, without arbitrarily selecting among them, and to know them in an orderly fashion. This means the candidate needs to be helped to build a synthesis which will be the result of the contributions of the different theological disciplines, the specific

¹⁶⁶Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian *Donum veritatis* (24 May 1990), nn. 11; 40: AAS 82 (1990), 1554-1555; 1568-1569).

¹⁶⁷Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 14.

¹⁶⁸*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Prol., 4: *Opera Omnia*, Tomus V, Ad Aquas Claras 1891, 296.

nature of which acquires genuine value only in their profound coordination.

In reflecting maturely upon the faith, theology moves in two directions. The first is that of the *study of the word of God*: the word set down in Holy Writ, celebrated and lived in the living Tradition of the Church, and authoritatively interpreted by the Church's Magisterium. Hence the importance of studying Sacred Scripture – "which should be the soul, as it were, of all theology,"¹⁶⁹ the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, the history of the Church and the teachings of the Magisterium. The second direction is that of *man, who converses with God*: man who is called "to believe," "to live," "to communicate" to others the *Christian faith and outlook*. Hence the study of dogmatic and moral theology, of spiritual theology, of canon law and of pastoral theology.

Because of its relationship to the believer theology is led to pay particular attention both to the fundamental and permanent question of the relationship between faith and reason and to a number of requirements more closely related to the social and cultural situation of today. In regard to the first we have the study of fundamental theology, whose object is the fact of Christian revelation and its transmission in the Church. In regard to the second we have disciplines which have been and are being developed as responses to problems strongly felt nowadays. This is true of the study of the Church's social doctrine which "belongs to the field... of theology and, in particular, of moral theology"¹⁷⁰ and is to be counted among the "essential components" of the "new evangelization," of which it is an instrument.¹⁷¹ This likewise true of the study of missiology, ecumenism, Judaism, Islam and other religions.

55. Theological formation nowadays should pay attention to *certain problems* which not infrequently raise difficulties, tensions and confusion within the life of the Church. One can think of the relationship between statements issued by the Magisterium and

¹⁶⁹Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatum totius*, n. 16.

¹⁷⁰Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), n. 41: AAS 83 (1991), 571.

¹⁷¹Cf. Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), n. 54: AAS 83 (1991), 859-860.

theological discussion, a relationship which does not always take the shape it ought to have, that is, within a framework of cooperation. It is indeed true that "the living Magisterium of the Church and theology, while having different gifts and functions, ultimately have the same goal: preserving the People of God in the truth which sets free and thereby making them 'a light to the nations.' This service to the ecclesial community brings the theologian and the Magisterium into a mutual relationship. The latter authentically teaches the doctrine of the Apostles. And, benefiting from the work of theologians, it refutes objections to and distortions of the faith, and promotes with the authority received from Jesus Christ, new and deeper comprehension, clarification, and application of revealed doctrine. Theology, for its part, gains, by way of reflection, an ever deeper understanding of the word of God found in the Scripture and handed on faithfully by the Church's living Tradition under the guidance of the Magisterium. Theology strives to clarify the teaching of Revelation with regard to reason and gives it finally an organic and systematic form."¹⁷² When, for a number of reasons, this cooperation is lacking, one needs to avoid misunderstandings and confusion, and to know how to distinguish carefully "the common teaching of the Church from the opinions of theologians and from tendencies which quickly pass (the so-called 'trends')."¹⁷³ There is no "parallel" magisterium, for the one Magisterium is that of Peter and the Apostles, the Pope and the Bishops.¹⁷⁴

Another problem, which is experienced especially when seminary studies are entrusted to academic institution, is that the *relationship between high scientific standards in theology and its pastoral aim*. This raises the issue of the pastoral nature of theology. It is a question really, of two characteristics of theology and how it is to be taught which are not only not opposed to each other, but which work together, from different angles, in favour of a more complete "understanding of the faith." In fact the pastoral nature of theology does not mean that it should be less doctrinal or that it should be completely

¹⁷²Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian *Donum veritatis* (24 May 1990), n. 212: *loc. cit.*, 1559.

¹⁷³*Propositio* 23.

¹⁷⁴For example, Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote: "We have to be more on the side of the authority of the Church than on that of Augustine or Jerome, or any other Doctor against the authority of Peter" (*Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 10, a. 12 ad 3).

stripped of its scientific nature. It means, rather, that it enables future priests to proclaim the Gospel message through the cultural modes of their age and to direct pastoral actions according to an authentic theological vision. Hence, on the one hand, a respectful study of the genuine scientific quality of the individual disciplines of theology will help provide a more complete and deeper training of the pastor of soul as a teacher of faith. And, on the other hand, an appropriate awareness that there is a pastoral goal in view will help the serious and scientific study of theology be more formative for future priests.

A further problem that is strongly felt these days is the demand for the *evangelization of cultures* and the *inculturation of the message of faith*. An eminently pastoral problem, this should enter more broadly and carefully into the formation of the candidates to the priesthood: "In the present circumstances in which, in a number of regions of the world, the Christian religion is considered as something foreign to cultures (be they ancient or modern), it is very important that in the whole intellectual and human formation the dimension of inculturation be seen as necessary and essential."¹⁷⁵ But this means we need a genuine theology, inspired by the Catholic principles on inculturation. These principles are linked with the mystery of incarnation of the Word of God and with Christian anthropology and thus illumine the authentic meaning of inculturation. In the face of all the different and at times contrasting cultures present in the various parts of the world, inculturation seeks to obey Christ' command to preach the Gospel to all nations even unto the ends of the earth. Such obedience does not signify either syncretism or a simple adaptation of the announcement of the Gospel, but rather the fact that the Gospel penetrates the very life of cultures, becomes incarnate in them, overcoming the cultural elements that are incompatible with the faith and Christian living and raising their values to the mystery of salvation which comes from Christ.¹⁷⁶ The problem of inculturation can have a particularly great interest when the candidates to the priesthood are themselves coming from indigenous cultures. In that case, they will need to find suitable ways of formation, both to overcome the danger of being less demanding and to

¹⁷⁵*Propositio* 32.

¹⁷⁶Cf. Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 67: *loc. cit.*, 315-316.

proper use of the good and genuine elements of their own cultures and traditions.¹⁷⁷

56. Following the teaching and the indications of the Second Vatican Council and their application in the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, the Church decided upon a vast updating of the reaching of the philosophical and especially theological disciplines in seminaries. This updating, which in some cases still needs amendments and developments, has on the whole helped to make the education available a more effective medium for intellectual formation. In this respect Synod Fathers have confirmed once again, frequently and clearly, the need – indeed the urgency – to put the basic study plan (both the general one which applies to the Church worldwide, and those of the individual nations or Episcopal Conferences) into effect in seminaries and in houses of formation.¹⁷⁸

It is necessary to oppose firmly the tendency to play down the seriousness of studies and the commitment to them. This tendency is showing itself in certain spheres of the Church, also as a consequence of the insufficient and defective basic education of students beginning the philosophical and theological curriculum. The very situation of the Church today demands increasingly that teachers be truly able to face the complexity of the times and that they be in a position to face competently, with clarity and deep reasoning, the questions about meaning which are put by the people of today, questions which can only receive a full and definitive reply in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Formation: Communion with the Charity of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd

57. The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence, their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character. The Council's Decree *Optatam Totius* states so clearly when speaking of Major Seminaries: "The whole training of the students should have

¹⁷⁷Cf. *Propositio* 32.

¹⁷⁸*Propositio* 27.

as its object to make them *true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd*. Hence, they should be trained for the ministry of the word so that they may gain an ever increasing understanding of the revealed word of God, making it their own by meditation, and giving it expression in their speech and in their lives. They should be trained for the ministry of worship and sanctification, so that by prayer and the celebration of the sacred liturgical functions they may carry on the work of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. They should be trained to undertake the ministry of the shepherd, that they may know how to represent Christ to humanity, Christ who 'did not come to have service done to him but to serve other and to give his life as a ransom for the lives of many' (*Mk 10:45; Jn 13:12-17*), and that they may win over many by becoming the servants of all (*1 Co 9:19*).¹⁷⁹

The Council text insists upon the coordination of the different aspect of human, spiritual, and intellectual formation. At the same time it stresses that they are all directed to a specific pastoral end. This pastoral aim ensure that the human, spiritual and intellectual formation has certain precise content and characteristics; it also unifies and gives specificity to the whole formation of future priests.

Like all other branches of formation, pastoral formation develops by means of mature reflection and practical application, and it is rooted in a spirit, which is the hinge of all and the force which stimulates it and makes it develop.

It needs to be studied therefore as the true and genuine theological discipline that it is: *pastoral or practical theology*. It is a scientific reflection on the Church as she is built up daily, by the power of the Spirit, in history; on the Church as the "universal sacrament of salvation,"¹⁸⁰ as a living sign and instrument of the salvation wrought by Christ through the word, the sacraments and the service of charity. Pastoral theology is not just an art. Nor is it a set of exhortations, experiences and methods. It is theological in its own right, because it receives from the faith the principles and

¹⁷⁹Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 4.

¹⁸⁰Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, n. 48.

criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history, a Church that each day "begets" the Church herself, to quote the felicitous expression of the Venerable Bede: "*Nam et Ecclesia quotidie gignit Ecclesiam.*"¹⁸¹ Among these principles and criteria one that is specially important is that of the evangelical discernment of the socio-cultural and ecclesial situation in which the particular pastoral action has to be carried out.

The study of pastoral theology should throw light upon its *practical application* through involvement in certain pastoral services which the candidates to the priesthood should carry out, with a necessary progression and always in harmony with their other educational commitments. It is a question of pastoral "experiences," which can come together in a real programme of "pastoral training," which can last a considerable amount of time and the usefulness of which will itself need to be checked in an orderly manner.

Pastoral study and action direct one to an inner source, which the work of formation will take care to guard and make good use of: this is the ever deeper communion with the pastoral charity of Jesus, which, just as it was the principle and driving force of his salvific action, likewise, thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Orders, should constitute the principle and driving force of the priestly ministry. It is a question of a type of formation meant not only to ensure scientific, pastoral competence and practical skill, but also and especially a *way of being* in communion with the very sentiment and behaviour of Christ the Good Shepherd: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (*Ph* 2:5).

58. And so pastoral formation certainly cannot be reduced to a mere apprenticeship, aiming to make the candidate familiar with some pastoral techniques. The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.

¹⁸¹*Explanatio Apocalypsis lib. II, 12: PL 93, 166.*

Thanks to an initial and gradual experience of ministry, future priests will be able to be inserted into the living pastoral tradition of their particular Church. They will learn to open the horizon of their mind and heart to the missionary dimension of the Church's life. They will get practice in some initial forms of cooperation with one another and with the priest alongside whom they will be sent to work. These priest have a considerably important role, in union with the seminary programme, in showing the candidate how they should go about pastoral work.

When it comes to choosing places and services in which candidates can obtain their pastoral experience, the parish should be given particular importance,¹⁸² for it is a living cell of local and specialized pastoral work, in which they will find themselves faced with the kind of problems they will meet in their future ministry. The Synod Fathers have proposed a number of concrete examples, such as visits to the sick, caring for immigrants, refugees and nomads; and various social works which can be expressions of charitable zeal. Specifically, they write: "The priest must be a witness of the charity of Christ himself who 'went about doing good' (Ac 10:38). He must also be a visible sign of the solicitude of the Church who is Mother and Teacher. And given that man today is affected by so many hardships, especially those who are sunk in inhuman poverty, blind violence and unjust power, it is necessary that the man of God who is to be equipped for every good work (cf. 2 Tm 3:17), should defend the rights and dignity of man. Nevertheless, he should be careful not to adopt false ideologies, nor should he forget, as he strives to promote its perfecting, that the only redemption of the world is that effected by the Cross of Christ."¹⁸³

These and other pastoral activities will teach the future priest to live out as a "service" his own mission of "authority" in the community, setting aside all attitudes of superiority or of exercising a power if it is not simply that which is justified by pastoral charity.

If the training is to be suitable, the different experiences which candidates for the priesthood have should assume a clear "ministerial" character, and should be intimately linked with all the demands

¹⁸²Cf. *Propositio* 28.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*

that befit preparation to the priesthood and (certainly not neglecting their studies) in relation to the services of the proclamation of the work, of worship and of leadership. These services can become a specific way of experiencing the ministries of Lector, Acolyte and Deacon.

59. Since pastoral action is destined by its very nature to enliven the Church, which is essentially "mystery," "communion," and "mission," pastoral formation be aware of and should live these ecclesial aspects in the exercise of the ministry.

Of fundamental importance is awareness that the Church is a "mystery," that is, a divine work, fruit of the Spirit of Christ, an effective sign of grace, the presence of the Trinity in the Christian community. This awareness, while never lessening the pastor's genuine sense of responsibility, will convince him that the Church grows thanks to the gratuitous work of the Spirit and that his service – thanks to the very grace of God that is entrusted to the free responsibility of man – is the Gospel service of the "unworthy servant" (cf. *Lk* 17:10).

Awareness of the Church as "*communion*" will prepare the candidate for the priesthood to carry out his pastoral work with a community spirit, in heartfelt cooperation with the different members of the Church: priests and bishops, diocesan and religious priests, priests and lay people. Such a cooperation presupposes a knowledge and appreciation of the different gifts and charisms, of the diverse vocations and responsibilities which the Spirit offers and entrusts to the members of Christ's Body. It demands a living and precise consciousness of one's own identity in the Church and of the identity of others. It demands mutual trust, patience, gentleness and the capacity for understanding and expectation. It finds its roots above all in a love for the Church that is deeper than love for self and the group or groups one may belong to. It is particularly important to prepare future priest for *cooperation with the laity*. The Council says, "they should be willing to listen to lay people, give brotherly consideration to their wishes and recognize their experience and competence in the different fields of human activity. In this way they will be able to recognize with them the signs of the times."¹⁸⁴ The recent

¹⁸⁴Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 9; cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1981), n. 61: *loc. cit.*, 512-514

Synod too has insisted upon pastoral solicitude for the laity: "The student should become capable of proposing and introducing the lay faithful, the young especially, to the different vocations (marriage, social services, apostolate, ministries and other responsibilities in pastoral activity, the consecrated life, involvement in political and social leadership, scientific research, teaching). Above all it is necessary that he be able to teach and support the laity in their vocation to be present in and to transform the world with the light of the Gospel, by recognizing this task of their and showing respect for it."¹⁸⁵

Lastly, awareness of the Church as a "missionary" communion will help the candidate for the priesthood to love and live the essential missionary dimension of the Church and her different pastoral activities. He should be open and available to all the possibilities offered today for the proclamation of the Gospel, not forgetting the valuable service which can and should be given by the media.¹⁸⁶ He should prepare himself for a ministry which may mean in practice that his readiness to follow the indications of the Holy Spirit and of his Bishop will lead him to be sent to preach the Gospel even beyond the frontiers of his own country.¹⁸⁷

II. THE SETTING OF PRIESTLY FORMATION

The Major Seminary – a formation community

60. *The need for the Major Seminary* – and by analogy for the Religious House – for the formation of candidates for the priesthood, was affirmed with authority by the Second Vatican Council¹⁸⁸ and has been reaffirmed by the Synod as follows: "The institution of the Major Seminary, as the best place for formation, is to be certainly reaffirmed as the normal place, in the material sense as well, for a community and hierarchical life, indeed as the proper home for the formation of candidates for the priesthood, with superior who are truly dedicated to this service. This institution has produced many good results down the ages and continues to do so all over the world."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵*Propositio* 28.

¹⁸⁶*Cf. Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷*Cf. Encyclical Letter Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), nn. 67-68: *loc. cit.*, 315-316.

¹⁸⁸*Cf. Decree on Priestly Formation Optatum totius*, n.4.

¹⁸⁹*Propositio* 20.

The seminary can be seen as a place and a period in life. But it is above all an *educational community in progress*: it is a community established by the Bishop to offer to those called by the Lord to serve as Apostles the possibility of re-living the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve. In fact, the Gospels present a prolonged and intimate sharing of life with Jesus as a necessary premise for the apostolic ministry. Such an experience demands of the Twelve the practice of detachment in a particularly clear and specific fashion, a detachment that in some way is demanded of all the disciples, a detachment from their roots, from their usual work, from their nearest and dearest (cf. *Mk* 1:16-20; 10:28; *Lk* 9:23, 57-62; 14:25-27). On several occasions we have referred to the Marcan tradition which stresses the deep link that unites the Apostles to Christ and to one another: before being sent out to preach and to heal, they are called "to be with him" (*Mk* 3:14).

In its deepest identity the seminary is called to be, in its own way a *continuation in the Church of the apostolic community gathered about Jesus*, listening to his word, proceeding towards the Easter experience, awaiting the gift of the Holy Spirit for the mission. Such an identity constitutes the normative ideal which stimulates the seminary, in the many diverse forms and varied aspects which it assumes historically as a human institution, to find a concrete realization, faithful to the gospel values from which it takes its inspiration, and able to respond to the situations and needs of the times.

The seminary is, in itself, *an original experience of the Church's life*. In it the Bishop is present through the ministry of the rector and the service of co-responsibility and communion fostered by him with the other teachers, for the sake of the pastoral and apostolic growth of the students. The various members of the seminary community, gathered by the Spirit into a single brotherhood, cooperate, each according to his own gift, in the growth of all in faith and charity, so that they may prepare suitably for the priesthood and so prolong in the Church and in history the saving presence of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

From the human point of view, the Major Seminary should strive to become "a community built on deep friendship and charity, so that it can be considered a true family living in joy."¹⁹⁰ As a

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

Christian institution, the Seminary should become - as the Synod Fathers continue - an "ecclesial community," a "community of the disciples of the Lord in which the one same Liturgy (which imbues life with a spirit of prayer) is celebrated, a community moulded daily in the reading and mediation of the word of God and with the Sacrament of the Eucharist and in the practice of fraternal charity and justice, a community in which, as its life and the life of each of its members progresses, there shine forth the Spirit of Christ and love for the Church."¹⁹¹ This ecclesial aspect of the Seminary is confirmed and concretized by the Fathers when they add: "As an ecclesial community, be it diocesan or interdiocesan, or even religious, the Seminary should nourish the meaning of communion between the candidates and their Bishop and Presbyterate, in such a way that they share in their hopes and anxieties and learn to extend this openness to the needs of the universal Church."¹⁹²

It is essential for the formation of candidates for the priesthood and the pastoral ministry, which by its very nature is ecclesial, that the Seminary should be experienced not as something external and superficial, or simply a place in which to live and study, but in an interior and profound way. It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community, a community that re-lives the experience of the group of Twelve who were united to Jesus.¹⁹³

61. The Seminary is, therefore, an *educational ecclesial community*, indeed a particular educating community. And it is the specific goal which determines its physiognomy: the vocational accompanying of future priests, and therefore discernment of a vocation, the help to respond to it and the preparation to receive the Sacrament of Orders with its own graces and responsibilities, by which the priest is configured to Jesus Christ Head and Shepherd and is enabled and committed to share the mission of salvation in the Church and in the world.

Inasmuch as it is an educating community, the Seminary and its entire life, in all its different expressions, is *committed to forma-*

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*

¹⁹²*Ibid.*

¹⁹³Cf. Address to the students and former students of the Almo Collegio Capranica (21 January 1983): *Insegnamenti* VI/1 (1983), 173-178.

tion, the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation of future priests. Although this formation has many aspects in common with the human and Christian formation of all the members of the Church, it has, nevertheless, contents, modalities and characteristics which relate specifically to the aim of preparation for the priesthood.

The content and form of the educational work require that the Seminary should have a precise *programme*, a programme of life characterized by its being organized and unified, by its being in harmony or correspondence with one aim which justifies the existence of the Seminary: preparation of future priests.

In this regard, the Synod Fathers write: "As an educational community, (the Seminary) should follow a clearly defined programme which will have, as a characteristic, a unity of leadership expressed in the figure of the Rector and his cooperators, a consistency in the ordering of life, formational activity and the fundamental demand of community life, which also involves the essential aspects of the tasks of formation. This programme should be at the service of specific finality which alone justifies the existence of the Seminary and it should do so without hesitation or ambiguity. That aim is the formation of future priests, pastors of the Church."¹⁹⁴ And in order to ensure that the programming is truly apt and effective, the fundamental outlines of the programme will have to be translated into more concrete details, with the help of particular norms that are aimed at regulating community life, establishing certain precise instruments and timetables.

A further aspect is to stressed here: the educational work is by its nature an accompanying of specific individual person who are proceeding to a choice of and commitment to precise ideals of life. For this very reason, the work of education should be able to bring together into an harmonious whole a clear statement of the goal to be achieved, the requirement that candidates proceed seriously towards the goal, and thirdly attention to the "journeyer," that is the individual person who is embarked on this adventure, and therefore attention to a series of situations, problems, difficulties, and different rates of progress and growth. This requires a wise flexibility. And this does not mean compromising, either as regards values or as regards the conscious and free commitment of the candidates. What it does mean

¹⁹⁴*Propositio* 20.

is a true love and a sincere respect for the person who, in conditions which are very personal, is proceeding towards the priesthood. This applies not only to individual candidates, but also to the diverse social and cultural contexts in which seminaries exist and to the different life histories which they have. In this sense the *educational work requires continual renewal*. The Synod Fathers have brought this out forcefully also when speaking about the structure of Seminaries: "Without questioning the validity of the classical forms of Seminaries, the Synod desires that the work of consultation of the Episcopal Conferences on the present day needs of formation should proceed as is established in the Decree *Optatam Totius*, (No. 1) and in the 1967 Synod. The *Rationes* of different nations or rites should be revised where opportune, whether on the occasion of request made by the Episcopal Conferences or in relation to Apostolic Visitations of the Seminaries of different countries, in order to bring into them diverse forms of formation that have proved successful, as well as to respond to the needs of people with so-called indigenous cultures, the needs of the vocations of adult men, and the needs of vocations for the missions, etc.¹⁹⁵

62. The purpose and specific educational form of the Major Seminary demand that candidates for priesthood have a *certain prior preparation* before entering it. Such preparation, at least until a few decades ago, did not create particular problems. In those days most candidates to the priesthood came from Minor Seminaries, and the Christian life of the community offered all, in general, a suitable Christian instruction and education.

The situation in many places has changed. There is a considerable discrepancy between, on the one hand, the style of life and basic preparation of boys, adolescents, and young men, even when they are Christians and at times have been involved in Church life, and, on the other hand, the style of life of the Seminary with its formational demands.

In this context, together with the Synod Fathers I ask that there be a sufficient period of preparation prior to Seminary formation: "It is a good thing that there be a period of human, Christian, intellectual and spiritual preparation for the candidates to the Major

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*

Seminary. These candidates should, however, have certain qualities: a right intention, a sufficient degree of human maturity, a sufficiently broad knowledge of the doctrine of the faith, some introduction into the methods of prayer, and behavior in conformity with Christian tradition. They should also have attitudes proper to their regions, through which they can express their effort to find God and the faith (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 48).¹⁹⁶

The "sufficiently broad knowledge of the doctrine of the faith" which the Synod Fathers mention is a primary condition for theology. It simply is not possible to develop an "*intelligentia fidei*" (an understanding of the faith), if the content of the "*fides*" is not known. Such a gap can be filled more easily when the forthcoming *Universal Catechism* appears.

While there is increasing consensus regarding the need for preparation prior to the Major Seminary, there are different ideas as to what such preparation should contain and what its characteristics should be: should it be directed mainly to spiritual formation to discern the vocation or to intellectual and cultural formation? On the other hand, we cannot overlook the many and deep diversities that exist, not only among the individual candidates, but also in the different regions and countries. This implies the need for a period of study and experimentation in order to define as clearly and suitably as possible the different elements of this prior preparation or "*propaedeutic period*": the duration, place, form, subject matter of this period, all of which will have to be coordinated with the subsequent years of formation offered by the Seminary.

In this sense I take up and propose to the Congregation for Catholic Education a request expressed by the Synod Fathers: "The Synod asks that the Congregation for Catholic Education gather all the information on experiments of such initial formation that have been done or are being done. At a suitable time, the Congregation is requested to communicate its findings on this matter to the Episcopal Conferences."¹⁹⁷

*The Minor Seminary and other forms
of fostering vocations.*

63. As long as experience shows, a priestly vocation tends to show itself in the pre-adolescent years or in the earliest years of

¹⁹⁶*Propositio* 19.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*

youth. Even in people who decide to enter the seminary later on it is not infrequent to find that God's call had been perceived much earlier. The Church's history gives constant witness of calls which the Lord directs to people of tender age. Saint Thomas, for example, explains Jesus' special love for Saint John the Apostle "because of his tender age" and draws the following conclusion: "This explains that God loves in a special way those who give themselves to his service from their earliest youth."¹⁹⁸

The Church looks after these seeds of vocations sown in the hearts of children, by means of the institution of Minor Seminaries, providing a careful though preliminary discernment and accompaniment. In a number of parts of the world, these Seminaries continue to carry out a valuable educational work, the aim of which is to protect and develop the seeds of a priestly vocation, so that the students may more easily recognize it and be in a better position to respond to it. The educational goal of such Seminaries tends to favour in a timely and gradual way the human, cultural and spiritual formation which will lead the young person to embark on the path of the Major Seminary with an adequate and solid foundation. "*To be prepared to follow Christ the Redeemer with generous souls and pure hearts*": this is the purpose of the Minor Seminary as indicated by the Council in the Decree *Optatam Totius*, which thus outlines its educational aspect: the students "under the fatherly supervision of the superiors, the parents too playing their appropriate part, should lead lives suited to the age, mentality and development of young people. Their way of life should be fully in keeping with the standards of sound psychology and should include suitable experience of the ordinary affairs of daily life and contact with their own families."¹⁹⁹

The Minor Seminary can also be in the Diocese a reference point for vocation work, with suitable forms of welcome and the offering of opportunities for information to adolescents who are looking into the possibility of a vocation or who, having already made up their mind to follow their vocation, have to delay entry into the Seminary for various family or educational reasons.

64. In those cases where it is not possible to run Minor Seminaries (which "in many regions seem necessary and very use-

¹⁹⁸*In Iohannem Evangelistam Expositio*, c. 21, lect. V, 2.

¹⁹⁹Decree on Priestly Formation *Optatam totius*, n. 3.

ful”), other, “institutions” need to be provided, as for example vocational groups for adolescents and young people.²⁰⁰ While they lack the quality of permanence, such groups can offer a systematic guide, in a community context, with which to check the existence and development of vocations. While such young people live at home and take part in the activities of the Christian community which helps them along the path of formation, they should not be left alone. They need a particular group or community to refer to, and where they can find support to follow through the specific vocational journey which the gift of the Holy Spirit has initiated in them.

We should also mention the phenomenon of *priestly vocations* arising among people of *adult age*, after some years of experience of lay life and professional involvement. This phenomenon, while not new in the Church’s history, at present appears with some novel features and with a certain frequency. It is not always possible and often it is not even convenient to invite adults to follow the educative itinerary of the Major Seminary. Rather, after careful discernment of the genuineness of such vocations, what need to be provided is some kind of specific programme to accompany them with formation in order to ensure, bearing in mind all the suitable adaptations, that such persons receive the spiritual and intellectual formation they require. A suitable relationship with other candidates to the priesthood and periods spent in the community of the Major Seminary can be a way of guaranteeing that these vocations are fully inserted in the one presbyterate and are in intimate and heartfelt communion with it.²⁰¹

III. THE AGENTS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION

The Church and the Bishop

65. Given that the formation of candidates for the priesthood belongs to the Church’s pastoral care of vocations, it must be said that the Church as such is the communal subject which has the grace and responsibility to accompany those whom the Lord calls to become his ministers in the priesthood.

²⁰⁰Cf. *Propositio* 17.

²⁰¹Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (6 January 1970), n. 19: *loc. cit.*, 342.

In this sense the appreciation of the mystery of the Church helps us to establish more precisely the place and role which her different members have – be it individually or as members of a body – in the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

The Church is by her very nature the “memorial” or “sacrament” of the presence and action of Jesus Christ in our midst and on our behalf. The call to the priesthood depends on his saving presence: not only the call, but also the accompanying so that the person called can recognize the Lord’s grace and respond to it freely and lovingly. It is in the Spirit of Jesus that thrown light on and gives strength to vocational discernment and the journey to the priesthood. So we can say that *there cannot exist any genuine formational work for the priesthood without the influence of the Spirit of Christ*. Every one involved in the work of formation should be fully aware of this. How can we fail to appreciate this utterly gratuitous and completely effective “resource,” which has its own decisive “weight” in the effort to train people for the priesthood? How can we not rejoice when we consider the dignity of every human being involved in formation, who for the candidate to the priesthood becomes, as it were, the visible representative of Christ? If training for the priesthood is, as it should be, essentially the preparation for future “shepherds” in the likeness of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, who better than Jesus himself, through the outpouring of his Spirit, can give them and fully develop in them that pastoral charity which he himself lived to the point of total selfgiving (cf. *Jn* 15:13; 10:11) and which he wishes all priests to live in their turn?

The first representative of Christ in priestly formation is the Bishop. What Mark the Evangelist tells us, in the text we have already quoted more than once, can be applied to the Bishop, to every Bishop: “He called to him those whom he desired; and *they came to him*. And he appointed twelve to *be with him*, and to be sent out...” (*Mk* 3:13-14). The truth is that the interior call of the Spirit needs to be recognized as the authentic call of the Bishop. Just as all can “go” to the Bishop, because he is Shepherd and Father to all, his priest who share with him the one priesthood and ministry can do so in a special way: the Bishop, the Council tells us, should consider them and treat them as “brothers and friends.”²⁰² By analogy the same can be said

²⁰²Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 7.

of those who are preparing for the priesthood. As for "being with him," with the Bishop, the Bishop should make a point of visiting them often and in some way "being" with them, as a way of giving significant expression to his responsibility for the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

The presence of the Bishop is especially valuable, not only because it helps the seminary community live its insertion in the particular Church and its communion with the Pastor who guides it, but also because it verifies and encourages the pastoral purpose which is what specifies the entire formation of candidates for the priesthood. In particular, with his presence and by his sharing with candidates for the priesthood all that has to do with the pastoral progress of the particular Church, the Bishop offers a fundamental contribution to formation in the "*sensus Ecclesiae*," as a central spiritual and pastoral value in the exercise of the priestly ministry.

The Seminary as an educational community

66. The educational community of the Seminary is built round the various people involved in formation: the rector, the spiritual father or spiritual director, the superiors and professors. These people should feel profoundly united to the Bishop, whom they represent in their different roles, and in various ways. They should also maintain among themselves a frank and genuine communion. The unity of the educators not only helps the educational programme to be put into practice properly, but also and above all it offers candidates for the priesthood a significant example and a practical introduction to that ecclesial communion which is a fundamental value of Christian living and of the pastoral ministry.

It is evident that much of the effectiveness of the training offered depends on the maturity and strength of personality of those entrusted with formation, both from the human and from the Gospel points of view. And so it is especially important, both *to select them carefully* and to encourage them to become ever *more suitable for carrying out the task entrusted* to them. The Synod Fathers were very aware that the future of the preparation of candidates for the priesthood depends on the choice and formation of those entrusted with the work of formation, and so they describe at length the qualities sought for in them. Specifically they wrote: "The task of formation of candidates for the priesthood requires not only a certain

special preparation of those to whom this work is entrusted, one that is professional, pedagogical, spiritual, human and theological, but also a spirit of communion and of cooperating together to carry out the programme, so that the unity of the pastoral action of the Seminary is always maintained under the leadership of the rector. The body of formation personnel should witness to a truly evangelical lifestyle and total dedication to the Lord. It should enjoy a certain stability and its members as a rule should live in the Seminary community. They should be intimately joined to the Bishop, who is the first one responsible for the formation of the priests."²⁰³

The Bishops first of all should feel their grave responsibility for the formation of those who have been given the task of educating future priests. For this ministry, priests of exemplary life should be chosen, men with a number of qualities: "human and spiritual maturity, pastoral experience, professional competence, stability in their own vocation, a capacity to work with others, serious preparations in those human sciences (psychology especially) which relate to their office, a knowledge of how to work in groups."²⁰⁴

While safeguarding the distinctions between internal and external forum, and maintaining a suitable freedom in the choice of confessors and the prudence and discretion which should be a feature of the ministry of the spiritual director, the priestly community of teachers should feel united in the responsibility of educating candidates for the priesthood. It is their duty, always with regard to the authoritative evaluation made by the Bishop and the rector together, to foster and verify in the first place the suitability of the candidates in regard to their spiritual, human and intellectual endowments, above all in regard to their spirit of prayer, their deep assimilation of the doctrine of faith, their capacity for true fraternity and the charism of celibacy.²⁰⁵

Bearing in mind (as the Synod Fathers have indeed done) the indication of the Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*²⁰⁶ and of the Apos-

²⁰³*Propositio* 29.

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*

²⁰⁵Cf. *Propositio* 23.

²⁰⁶Cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, (30 December 1988), n. 61; n. 63: *loc. cit.*, 512-514; 517-518; Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (15 August 1988), nn 29-31: *loc. cit.*, 1721-1729.

tolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, which stress the suitability of a healthy influence of lay spirituality and of the charism of femininity in every educational itinerary, it is worthwhile to involve, in ways that are prudent and adapted to the different cultural context, the cooperation also of lay faithful, both men and women, in the work of training future priests. They are to be selected with care, within the framework of Church laws and according to their particular charism and proven competence. We can expect beneficial fruits from their cooperation, provided it is suitably coordinated and integrated in the primary educational responsibilities of those entrusted with the formation of future priests, fruits for a balanced growth of the sense of the Church and a more precise perception of what it is to be a priest on the part of the candidates to the priesthood.²⁰⁷

The professors of theology

67. Those who by their teaching of theology introduce future priests to *sacred doctrine* and accompany them in it have a particular educational responsibility. Experience teaches that they often have a greater influence on the development of the priest's personality than other educators.

The responsibility of the *teachers of theology* will lead them, even before they consider the teaching relationship they are to establish with candidates for the priesthood, to look into the concept they themselves should have of the nature of theology and the priestly ministry, and also of the spirit and style in which they should carry out their teaching of theology. In this sense the Synod Fathers have rightly affirmed that "the theologian must never forget that as a teacher he is not presenting his personal doctrines but opening to and communicating to others the understanding of the faith, in the last analysis in the name of the Lord and his Church. In such a way, the theologian, using all the methods and techniques provided by his science, carries out his task at the mandate of the Church and cooperates with the Bishop in his task of teaching. Since theologians and Bishops are at the service of the Church herself in promoting the faith, they should develop and foster trust in each other and, in this spirit, overcome tensions and conflicts (for the fuller treatment,

²⁰⁷Cf. *Propositio* 29.

cf. *Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*).²⁰⁸

The teacher of theology, like any other teacher, should remain in communion and sincerely cooperate with all the other people who are involved in the formation of future priest, and offer with scientific precision, generosity, humility and enthusiasm his own original and expert contribution of doctrine - even though it be sacred doctrine - but is above all the presentation of the point of view which unifies, in the plan of God, all the different branches of human knowledge and the various expressions of life.

In particular, the formative effect of the teachers of theology will depend, above all, on whether they are "men of faith who are full of love for the Church, convinced that the one who really knows the Christian mystery is the Church as such and, therefore, that their task of teaching is really and truly an ecclesial ministry, men who have a richly developed pastoral sense which enables them to discern not only content but forms that are suitable for the exercise of their ministry. In particular, what is expected of the teachers is total fidelity to the Magisterium: for they teach in the name of the Church, and because of this they are witnesses to the faith."²⁰⁹

*Communities of origin and
associations and youth movements*

68. The communities from which the candidate for the priesthood comes continue, albeit with the necessary detachment which is involved by the choice of a vocation, to bear considerable influence on the formation of the future priest. They should therefore be aware of their specific share of responsibility.

Let us mention first of all the family: Christian parents, as also brothers and sisters and other members of the family, should never seek to call back the future priest within the narrow confines of a too human (if not worldly) logic, no matter how supported by sincere affection that logic may be (cf. *Mk* 3:20-21, 31-35). Instead, driven by the same desire "to fulfil the will of God," they should accompany the formative journey with prayer, respect, the good example of the

²⁰⁸*Propositio* 30.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*

domestic virtues and spiritual and material help, especially in difficult moments. Experience teaches that, in so many cases, this multiple help has proved decisive for candidates for the priesthood. Even in the case of parents or relatives who are indifferent or opposed to the choice of a vocation, a clear and calm facing of the situation and the encouragement which derives from it can be a great help to the deeper and more determined maturing of a priestly vocation.

Closely linked with the families is the *parish community*. Both it and the family are connected in education in the faith. Often, afterwards, the parish, with its specific pastoral care for young people and vocations, supplements the family's role. Above all, inasmuch as it is the most immediate local expression of the mystery of the Church, the parish offers an original and especially valuable contribution to the formation of a future priest. The parish community should continue to feel that the young man on his way to the priesthood is a living part of itself; it should accompany him with its prayer, give him a cordial welcome during the holiday periods, respect and encourage him to form himself in his identity as a priest, and offer him suitable opportunities and strong encouragement to try out his vocation for the priestly mission.

Associations and youth movements, which are a sign and confirmation of the vitality which the Spirit guarantees to the Church, can and should contribute also to the formation of candidates for the priesthood, in particular of those who are the product of the Christian, spiritual and apostolic experience of these groups. Young people who have received their basic formation in such groups and look to them for their experience of the Church should not feel they are being asked to uproot themselves from their past or to break their links with the environment which has contributed to their decision to respond to their vocation, nor should they erase the characteristic traits of the spirituality which they have learned and lived there, in all that they contain that is good, edifying and rich.²¹⁰ For them too, this environment from which they come continues to be a source of help and support on the path of formation towards the priesthood.

²¹⁰Cf. *Propositio* 25.

The Spirit offers to many young people opportunities to be educated in the faith and to grow as Christians and as members of the Church through many kinds of groups, movements and associations inspired in different ways by the Gospel message. These should be felt and lived as a nourishing gift of a soul within the institution and at its service. A movement or a particular spirituality "is not an alternative structure to the institution. It is rather a source of a presence which constantly regenerates the existential and historical authenticity of the institution. The priest should therefore find within a movement the light and warmth which make him capable of fidelity to his Bishop and which make him ready for the duties of the institution and mindful of ecclesiastical discipline, thus making the reality of his faith more fertile and his faithfulness more joyful."²¹¹

It is therefore necessary, in the new community of the Seminary in which they are gathered by the Bishop, that young people coming from associations and ecclesial movements should learn "respect for other spiritual paths and a spirit of dialogue and cooperation," should take in genuinely and sincerely the indications for their training imparted by the Bishop and the teachers in the Seminary, abandoning themselves with real confidence to their guidance and assessments.²¹² Such an attitude will prepare and in some way anticipate a genuine priestly choice to serve the entire People of God, in the fraternal communion of the presbyterate and in obedience to the Bishop.

The fact that seminarians and diocesan priests take part in particular spiritualities or ecclesial groupings is indeed, in itself, a factor which helps growth and priestly fraternity. Such participation, however, should not be an obstacle, but rather a help to the ministry and spiritual life which are proper to the diocesan priest, who "will always remain the shepherd of all. Not only is he a 'permanent' shepherd, available to all, but he presides over the gathering of all so that all may find the welcome which they have a right to expect in the community and in the Eucharist that unites

²¹¹Address to priests connected with the "Communion and Liberation" movement (12 September 1985): AAS 78 (1986), 256.

²¹²Cf. *Propositio* 25.

them, whatever be their religious sensibility or pastoral commitment."²¹³

The candidate himself

69. Lastly, we must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons.

And so the future priest also, and in the first place, must grow in his awareness that the Agent par excellence of his formation is the Holy Spirit, who, by the gift of a new heart, configures and conforms him to Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. In this way the candidate to the priesthood will affirm in the most radical way possible his freedom to welcome the moulding action of the Spirit. But to welcome this action implies also, on the part of the candidate, a welcome for the human "mediating" forces which the Spirit employs. As a result, the action of the different teachers becomes truly and fully effective only if the future priest offers his own convinced and heartfelt cooperation to this work of formation.

²¹³Meeting with members of the Swiss clergy, Einsiedeln (15 June 1984), n 10: *Insegnamenti* VII/1 (1984), 1798.

Catechism is Sure Norm of Doctrine

John Paul II

*Letter of the Holy Father
Pope John Paul II
to Priests
for Holy Thursday 1993*

1. *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"*
(*Heb 13:8*).

Dear Brothers in the priesthood of Christ!

As we gather today in the many different Cathedral Churches throughout the world – members of the presbyteral communities of all the churches together with the Pastors of the Dioceses – there come back to our mind with new force these words about Jesus Christ which became the recurring theme of the 500th anniversary of the evangelization of the New World.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever": these words refer to the *one eternal Priest*, who "entered once for all into the Holy Place... with his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (cf. *Heb 9:12*). Now the days have come – the "Triduum Sacrum" of the Church's sacred liturgy – in which, with even deeper veneration and worship, we renew the Passover of Christ, "his hour" (cf. *Jn 2:4; 13:1*), which is blessed "fullness of time" (cf. *Ga 4:4*).

Through the Eucharist, this "hour" of Christ's redemption continues, in the Church, to be salvific. Today especially the Church recalls the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you" (Jn 14:28). Precisely through his "paschal going forth," Christ constantly comes to us and remains present among us, by the power of the Spirit, the Paraclete. He is present sacramentally. He is present through the Eucharist. He is really present.

Dear brothers, *after the Apostles we have received this ineffable gift so that we may be ministers of Christ's going forth by way of the cross and, at the same time, of his coming in the Eucharist. How wonderful this Holy Triduum is for us! How wonderful for us this day - the day of the Last Supper! We are ministers of the mystery of the redemption of world, ministers of the Body which was offered and of the Blood which was shed so that sins might be forgiven. Ministers of that Sacrifice by which he, alone, entered once for all the into the Holy Place. "Having offered himself without blemish to God, he purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (cf. Heb 9:14).*

Although all the days of our life are marked by this great mystery of faith, today is even more so. This is our day with him.

2. On this day we gather together *in our priestly communities*, so that each one can contemplate more deeply the mystery of the Sacrament whereby we have become ministers in the Church of Christ's priestly offering. We have likewise become servants of the royal priesthood of the whole People of God, of all the baptized, so that we may proclaim the "*magnalia Dei*," the mighty works of God" (Ac 2:11).

It is fitting to include in our thanksgiving this year *a particular element of gratitude* for the gift of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This text is a response to the mission which the Lord has entrusted to his Church: to guard the deposit of faith and to hand it down intact, with authority and loving concern, to coming generations.

The result of the fruitful cooperation of the Bishops of the Catholic Church, the Catechism is entrusted above all to us, the Pastors of God's People, in order to strengthen our deep bonds of

communion in the same apostolic faith. As a compendium of the one perennial Catholic faith, it constitutes a trustworthy and authoritative means for bearing witness to and ensuring that unity in faith for which Christ himself prayed fervently to the Father as his "hour" drew near (cf. *Jn* 17:21-23).

The Catechism sets forth once more the fundamental and essential contents of Catholic faith and morality as they are believed, celebrated, lived and prayed by the church today. It is thus *a special means* for deepening knowledge of the inexhaustible Christian mystery, for encouraging fresh enthusiasm for prayer intimately united with the prayer of Christ and for strengthening the commitment of a consistent witness of life.

At the same time, this Catechism is given to us as a sure point of reference for fulfilling the mission, entrusted to us in the Sacrament of Orders, of proclaiming the "Good news" to all people *in the name of Christ and of the Church*. Thanks to it, we can put into practice in a constantly renewed way Christ's perennial command: "go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (*Mt* 28:19-20).

Indeed, in this summary of the deposit of faith, we can find *an authentic and sure norm* for teaching Catholic doctrine, for catechetical activity among the Christian people, for that "new evangelization" of which today's world has such immense need.

Dear priests, our life and ministry will themselves become an eloquent catechesis for the entire community entrusted to us, provided that they are rooted in the Truth which is Christ. Then ours will not be an isolated witness, but a harmonious one, offered by people united in the same faith and sharing in the same cup. It is this sort of vital "infectiousness" that we must together aim at, in effective and affective communion, in order to carry out the ever more urgent "new evangelization."

3. Gathered on Holy Thursday in all the priestly communities of the Church throughout the world, we give thanks for the gift of Christ's priesthood which we share through the sacrament of Holy Orders. In this thanksgiving we wish to include the theme of the Catechism, because its contents and its usefulness are *particularly linked up with our priestly life and with the Church's pastoral ministry*.

In this journey towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the church has succeeded in producing, after the Second Vatican Council, a compendium of her teaching on faith and morality, on sacramental life and prayer. This synthesis can support our priestly ministry in various ways. It can also enlighten the apostolic awareness of our brothers and sisters who, following their Christian vocation, desire together with us to account for that hope (cf. *1 Pt* 3:15) which gives us life in Jesus Christ.

The Catechism presents the "*the newness of the Council*," and at the same time situates it *in the whole of Tradition*. The Catechism is so filled with the treasures found in Sacred Scripture and in the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in the course of 2,000 years that it will enable each of us to become like the man in the Gospel parable "who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (*Mt* 13:52), the ancient and ever new riches of the divine deposit.

Rekindling the grace of the Sacrament of Orders, conscious of what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* means for our priestly ministry, we confess with worship and love the One who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

From the Vatican, on 8 April, Holy Thursday, in the year 1993, the 15th of my Pontificate.

Cultivate Basic Vocational Attitudes

John Paul II

Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocation

Beloved Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters throughout the world!

1. Christ is the Good Shepherd; "he calls his sheep by name and leads them forth" (*Jn* 10:3-4). We, his flock, know his voice and we share his concern to gather his people together, to lead them on the way of salvation.

In this 30th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we want to ask the Lord unceasingly to send "the workers of the Gospel" to his Church. We want our prayer to be persevering, rich in hope, and full of love for our brothers and sisters, who are often confused as sheep without shepherd.

2. I desire, first of all, to call attention to the urgency of cultivating what we could call, "basic vocational attitudes" which give life to an authentic "culture of vocation." These attitudes are: formation of conscience; a sensitivity to spiritual and moral values; the promotion and defense of the ideals of human brotherhood, of the sacredness of life, of social solidarity, and of civil order. *It is a question of a culture which allows modern man to refind himself, appropriating anew the higher values of love, friendship, prayer,*

and contemplation. The world, tormented by what are often rending transformations, has need, more than ever before, of the witness of men and women of good will and especially of lives consecrated to the highest and most sacred spiritual values, so that there will not be lacking to our times the light which is given off by the most sublime triumphs of the spirit.

There is widespread today a culture which leads young people to be satisfied with modest endeavors which are far below their potential. But we all know that really in their hearts there is a restlessness and a lack of satisfaction in the face of ephemeral achievements; there is in them a desire to grow in truth, in authenticity, and in goodness; they await a voice which calls them by name. This restlessness, besides, is precisely the sign of the inalienable necessity of a culture of the spirit. The pastoral care of vocations today has developed with a recognition of this historic and cultural dimension, which makes evident not only the crisis but also the awakening of vocations. It is necessary, therefore, to promote a culture of vocation which will recognize and welcome this profound human aspiration, which brings a person to discover that Christ alone can tell him the truth about life. He who "penetrated in a unique and unrepeatable way into the mystery of man" (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 8) "fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22): life is a totally gratuitous gift and there is no other way to live which is worthy of man than that of the giving of oneself. Christ, the Good Shepherd, calls every person to recognize himself in this truth. Vocation is born from love and leads to love, because, "man cannot live without love" (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 10). This culture of vocation is at the base of a culture of new life, which is a life of gratitude and of gratuity, of trust and of responsibility; at its roots, it is a culture of the desire for God, who gives the grace of esteeming man for himself, and of incessantly defending his dignity in the face of all that could oppress him in body and in spirit.

3. If Christ "speaks to people as Man" (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 7), adapting himself to human categories, the Church also must speak a language which is simple and close to the sensitivities of young people, making an intelligent use of all modern means of social communication, so that what she has to say will be ever more incisive and better understood. Above all it will be necessary that the pastoral

care of young people be explicitly vocational, and that it aims at awakening in youths the consciousness of the divine "call," so that they experience and taste the beauty of giving themselves in a stable programme of life. Each Christian, then, will truly give proof of his collaboration in the promotion of a culture for vocations, if he is able to commit his own mind and heart in discerning what is good for man: if he is able, that is, to discern with a critical spirit the ambiguities of progress, the pseudo-values, the snares of the deceptions which certain civilizations make shine before our eyes, the temptations of materialism and of passing ideologies.

4. I turn to you especially, dear young people! Let yourselves be summoned by the love of Christ; recognize his voice which rings in the temple of your heart. Receive his luminous and penetrating glance which opens the paths of your life upon the horizons of the mission of the Church, today more than ever committed to teaching man his true being, his end, his destiny and to revealing to faithful souls the unspeakable riches of the love of Christ. Have no fear of the fact that the response he requires is radical, because Jesus, who has first loved you, is ready to give what he asks of you. If he asks much it is because he knows that you can give much. Young people, give the Church a hand in the task of saving the world of youth. React against the culture of death by means of the culture of life.

I ask you, *Bishops of the Church of God*, to reinvigorate the social fabric of the Christian community by means of the evangelization of the family; assist the laity to enliven the values of consistency, justice and Christian charity in the world of youth.

I turn as well to all who are called, in various ways, to define and to deepen the culture of vocation: to *theologians*, in order that such a culture have before all else a solid theological foundation; to *those who work in the mass-media*, that they may know how to enter into dialogue with young people; to educators, that they may know how to respond to the aspirations and sensitivities of the young; to *spiritual directors*, so that each young person might be helped to recognize that voice which calls him by name. I turn, finally, to you who are already consecrated to the Lord and, in a special way, to your *priests*: you have already heard and recognized the call of the Good Shepherd; lend your own voice to him who today still calls many to follow him. Speak to your young people, letting them hear

about the beauty of following the Lord, and accompany them along the paths of life, which at times can be full of difficulties. Above all, witness with your life to the joy of being in the Lord's service.

5. And now let us pray together:

Lord, Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of our souls, you who know your sheep and know how to reach man's heart, open the minds and hearts of those young people who search for and await a word of truth for their lives; let them understand that only in the mystery of your Incarnation do they find full light; arouse the courage of those who know where to seek the truth, but fear that what you ask will be too demanding; stir the heart of those young people who would follow you, but who cannot overcome doubts and fears, and who in the end follow other voices and other paths which lead nowhere. You who are the Word of the Father, the Word which creates and saves, the Word which enlightens and sustains hearts, conquer with your Spirit the resistance and delays of indecisive hearts; arouse in those whom you call the courage of love's answer: "Here I am, send me!" (*Is* 6:8).

Virgin Mary, young daughter of Israel, support with your motherly love those youths to whom the Father will grant that they hear his voice; protect those who are already consecrated. Let them repeat with you the yes of a joyful and irrevocable gift of self. Amen.

With my Apostolic Blessing.

At Castel Gandolfo, 8 September 1992

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

Second Seminar for Rectors and Spiritual Directors: Final Statement

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference

We, eighty-four rectors and spiritual directors of Asian Major Seminaries and chairmen of National Bishops' Commissions for Seminaries from thirteen countries, assembled from October 11 to 25, 1992, at the Retreat House of the Missionary Catechists of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus in Tayabas, Quezon Province, Philippines, as an aftermath of the 1990 Synod [of] Bishops in order to reflect together more deeply in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* on the formation of priests in the circumstances of present-day Asia. The seminar was sponsored and organized by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and ably assisted by the Office for Education and Student Chaplaincy of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences.

We received support from the encouraging messages of the Holy Father and the Prefect of the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples.

The seminar gave us an overview of priestly formation in the Asian seminaries, and the Asian context formed the immediate setting or background for our reflections and deliberations.

The dynamics of the seminar embraced the following areas of holistic priestly formation for pastoral deliberations:

- a. The spirituality of the diocesan priest
- b. Discipline and human formation for discipleship
- c. Spiritual formation and direction of future priests
- d. Formation in the spirit of poverty and the need for detachment
- e. Formation for celibate life
- f. Formation in the missionary spirit and interreligious dialogue
- g. Formation in the social doctrine of the Church
- h. The impact of social communication (mass media, etc.) and its implication for priestly formation
- i. The role of the rector and his relation with the spiritual director

The seminar papers were contributed by eminent persons, including bishops, priests, religious and lay experts both from the Philippines and from other countries. Much time was also given to discussion in small groups.

At the end of the common reflection, we, the delegates, worked out and adopted this final statement, consisting of convictions and recommendations which emerged from the group discussions, as well as from the General Assembly. This text of conclusions, it is hoped, will facilitate a more responsive priestly formation in the Asian Seminaries in the context of the complex and rapidly changing circumstances of Asia today.

As we close this fruitful seminar, we thank God for his unfailing love and guidance and entrust the task of priestly formation to Mary, the Mother of priests, for she is the human being who responded better than any other to God's call.

Priestly formation in the Asian Context

The startling event of the 1990's has been the collapse of USSR. China too is gradually yielding to a guarded form of free economy. The nations of Asia and the Asian Church are making a careful and prayerful study of these enigmatic signs of the times.

Asia has been the cradle of the world's major religions. Except in the case of Christianity, Asia also continues to embody a major section of believers of all these religions. For example Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Judaism witness the deep religious sensitivity of our people. Of these, Islam and Hinduism are going through a period of resurgence. What is further true of Islam are the inroads it continues to make beyond Asia and Africa and some European countries. On the other hand, the impact of Christianity in Asia, besides being still considered a "potted plant" of the West, also lacks missionary vibrance. In fact, in some countries, some of its sheep are being lost to New Age religions that confront them. South Korea, however, is an outstanding example of a vibrant Church which is growing rapidly.

Pastores Dabo Vobis has ably pointed out: "Despite many contradictions, society is increasingly witnessing a powerful thirst for justice and peace, a more lively sense that humanity must care for creation and respect nature, a more open search for truth, a greater effort to safeguard human dignity..." (n. 6). This is surely true of Asia. We see, however, that Asia is experiencing the havoc of ethnically, politically, economically or religiously based turmoil, genocide, and even war that has rendered millions shelterless and refugees. Besides, several Asian countries have fallen victim of the dictates of international loan-giving agencies and transnational corporations. Many a country is being turned into a paradise for tourists, with the accompanying degradation by mass media, the installing of cable T.V. and lewd entertainment. All these have spawned a culture of opportunism, materialism, consumerism, hedonism and the so-called family phenomenon - factors so detrimental to the nurturing of priestly vocations.

The Asian conscience has been roused by rampant poverty and polarization between rich and poor to respond through the network of its non-government organizations, including human rights organizations. The stage is set for the Church to take a more active role in sensitizing people to violations of social justice and opportunities to promote human dignity.

The majority in the Asian Church is comprised of the marginalized. These poor masses who live outside the bustling metropolises are gradually maturing and discovering, through inter-faith dialogue of life, what it means to be the light of the world, yeast in the dough,

and salt of the earth. No wonder, therefore, that increasing numbers of priestly and religious vocations are from this group. Almost all the Asian countries are experiencing an increase in vocations. In several countries they have more than double. Asian seminaries are, on the other hand, insufficiently equipped to cope with the quality and changing quality of candidates.

All Asian formators accept the need for improved methods, contents and personnel in the realm of priestly formation. The holding of the Bishops Synod on the Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day, the ensuing document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, other ecclesiastical documents and the series of seminars held by the FABC-OESC, are undoubtedly an unfathomably positive contribution and an impetus to review priestly formation in their light and to hopefully give the much-needed thrust to a more contextualized formation of priests and their ongoing formation for the carrying out of the Church's pastoral, prophetic, and missionary tasks for the evangelization of humanity in Asia (PDV, n.2).

Convictions and Recommendations

SELECTION OF NEW CANDIDATES

Convictions

1. Candidates who apply to enter the seminary come from an increasingly poorer background:

- a society which fosters the anti-evangelical values of individualism, materialism and permissiveness and in which there are increasingly attractive professions available for brighter students.
- an educational system which in many places has disintegrated
- an economically poor background
- the religious background of new converts.

Recommendations

1. That there be a careful selection of applicants including psychological evaluation, before they enter the major seminary.

2. That formators be prepared effectively to address the need of the candidates who are accepted.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE DIOCESAN PRIEST

Convictions

1. The spirituality of the diocesan priest is biblical and ministerial. It centers on his belonging to a particular local Church or diocese on behalf of which and within which he exercises his ministry of the Word, of the sacraments and of leadership in communion with and under the direction of the bishop and in collaboration with his fellow priests in the presbyterium, the religious and the laity. Hence, he is called to be a man of intimate union with God and with Christ, and a man of communion, respectful of and close to his people, his fellow priests and his bishop.

Recommendations

1. That the seminarians be helped to become well acquainted with their diocese and to develop a clear sense of belonging to it and responsibility for it; hence, they should gradually be more and more involved in its life and especially in its concern for the poor.

2. That the bishops and the priest of the diocese, by the frequency and quality of their contacts with the seminarians, foster in them this sense of belonging. It is in this context that the seminarian should be helped to develop into a man of prayer and be trained in the ministry of the Word, of the sacraments and of leadership - ministries which are the shape that his love for God and neighbor must take.

3. That the seminarians have contact with role models whose lives are characterized by this type of priestly spirituality.

4. That the seminarians be formed to a prayer life nourished by a contemplative reading of the Word of God, and events in the life of the local and universal Church, the life of the people (Christian and those of other religions) of their diocese. This should be done in the liturgy as well as in personal prayer and reflection.

FORMATION IN POSITIVE HUMAN VALUES

Convictions

1. Human formation, or formation in positive human values, is a prerequisite, as well as a continuing and essential dimension of priestly formation.

2. Human formation requires that formators and seminarians promote a relationship marked by trust, compassion and sensitively based on openness and truth.

3. Seminary formators, in order to be effective are called to be examples of maturity.

4. The selection of seminary formators must be based on their human maturity, virtues and competence.

5. The formation of the value system of seminarians is greatly influenced before formal seminary training, primarily in the family.

Recommendations

1. That the admission and formation of candidates adequately take into account the first agents of their formation (the family, school, community, etc.) and that formation not isolate them from these (although seminarians are indeed called out of their families and they are not intended to serve the interest of their families as ordained ministers).

2. That the selection, preparation and ongoing formation of seminary formators be given careful study and attention in the diocesan pastoral program in the dioceses concerned.

3. That the community of seminarians be structured in small groups along the lines of Basic Ecclesial Communities.

4. That hypocrisy and distrust be effectively reduced and an atmosphere of openness, sincerity and transparency be promoted by person-oriented formation (as opposed to an institution-oriented formation)

5. That seminary formators and seminarians promote and maintain a wholesome (open, sincere and transparent) relationship.

6. That sisters and lay people be invited to participate more actively and creatively in seminary formation.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Convictions

1. Personal spiritual direction should be a top priority in seminary formation.

2. The Holy Spirit is the principal director of a seminarian's life, and a personal spiritual director is only his instrument. The director must, therefore, be a man of faith sensitive to the action of the Spirit.

3. Spiritual direction is a personal relationship between a seminarian and the priest to whom he goes for direction in which the task of the director is to discern and to help the seminarian discern and respond to the presence and activity of God in his life.

4. Discernment of the seminarian's vocation and his appropriation of priestly values are important parts of this relationship.

5. The director must also help the seminarian free himself from obstacles to his being open to the Spirit.

6. The spiritual director needs to have the experience of at least a solid spiritual life of his own, to have a friendly and welcoming attitude and a sincere desire to help the particular seminarian to grow in his relationship with God, and to be a good listener.

7. He needs a basic knowledge of human psychology and counseling skills. He is bound to an absolute confidentiality regarding what he knows from spiritual direction.

8. The seminarian needs to have complete frankness with his director and trust in him.

Recommendations

1. That the spiritual director, besides a deeper knowledge of prayer and the spiritual life, be encouraged to acquire deeper knowledge of human psychology and counseling skills. However, he must be aware that spiritual direction does not consist in problem-solving or psychological counseling.

2. That he be concerned to help the seminarians to develop complete frankness and trust during spiritual direction.

3. That the seminarian have spiritual direction from freely chosen director approved by the rectors at least once a month.

FORMATION TO CELIBACY

Convictions

1. Celibacy is a special gift of God offered only to some and intended not only for the individual himself but also for the Church.

2. It is a special way of loving God with an "undivided heart" (1 Co 7:35) and of loving others especially the poor and the unloved, with a non-exclusive love.

3. Though some Asian cultures esteem celibacy while others do not, there is uniqueness in the way it is understood and lived out in the Catholic priesthood.

4. There are many influences militating against the appreciation and practice of Christian celibacy - for example, the negative view of celibacy in some cultures, materialism, permissiveness and hedonism of modern society propagated by the mass media the widespread taboo against discussing sexual matters and consequent ignorance and misinformation, and the bad example of priests who are unfaithful to their commitment to celibacy.

5. Formation should take into account problems in sexuality, especially masturbation and homosexuality. Masturbation takes various forms: a) adolescent masturbation (difficulty often encountered in the process of maturing), b) compensatory masturbation (an occasional immature reaction to failure, frustration, etc.) and c) the sexual manifestation of a deep-seated and perhaps repressed problem. In each case, it must be addressed differently. Especially in the last-named case, professional help may be necessary.

6. There must be an awareness that homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior are not the same. In particular instances such behavior in adolescents may not be an indication of orientation. However, the orientation itself may well indicate that orientation is inadvisable.

Recommendations

1. That all aspects of sexuality, chastity and celibacy be openly and completely discussed with the seminarians both in groups and individually. Experts may well be invited to assist in the education. Particularly in discussing these matters in spiritual direction the seminarian needs to be completely frank about his inclinations and experiences.

2. That the seminarian be helped to appreciate celibacy as the special gift of God which it is to understand its appropriateness and value in the priestly ministry and to come to live his celibacy with

generosity and joy as a very special way of loving God and his neighbor. Classes, retreats, spiritual conferences and spiritual direction can be used for this purpose.

3. That special importance be given to the seminarian's contact with priests who by the peace, joy and generosity of their lives demonstrate how great a gift celibacy is.

4. That the seminarians have normal contact with married people, religious women and unmarried women and girls and learn what is appropriate behavior with member of the opposite sex.

5. That the seminarians be encouraged to form mature friendships and helped to understand the phenomenon of loneliness and the appreciate the renunciations involved in celibacy.

6. That the seminary community consciously strive to provide various models of community support for personal growth which the seminarian can carry into the prebyterium after ordination.

7. That the importance of asceticism and a healthy emotional and physical life, as well as a solid prayer life for fidelity to his commitment be made clear.

8. That mistakes and failures be neither overestimated nor underestimated since we can grow through our mistakes, though failures may also indicate that one lacks the gift of celibacy. When formators are not able adequately to address problems, they may have recourse to professional help but without dismissing their own responsibility.

9. That the formators discuss among themselves and possibly seek further formation for themselves in order to be of adequate help to the seminarians in their formation to celibacy.

10. That sexual problems be addressed by formators and in particular by the spiritual director, with compassion, patience and perseverance.

11. That a seminarian with sexual problems be helped honestly to accept himself humbly to pray and strive to acquire a solid chastity, and clearly to discern his vocation to the celibate priesthood.

12. That anyone who has not demonstrated his ability to live a chaste celibate life with generosity and joy and to be at peace with his own sexuality never be ordained.

FORMATION IN THE SPIRIT OF POVERTY

Convictions

1. Evangelical poverty is first and foremost a dependence on God our Father who is rich and bountiful in providing for our everyday needs. The one who is poor has his center not in himself but in God and his Kingdom.

2. Evangelical poverty is for us a call, and thus a grace to imitate Christ in detachment and full dedication to our ministry. It demands sharing in the kenosis of Christ and leads to pastoral availability.

3. The priest is called to a lifestyle that is prophetic in relation to his fellow human beings.

4. Evangelical poverty, demanding a spirit of detachment from worldly possessions (or stewardship of the earth) and solidarity with the poor can, be lived meaningfully only in the context of a specific Christian community.

Recommendations

1. That seminarians be made aware that evangelical poverty should find concrete expression in action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of society.

2. That courses on the crucial issues of poverty be integrated especially in the early stages of seminary formation.

3. That during vacation periods seminarians be sent in small groups to live with poor people and to find their own means of subsistence.

4. That seminarians be encouraged to raise funds for the poor by manual work and other projects.

5. That seminarians be taught responsible stewardship by being made more personally involved in making and keeping the seminary budget in those areas that concern them directly as well as their own personal budgets.

6. That seminarians be formed in the exercise of responsible stewardship by the critical acquisition and disposition of possessions.

7. That seminarians be formed not only in material poverty, but also in poverty of spirit in silence, solitude, and contemplation.

MISSIONARY FORMATION

Convictions

1. The missionary formation of the future priest in Asia, with its emphasis on evangelization and dialogue, assumes vital importance particularly because a vast majority of the people of the continent are yet to experience the redemptive love of God manifested in Jesus Christ.

2. Missionary apostolate is an essential dimension of the Church and of priestly life and, therefore, everyone concerned with their formation should strive hard to instill in the seminarians a strong missionary spirit.

3. Team spirit - the spirit of working together in close collaboration - along with a sharing with formators, is important as a preparation for apostolate.

4. In the context of our religious pluralism and cultural diversity dialogue is imperative. While for us Jesus Christ is the basis of interreligious dialogue, we admit the difficulties implied in this arduous task.

Recommendations

1. That missionary spirit permeate the whole formation of seminarians, and that it be present in all subjects taught.

2. That formators be an example of this spirit and team work.

3. That this spirit and apostolic zeal be fostered by inviting to the seminary active missionaries who can serve as role models and share their experiences thus inspiring the seminarians.

4. That missionary intentions and concerns have their place in our liturgical celebrations.

5. That practical training be given to seminarians to foster in them a missionary attitude. This should be done during semester sessions and also through experiences.

6. That in the seminary a group for pastoral and evangelizing activity be set up and missionary groups be created.

7. That in regional seminaries diocesan groups be a basis for the team work to be fostered.

8. That in the seminary curriculum there be a study of other religions and the orientation of the Church regarding interreligious dialogue.

9. That an exposure program be set up for seminarians to live in relationship with followers of the other religions.

10. That interreligious prayer meetings be organized on certain occasions.

FORMATION IN THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Convictions

1. It is of paramount importance that the seminarians have a good understanding and awareness of the economic and socio-political realities which threaten the life of our people. This study would take into consideration the deep aspiration of the people for God.

2. It is important to relate and integrate the three aspects of a social analysis: philosophical, doctrinal and contextual (i.e., in the context of concrete situations). The analysis would affirm that every person has something to offer no matter how poor, oppressed and exploited he or she is for everyone can reveal God to us and evangelize us.

3. It is essential to form a correct personal conscience for the proper discernment of one's instinctive tendencies and rapidly changing values system and for responsible interaction with social situation.

Recommendations

1. That the seminarians be given a complete education in the social teaching of the Church together with an exposure-immersion program to sensitize them to the social conditions of our people.

2. That the students be made aware of "structures of sin" which we all have a role and responsibility to transform.

3. That the formation or social apostolate include a thorough understanding of the ecological crisis which is threatening our planet earth.

4. That seminarians be made aware of the ever increasing threat to human life and dignity (abortion, contraception, violence, war, etc.) and be encouraged to foster respect for human life and uphold dignity and rights.

5. That the seminarians cultivate a habit and be given a method of reflection on social matters namely: "See-Judge-Act," and be helped to integrate the social action into their life with the help of the pastoral spiral (situation/reality-> reflection in faith-> response/judgment/decision-> planning-> action-> evaluation-> new situation/reality, all centered around prayer and love).

6. That the seminarians be given ample opportunity and encouragement to work with Church organizations dealing with social problems.

7. That care be taken that the seminarians not forget the apostolic dimension of their social action which alone would distinguish the priests and seminarians engaged in social action from social workers.

8. That everyone engaged in social action be given time and place for solitude, silence and contemplation.

PROVIDING AN INTEGRATED FORMATION

Convictions

1. Priestly formation, as a ministry in the Church, is as multi-faceted as the human person being formed. Each aspect needs to be developed separately and linked with the other aspects. All aspects need to be integrated in order to promote the human maturity of the seminarian enabling him to commit himself more and more fully to the Lord Jesus and his people.

2. There is a need for adequate formation of formators.

3. Seminary professors are called to be formators as well. Being men and women of faith and love, they are also called to collaborate as a team in accompanying seminarians in discipleship and apostleship.

4. Formators and professors should be assigned to the seminary for a specified term.

5. The community life of the formators must be an example to the seminarians. A team spirit among students and healthy rapport between staff and students promote good formation.

6. The seminarians should be involved in elaborating the seminary program. The seminary charter, goals, means and activities should be presented to them.

7. The evaluation of seminarians is meant not only to rate the performance of candidates but also to point out areas of potential growth and to provide an opportunity for integration.

8. A certain degree of fear and anxiety regarding evaluations will always be present in seminarians. Besides the bishop, the student too has the right to know about his evaluation.

9. Bishops should be intimately related to the formation program.

Recommendations

1. That formators be selected, prepared and formed continuously in such a way that they are able to accompany the seminarians more effectively for example through training in spiritual direction and counseling.

2. That the formator or professor be given a fixed renewable term (perhaps of six years), and a one-year sabbatical or renewal program.

3. That information on formation centers in India and the Philippines be disseminated. That regional centers be established if these are inadequate. That every new formator be sent to such a center. That others avail themselves of training during vacations or their sabbatical year.

4. That the formation team meet two or three days before opening the semester in order to identify short-term goals.

5. That the formation team clarify their vision, goals and roles, that they work as a team and that they periodically evaluate

their exercise of the ministry, even with the help of the seminarians themselves.

6. That seminary formators (including professors) build and promote a Christian community among themselves, ongoing regularly in common prayer and contemplation discernment and decision, work and recreation, thus giving witness to Christ who calls the Church to unity and solidarity.

7. That the rector and resident professors partake in community activities, e.g., liturgy and prayer, games and recreation, outings and recollections.

8. That the seminary community be structured so that the seminarians with the help of formators are formed more deeply and integrally.

9. That the intellectual formation program be developed so that its intrinsic connection with spiritual formation is manifested more clearly.

10. That the fear and anxiety syndrome caused by evaluation be kept at a minimum. That evaluation be held at least once a year by the staff by peers and by the seminarian himself. That the contents of the evaluation be made known to the individual.

11. That bishops stay in the seminary for a few days every year to meet the seminarians and the formators. That the bishop be requested to give due weight to the recommendation or advise of the rector and staff in the appointment or withdrawal of a staff member.

THE ROLES OF THE RECTOR AND THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

Convictions

1. The rector is a pastor building up the spirit of the community, correcting when necessary, distributing responsibilities, bringing out the charisms and talents of all and helping them read the signs of the times.

2. The rector, together with his administrative council, is to assess the work load of each staff member.

3. The rector has the unique opportunity, role and obligation of fostering the development of a formation team, who, together with the local Ordinary, has the duty of developing and implementing an integrated formation program.

4. The seminary is to provide sufficient spiritual directors. Every student should be required to see his spiritual director at least once in a month.

5. All formators, except the rector can be spiritual directors. They should be compassionate and encouraging towards students. They are to point out to the seminarian matters known in the community about his prayer life and discipline. They should encourage him to the practice of virtues.

6. The rector has the right to know who the spiritual directors of the seminarians are.

7. Confidentiality must be scrupulously observed by the spiritual director.

8. Monthly recollections of staff and students should be organized by the rector and the spiritual director respectively. Staff members should be prepared to help with the students' recollections.

Recommendations

1. That whenever possible, the rector be consulted regarding appointment or transfer of new priests and discussions of seminary matters.

2. That before receiving the ministries and holy Orders, the candidate be required to state that he has consulted his spiritual director.

3. That the spiritual director notify the rector if any student refuses to come to him regularly.

4. That the spiritual director refrain from attending evaluation meetings if the students fear that confidentiality may be broken.

5. That daily Mass, meditation, spiritual direction, the sacrament of reconciliation and study be counted among the non-negotiable elements of student participation in the seminary spiritual program.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION (PROPAEDUETIC) YEAR

Convictions

1. There must be a harmonious relationship between the spirituality of the spiritual year and that practiced in the major seminary.
2. There must be a certain degree of continuity between the spiritual year and the philosophate.

Recommendations

1. That the rector and the spiritual director of the major seminary be consulted when determining the program for the spiritual year.
2. That already in this period the student develop an understanding and an appreciation for spiritual direction.

Conclusion

As we end this most fruitful seminar, we are filled with gratitude and joy. We have been blessed by God with financial support, with an abundance of material help. The clerical help and assistance for our work along with the prayerful support of so many dedicated people – laity, cloistered sisters, religious of many different congregations and clergy – give us abundant cause of gratitude.

From the sponsorship of the conference to the places where we stayed all were most gracious and kind. The lay people who welcomed us and sent out of their way to make our stay pleasant, gave us witness of the love that people have for priests and the hope that they place in their well-being.

We have tried to face the responsibilities which are ours as openly and honestly as possible and were enriched with the sharing of each of our brothers. With one another, we gave flesh to your living word: may we likewise become living reminders of God's grace to those whom we hope to form and we live daily the paschal mystery under the care of Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Church and Patroness of Asia.

Evangelization Cannot be Christ-less*

Introduction

During the last 25 years or so some radical questions have been raised about Christian mission. What is Christian mission today? Quite a number of Christians and theologians tend to give new answers to these questions which reflect a radical shift in the very meaning of Christian mission to evangelize: a shift from the proclamation of Jesus Christ to the promotion of the kingdom of God understood as something horizontal and temporal, centering around such values as justice, love, freedom, human well-being and harmony.

In other words, some are speaking of a Christ-less evangelization. Can we reduce Christian mission and evangelization to kingdom-centred or man-centred projects? That the tendency is widespread enough is obvious from the warning that Pope Paul VI gave already in 1975 when he wrote that some "are frequently tempted to reduce her mission to the dimensions of a simply temporal project" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n.32). An evangelization that does not place Christ at the centre of proclamation will then lose its fundamental meaning (*Ibid.*, n.32).

*In November 1992 the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences sponsored a congress on evangelization in Manila, Philippines. Salesian Father Sebastian Karotemprel, Secretary General of the FABC's Office of Evangelization and a member of the International Theological Commission, gave this keynote address.

The Church's task, according to some, is no longer proclaiming Jesus Christ, but ushering in a kingdom "here and now" though no one gives us the formula how to do so! Thus an Asian theologian writes: "We have to reverse the shift not only from Church to Christ, but also from Christ to the kingdom he proclaimed." According to some, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, conversion and baptism, and the formation of Christian communities are to be strictly avoided under a total moratorium!

For some, evangelization has come to mean evangelizing cultures, entering into dialogue with religions, interpreting God's presence in history, and having a vision of mankind's common destiny. Most significantly, there is no mention of Jesus Christ in all this plethora of words.

Behind all these attempts at interpreting Christian mission and evangelization is the assumption that Jesus preached the kingdom of God and we must return to such kingdom-centred proclamation in evangelization.

Is evangelization without Jesus Christ possible?

The attempt to have Christ-less evangelization is nothing new. Paul tried it out in Athens by proclaiming the unknown God (Ac 17:16-34). Paul learned his lesson once and for all, and from then on decided to preach only Christ crucified: "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. . . . For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Co 1:22; 1 Co 2:2).

It would be real folly to move into a Christ-less evangelization, or to proclaim a Christ who is an abstraction, not Jesus Christ, the revelation and the revealed One of the Father.

The purpose of the first evangelization by the Father in sending his Son into the world was to direct humankind's gaze to Jesus his Son, to the mystery of God and man revealed in Jesus Christ. In him, God and man are newly and radically defined and expressed. In him "the God of creation is revealed as the God of redemption" (*Redemptor hominis*, n.9). In him man too is newly created and newly expressed: "In the mystery of the redemption man becomes newly expressed and in a way, is newly created" (*ibid.*, n.10).

If the first evangelization by the Father was in Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of God was the Gospel concerning his Son (Rm 1:1), can today's evangelization be anything else?

How will humanity's gaze be turned to Jesus Christ, the centre of the first evangelization, unless the Church unambiguously professes faith in him as the universal Redeemer and proclaims him to others, and thus draws all peoples to the mystery of God and man? John Paul II answers this question: "The Church's fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to direct man's gaze, to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. At the same time man's deepest sphere is involved – we mean the sphere of human hearts, consciences and events" (*Redemptor hominis*, n.10).

We must then conclude that there can never be an authentic Christian mission without Christ.

Why is Jesus Christ at the centre of evangelization

All the New Testament writers, though from different angles, perspectives and emphases, unequivocally affirm that Jesus Christ is the culmination of all the revelatory-salvific activity of God: "The basic affirmation that the history of God's saving activity has culminated in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection and affected a radically new situation for the human community and the cosmos are articulated with the help of an apocalyptic world view" (P. Meagher, "Paul and his mission," *Vidyajyoti*, 56, 1992, p.253).

For the evangelists, Paul and other New Testament witnesses to the Christ-event, all religious endeavors of man, whether spelt out in philosophical belief systems, elaborate cultic ritual, devotions and social organizations, or only in simple primal, natural religions, whether Jewish, Greek, Roman or barbarian, were powerless to save man and offer him wholeness here and in the hereafter.

a) God has definitely revealed himself in Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the love, mercy, forgiveness, goodness and power of God, especially in his death and resurrection: "The paschal mystery of Christ is at the summit of the

revelation of the inscrutable mystery of God. It is precisely then that the words pronounced in the Upper Room are completely fulfilled: 'he who has seen me has seen the Father'" (*Dives in misericordia*, n.8).

In today's mission debate, seldom are some vital questions about revelation and salvation raised. Some speak of community, harmony, peace, dialogue, kingdom values - all great values indeed and essential for mission. But what does God say to us in Jesus Christ his Son? What does God demand of man? These questions are bypassed, and Jesus Christ with them also.

The one single conviction of the apostolic Church, whatever the shades or angles or starting points of their Christ-understanding, is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the definitive manifestation of the Father. On this point there was no doubt and no open-ended Christologies in the New Testament, whether in the Gospels, the Acts, the Pauline Letters, or the Catholic Epistles, Hebrews or the Book of Revelation! They all, without exception, confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

b) *Jesus Christ is the revelation of man*

In Jesus Christ not only God is fully and definitively revealed but the ultimate meaning and destiny of man is also revealed and realized. As Vatican II has penetratingly put it, the mystery, the riddle, the problem of man is nowhere so fully, clearly and credibly answered as in Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen. In him man is newly defined as in right relationship with God and neighbor. He is "our righteousness" (1 Co 1:30). In him man "is a new creation" (2 Co 5:17), renewed from radical sinfulness from within. In him the riddle of death and the question of total freedom from all forms of "death" and exploitation, whether physical, moral, political or cultural, and the darkness of what lies on the other side of death, as well as the Angst of total annihilation, are overcome and made luminous by his resurrection. He is indeed our resurrection.

If Jesus Christ is the final meaning that God gives to man, all other meanings, whether discovered as a result of man's own search or offered as a gift by God, cannot be different from, or apart from, the meaning of Jesus Christ. They are either ordained towards it or flowing from it: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man,

was a figure of him who was to come, namely, Christ the Lord; Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then that in him all the aforementioned truth find their root and attain their crown" (*Gaudium et spes*, n.22).

To be silent about Jesus Christ in our proclamation is to be silent about the meaning of Jesus Christ for man and the meaning of man.

c) *Jesus Christ is our salvation.*

Human salvation according to the New Testament, wherever it is found and achieved, is God's gift. All miss the mark of salvation; all alike have sinned; all are without the saving presence of God (*Rm* 1:18-3:19). Salvation is God's absolute offer of himself here and in the hereafter. This offer is made in his Son Jesus Christ. Wherever and whenever man accepts this absolute offer of God, there is salvation.

In Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen, man's acceptance of God's offer of himself is absolute and final and made irrevocable by Christ's death and resurrection. Hence Jesus Christ has become the unique pattern and source of salvation for all: "Thus is the real significance of Jesus Christ 'for us and for our salvation.' Jesus gives to all men a personal and historical witness of man's religious resurrection to God and his self-giving to his fellow men. Jesus becomes the unique pattern for it and communicates his power, grace and readiness to help all men of good will to do the same. Such testimony and grace are unique though it does not take away or deny the grace and power of other efforts for salvation and wholeness. With Rahner we may state our well-founded conviction that no one else has died and risen again in witness and grace: 'another testimony of this kind has yet to appear in our history because all the other great figures in the history of religion did not provide this testimony, and they did not even intend to do so'" (S. Karotemprel, *CRI Report*, 1990, p. 89).

A salvation that is only temporal and not also eschatological is no salvation at all. Only in the cross and in the empty tomb does man's definitive renewal take place: "In the eschatological fulfilment

and definitive renewal of the world will love conquer, in all the elect, the deepest sources of evil, bringing as its fully mature fruit the kingdom of life and holiness and glorious immortality" (*Dives in misericordia*, n.8). In Jesus Christ the absolute future of man is somehow made present and made available to all, whatever the channel of man's participation in this offer of salvation.

Jesus Christ is at the centre for our salvation for Christians and non-Christians alike, and to be silent about him is ultimately to be silent about our understanding of salvation itself.

d) *Jesus Christ is our kingdom*

The theme of the kingdom of God is crucial to Jesus' life, mission and death-resurrection. Today we are rediscovering the meaning of kingdom and its importance in evangelization.

In the New Testament, however, kingdom is not an abstract reality, a concept, a wish. The kingdom of God means two things: radical change of heart by purification from sin and the presence of God in our hearts through acceptance of his will. In Jesus' ministry and preaching, kingdom is more than human, temporal liberation. Jesus' words, deeds, cures and exorcisms go far beyond temporal, earthly, and social justice, and freedom from political and cultural oppression. Jesus often spoke of the kingdom being accomplished or its being in the midst of his listeners. That was Jesus himself, in his paschal mystery, as one who accepted God's rule even to death on the cross.

Jesus Christ is the kingdom. That is the reason why the disciples preached not an abstract kingdom but the concrete, personal, already present and realized, eschatological kingdom in the risen Lord, as I. de la Potterie has said: "The identification of Jesus with the kingdom will be found in the tradition of the Church: the Son of God is the *autobasileia*, the kingdom of God in person" (*I de la Potterie, Il mistro del cuore trafitto*, Bologna, 1988, p.12).

The very commitment to the kingdom as understood, intended and willed by Jesus demands that we proclaim Jesus Christ himself as the kingdom. Thus, far from being silent about Jesus Christ in our evangelizing proclamation, Jesus Christ will be at its centre: "Evangelization will also always contain – as the foundation, centre and at the same time summit of its dynamism – a clear proclamation that, in

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n.27).

e) *The Holy Spirit and the proclamation of Jesus*

It is the Spirit who gave utterance to the disciples on Pentecost: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Ac 2:4). And their utterance was all about Jesus of Nazareth... put to death on the cross... whom God raised up... whom God made both Lord and Christ (Ac 2). The response of the people was repentance, faith and baptism. Significantly, when confronted by the religious leaders of Israel and forbidden to proclaim Jesus Christ, the Apostles' answer was: "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Ac 4:20).

The Spirit is the Spirit of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. Often in today's mission debate, the mission of the Spirit is projected as if parallel to that of Jesus Christ and of the Church. This is far from New Testament understanding of the mission of the Spirit. In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus said to his disciples: "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (Jn 16:14). The word used by John here means to proclaim, to announce. The Spirit has a specific task to perform: to take the meaning of the death-resurrection of Jesus Christ and make it known to the disciples and the world, to announce and proclaim it to the world so that they might recognize the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and believe in him and have the fullness of life. He has no new mission: "It is rather the complete identity of the mission of the disciples under the Spirit's guidance. The whole of God's will for mankind has been expressed in Jesus" (B. Lindars, NCB, *The Gospel of John*, 1987, p. 506). Jesus Christ and his work - herein is the sole text on which the Spirit will comment in the souls of the disciples (cf. F.L. Godet, 1980, p. 506). Hence we may conclude that there is not a breath of the Spirit which is not at the service of the person of the historical Jesus Christ.

Man's salvation is accomplished in Jesus Christ by the Father. The Father reveals himself and the Son in his death-resurrection as the saving event for man. The Spirit makes this clear to the disciples and will continue the work of revealing this mystery of the Son to

peoples of all times (R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, 1982, vol. 3, p.136).

John 16:14-15 is clearly a missionary text. Though it has given rise to Trinitarian reflections, primarily it is a Christological and missionary text: "It has a clearly Christological intention and points to the fullness and absolute nature revelation in Jesus Christ. Any later proclamation and all the exposition and interpretation of the event of Christ that takes place in the Spirit is connected with this intention, however historically necessary it may be" (*Ibid.*, p. 136).

The spirit will always take what is of Jesus and proclaim it to peoples of all times and make it their possession either in ways known and visible through the confession of faith and sacraments, or in the mysterious ways of the Spirit known only to God. The content of the paschal mystery thus made available in both cases is the same. Thus the most important task of the Spirit is to make known, to announce, to proclaim Jesus Christ, and the meaning of Jesus Christ to people in all times and places (cf. R. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, pp.708-717). According to John, as Jesus reveals the Father and man, the Spirit reveals Jesus Christ. To proclaim Jesus Christ is to proclaim the Father and man.

If Jesus is the very centre of the salvific proclamation of the Father and the Spirit, the heart of the Church's proclamation cannot but be Jesus Christ.

f) *Jesus Christ at the centre of all religions*

All religions are, in a certain sense, sociological phenomena. On the other hand, the core of all religions, beyond the encrustment of rituals, belief systems, ethical codes and cultural expressions, is man's ultimate self-surrender to God in acceptance of and openness to one's neighbor. All religions and ideologies propose to lead man to God in self-surrender, or at least to one's neighbor in self-giving p73 through human solidarity.

In this sense, Jesus Christ is at the heart of all religions since he, above all other, realized in himself the very substance of what all religions profess to be and are meant to accomplish. Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of all "Law," of all revelations, of all prophets and seers of all times and places by his total self-surrender to God and self-

giving to his disciples. He does not displace them, nullify them or render them superfluous but makes them supremely, unambiguously, visibly, historically, convincingly and authoritatively relevant, valid and effective by his death and resurrection.

Jesus Christ is at the heart of all religion. He is the core of all religions. He is religion.

No Evangelization without Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ is more than a religious myth. If Jesus Christ is God's revelatory-salvific Word, then this Word must be constantly heard in the life and proclamation of the Church. To be silent about Jesus Christ is to be silent about God's own Word, whom he anointed and sent into the world. A shift from Jesus Christ to God (as some Asian theologians argue for) or a shift from God to man (as some Anglo-Saxon theologians suggest) can ultimately be only a shift away from God and man, as the history of the world has constantly proved.

Jesus Christ is the Word of the Father, but he is also the word about man. He is man's word to God. He is the very meaning and destiny of man. To be silent about the Word incarnate, crucified and risen, is to silence God's Word and man's word to God, for "it is through him that we answer 'Amen' to give praise to God" (2 Cor 1:20).

Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God, for in him God's reign has been perfected; he is also the kingdom of man, for in him man finds his ultimate fulfilment and the full stature of his humanity. To discard Jesus Christ in our proclamation is to miss the kingdom within ourselves and our commitment to the kingdom on behalf of others. Such an attitude can only derail or slow down our progress towards the kingdom already initiated in history and realized in the death-resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is its dynamism towards its eschatological fulfilment, a dynamism and momentum imparted by his death-resurrection. The kingdom cannot be merely wished for or rung in. It means to struggle against the powers of evil and selfishness, and only the victory of the cross can overcome them.

The disciples of Jesus and the Church realized this truth and proclaimed Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. The Church would fail in her mission if she were to relegate Jesus Christ to the background of her evangelization effort: "indeed, after the resurrection, the

disciples preached the kingdom by proclaiming Jesus crucified and risen from the dead. In Samaria, Philip 'preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ' (Ac 8:12). In Rome, we find Paul 'preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ' (Ac 28:31). The first Christians also proclaimed 'the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Ep 5:5); cf. Rev 11:15; 12:10), or 'the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Pt 1:11). The preaching of the early Church was centre on the proclamation of Jesus Christ, with whom the kingdom was identified. Now, as then, there is a need to unite the proclamation of the kingdom of God (the content of Jesus' own *kerygma*) and the proclamation of the Christ-event (the *kerygma* of the Apostle). The two proclamations are complementary; each throws light on the other" (*Redemptoris Missio*, n.16).

Christian mission is Jesus Christ

There can never be a Christian mission to evangelize without Jesus Christ, crucified, raised up and seated at the right hand of the Father. There can be many missions in the world but what makes the Church's mission unique is Jesus Christ. Not to proclaim him, for sociological, cultural, or political reason or convenience or compromise is to empty it of its true contents.

To lose our focus on Jesus Christ in evangelization efforts is to lose our focus on Christian mission itself. Confusion about Jesus Christ can only result in confusion about Christian mission, and finally, confusion about God and man.

Jesus Christ is the only way for the Church. For other there might be other ways, but for the Church there is only one way, as Pope John Paul II has said: "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He himself is our way 'to the Father's house' and is the way to each man" (*Redemptoris Hominis*, n.38). To miss Jesus Christ in our proclamation is to miss our way to man.

Conclusion

The greatest gift that Christian can offer Asia is Jesus Christ. Obviously, to make this gift to Asians, Christians must become Christ-like so that Jesus Christ is not seen as an Asian Trojan horse for any form of domination, cultural or otherwise. Here I am

reminded of the book whose title is significant for us, Christ Our Brother, by one of the greatest theologians of modern times, Karl Adam. Let Jesus Christ become a brother to our Asian brothers and sisters; Christ the servant, Christ the healer, Christ the teacher, Christ the giver of life and freedom.

To do this, Christian must become brothers and sisters, healers and servants to our brothers and sisters of other religions of Asia, as Jesus did in his time. We must do mission in Christ's way and not in our own ways, or in the ways of the colonial past: we must do it in dialogue and not from any sense of superiority; in the true incarnation of Jesus Christ in the cultures of Asia; in mutual enrichment and fecundation through our sharing of the God-experience; in human development; in acceptance and not in rejection or condemnation; in sharing through solidarity with all peoples and religions in the struggle for a just and humane society and not in isolation; in promoting the values of the kingdom and not in empty words. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life for Christian first and then for others, for we believe that Jesus Christ is the truth of God and man, man's present and his future. He is the Way, the Truth, and Life of man in Asia too.

To shy away from offering Jesus Christ to our Asian brothers and sisters would be a betrayal not only of Jesus Christ and his mission, but also of the Asian peoples. What do we Christians have to offer them except Jesus Christ? What do they need except the human dignity, freedom and life that Jesus Christ represents? Christians have only one Good News, only one Gospel, Jesus Christ. We need not be "ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of every one who believes: first the Jew, then for the Gentile" (*Rm* 1:16). That Gospel is the Gospel for all peoples, "which has now become flesh and blood in our human history, in Jesus Christ. It is the Gospel regarding his Son... Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rm* 1:1-4).

Love of Creation: An Asian Response to the Ecological Crisis*¹

Introduction

1. The magnitude of the ecological problems facing Asia brought forty-three of us together in a Colloquium on this matter. The group included bishops, priests, brothers, sisters, lay men and women, most of whom were professional scientists, from Bangladesh, Hongkong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand, joined in a common effort to address the issues involved.

2. The colloquium was organized as the implementation of the proposal made by the FABC-OESC Colloquium on Education of January 1992.

3. We drew inspiration from the Bandung 1990 Statement of FABC which demanded of Christian schools "to study how Gospel values can positively influence culture, science and technology" (7.3.2.2.). We were motivated by the appeal made by the FABC Office of Human Development Colloquium of 1992 "that deep social consciousness and truly human values be inculcated in students of every level. They should be trained in solidarity, cooperation, care for the earth and respect for human dignity..."

¹FABC-OESC, Colloquium on Faith and Science, Tagaytay City, January 31 to February 5, 1993.

4. The Holy Father's reminder in his World Day of Peace Message of 1990, that "many ethical values fundamental to the development of a peaceful society are particularly relevant to the ecological question," has served as a guideline.

1. Objective of the Colloquium

The objective of the colloquium was to make a comprehensive analysis of the ecological problem in its scientific, cultural, political, theological and pastoral dimensions and to suggest feasible approaches and action plans towards a solution.

2. Our Common Concern: The Asian Environmental Situation:

2.1. The participants noted with concern the serious distortion of the cycles of the entire eco-system and more specifically.

2.1.1. The problems caused by deforestation, mainly oil erosion leading to floods and drought;

2.1.2. The increase in concentration of "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere.

2.1.3. The large-scale depletion of non-renewable energy resources, engendered by consumerism which could jeopardize the quality of life of future generations;

2.1.4. The serious depletion of marine resources resulting from unhealthy fishing practices, the clearing of mangroves, the damaging of coral reefs or the use of coastal water as a dumping ground for wastes;

2.1.5. The dangerous accumulation of toxic materials in the atmosphere, in rivers, lakes and the sea and even on land caused by inadequate or even non-existent effluent treatment in chemical plants;

2.1.6. The deadly radiation emanating from leaks and poor disposal facilities of atomic power plants exposing populations to the risk of contracting cancer or genetic defects;

2.1.7. The contamination of fruits and vegetable by the indiscriminate use of pesticides and the long-term destruction of fertile land by the excessive use of chemical fertilizers;

2.1.8. The strains which rapidly increasing populations in Asian countries are placing on the region's limited resources;

2.1.9. The displacement of populations engendered by mega-projects such as the building of dams, the excavation of mines, the constructions of highways and the laying of new railway lines.

2.2. *We recognize however, that these are but the symptoms rather than the causes of the ecological crisis we witness today, the root causes being:*

Abject poverty of large section of the population, human greed leading to unrestrained consumerism, ignorance of ecological issues, and lack of appreciation of the life support systems of the earth.

3. **Our Approach Towards a Solution**

3.1. *Sustainable Development*

3.1.1. The conventional approaches which consisted of development without regard for environmental protection or environmental protection which ignored development are inadequate.

3.1.2. The need for a more holistic approach gave rise to the concept of Sustainable Development, a concept that has evolved especially during the intervening years between the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and the Rio Conference in 1992.

3.1.3. Sustainable development meets the needs of today without jeopardizing those of future generations. It is a process which brings about development that is "economically justifiable, technically feasible, socially desirable and ecologically sound" (Agenda 21).

3.1.4. Sustainable development requires radical shifts in world-view, changes in the way we view the nature and purposes of science and technology and in our patterns of production, consumption and lifestyle. Excessive consumerism must yield to a culture of sharing and

solidarity, in humble acknowledgement that the goods of the earth are intended for the benefit of all. Wants must be distinguished from genuine human needs, which always foster "being" over "having."

3.2. We endorse and shall endeavor to mobilize support for the programs of action for the repair of existing damage to the environment and the implementation of measures to prevent further damage, among which we cite the following:

3.2.1. An integrated approach to environmental assessment management and legislation leading to institutional arrangements for the solution of the problems;

3.2.2. Community-based resource management involving the collaboration of the people themselves in the rehabilitation of their environment such as reforestation, and giving them in return the means of livelihood and the right to access and tenure to such restored areas;

3.2.3. Motivation and control of those using renewable resources to ensure that the maximum sustainable yield of any given resource is not exceeded.

3.2.4. The strict enforcement of pollution-control measures especially in the mining industry, in chemical factories and particularly in nuclear power plants.

3.2.5. A total ban on the export of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries, except for the purpose of treatment where special facilities exists.

3.3. Integration of Faith and Science

3.3.1. While we appreciate the great contributions that science is making in understanding and handling ecological problems, we emphasize the faith dimensions, acknowledging God as Creator, trusting in His active Presence and contemplating the beauty of His creation.

3.3.2. Therefore, the concept of man as master of the universe should be replaced by the concept of stewardship with responsibility for the well-being of this world.

3.4. *Integration of Culture and Science.*

The modern science and technology need not conflict with traditional cultures which are in harmony with nature. We stress the need to re-integrate culture, science and technology. Authentic human and cultural values must permeate scientific and technological endeavors and place them at the service of humanity and the protection and management of our fragile eco-systems.

3.5. *Authentic Human Development*

We call for the “development of the whole person and of every human being.” Authentic human development, also refers to the right relationship of a person with God, with Nature and with Society.

“Peoples or nations have a right to their own full development which, while including the economic and social aspects, should also include individual cultures, identity and openness to the Transcendent” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 32).

4. Our Recommendations

The ecological crisis which confronts us is such that it has clearly become one of the most pressing moral issues that we have to address today. The Church in Asia, deeply concerned yet full of hope, and ever faithful to the mission entrusted to her by the Lord in this part of the globe, wishes, to positively contribute, through various organizations, towards its solution. To this effect, we make the following recommendations.

4.1. *To Governments*

4.1.1. We strongly appeal to governments to implement Agenda 21 of the Rio Summit especially in:

- promoting and subsidizing environmental education.
- initiating and supporting action for restoration and preservation of the ecological balance;
- enacting and enforcing legislation on the protection of the environment.

4.2. *To FABC and National Conferences of Bishops*

4.2.1. The FABC with the help of its Theological Advisory Commission should develop a theology (theological position papers) of ecology, especially relevant to Asia.

4.2.2. The FABC and all the related national and regional bodies should promote initiatives and experiments in the ecological apostolate and disseminate information on these efforts.

4.2.3. Episcopal conferences should formulate environmental action programs for service organizations, institutions and parishes and monitor their progress at regular efforts.

4.3. *To Bishops*

Bishops have a vital role in animating and coordinating pro-earth activities. They have to inspire the pastors and heads of educational institutions and maintain the tempo of creative and educative action. Organizations of Youth and Women, if adequately motivated, can play a significant role. Their services should be enlisted and encouraged. Regular evaluation of these activities should be undertaken by Diocesan bodies.

4.4. *To Seminary Formators:*

4.4.1. A genuine scientific outlook and attitude that is in harmony with their faith experience should be inculcated in seminarians.

4.4.1. Environmental education must be part and parcel of the academic and pastoral formation of future priest. They must be given adequate training and exposure so as to enable them as future priest to provide able leadership on the environmental efforts of the communities to which they will be assigned. Seminary formators must exert efforts to bring together Deans, professors and scientists in a continuing dialogue on how this can be obtained.

4.5. *To Educators*

4.5.1. *Teaching of Religion:* Religion can be a powerful motivating force for the care of nature as God's gift and for a

genuine concern and love for the poor and marginalised. God must be presented as the Source of Truth and Love, giving meaning to Man's life by making him a sharer in His Divine Love so that he is inspired by it to love his fellow-men. Our common ecological concerns could bring people of different religions together for cooperation, dialogue and mutual enrichment.

Contemplation of God, being active and present in creation, needs to be strongly encouraged, particularly since it is practiced in many Asian religious traditions.

4.5.2. *Teaching of Science and Technology:* Science and technology have often been abused leading to the dehumanization of people and to the destruction of the environment. To enable the scientist and technologist to develop a more humanistic and balance outlook, science and technology should not be taught as the mere imparting of knowledge. It should rather stimulate creativity and be taught as having relevance to life. Specialization at the expense of adequate general formation should be avoided. The inclusion of Philosophy of Science in the curriculum will enable students to better appreciate the scope and limitations of Science. They must be made aware of the ethical implications of their field of activity and must be imbued with a spirit of social and ecological concern in the eventual practice of their profession.

To achieve these objectives, students should be encouraged to participate in discussions on ethical issues related to scientific developments and new technologies.

4.5.3. *Environmental Education.* It is strongly recommended that respect for the earth be stimulated at all levels of education:

- In primary and secondary education: by introducing ecology in the teaching of regular subjects of the syllabus as well as by simply "Nature" projects like the replanting of trees.
- In universities: by teaching more advanced ecology and by encouraging students to undertake more concrete environmental project in an interdisciplinary manner based on the particular problems being encountered in the region.

4.5.4. *Non-Formal Education.* It is recommended that competent environmental educators reach out to various sectors and age levels of society by organizing seminars and workshops. The use of the mass media like radio and television and the enactment of street plays are powerful means of communicating the message of ecology.

4.6. *To Pastors*

4.6.1. Pastoral formation programs at the parochial level must include environmental education, aimed at making the faithful realize the need to respect God's creation and be conscious of their moral responsibility towards nature and towards the life of future generations. Such pastoral formation and environmental care could be fostered by the ecological reading of the Bible.

4.6.2. Parishes must seek opportunities to celebrate the liturgy and the sacraments in such a creative way that it has great formative value regarding the Christian responsibility towards nature and the environment.

4.6.3. Basic Ecclesial Communities must be used as for educating the faithful on the need and the responsibility to care for the earth. They must be involved in implementing concrete and viable programs designed to protect, preserve and restore the environment. They should monitor and combat possible cases of over-exploitation of natural resources, pollution, and other possible threats to the environment in their respective localities.

4.6.4. Structural forms of poverty, unjust distribution as well as inequitable access to natural resources need also to be addressed at the parish level, for there exists a relationship between these socio-economic realities and the depletion of natural resources and environmental destruction.

4.7. *To the Lay Faithful*

4.7.1. We urge Catholic lay professionals, especially scientists, doctors, pharmacists, agriculturists and foresters, to give witness to the faith by rendering service to the protection

of the environment. The examples of martyrs for ecology are worthy of emulation.

4.7.2. Lay scientists have an obligation to keep Church leaders informed about developments in science and technology and engage in a dialogue with theologians to the enrichment of both Theology and Science. It will also enable the Church to speak in a language meaningful to modern man.

4.7.3. The Chrisitna family must play a crucial role in the concerted effort to face up to the challenge posed by the ecological crisis. Parents must instill in their children reverence for creation and the importance of a simple lifestyle.

4.7.4. Recognizing the population pressure on natural resources, couples should be helped to practice responsible parenthood and respect for life.

Conclusion

We present these conclusions and recommendations to the Christian community of Asia for ongoing reflection and implementation to the best of their abilities.

We express our deep gratitude to God, whose loving kindness we enjoyed and whose Word we shared both in the Eucharist and in the gospel and whose Spirit kept inspiring us.

We hope that this consultation and the follow-up action will be a step in the realization of the Divine plan to "restore all things in Christ" (*Ep* 1:10).

The Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary

Ranhilio C. Aquino

The process used to be simple: graduates from elementary schools who thought they wanted to be priests had to seek admission to the San Jacinto (Minor) Seminary where they would follow a four year secondary, classical curriculum. If their grades — and their conduct — so warranted, they would eventually be promoted to the collegiate level.

The Archdiocese started to feel the need for an alternate program when high school graduates, with considerably greater circumspection and voluntariness, sought admission for candidacy to the priesthood. Even college graduates wanted a program that would suitably prepare them for theology.

The first response was to send them to San Jacinto Seminary for what was called an “orientation program” but which, in actual fact, was hardly anything more than a board-lodging arrangement. It should be obvious to all that making a collegian follow the way of life of high school boys is utterly nonsensical!

I then proposed to Archbishop Talamayan the creation of a Formation House that would allow college graduates to earn the requisite units in philosophy prior to theology and that would also orient the candidates to seminary life. Thus was born the Priestly Formation Institute at the Lyceum of Aparri. Permit had to be obtained from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports so

that the Lyceum of Aparri could offer the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy degree — an additional major field to the already recognized Liberal Arts curriculum of the college. At formal ceremonies, the seminary was decreed into existence, and the Department of Philosophy opened with a discourse by Fr. Maximiliano Rebollo, O.P. on "The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and the Challenge of Contemporary Times." Fr. (now Monsignor) Vicente Catral was the first Rector; I was Dean of Studies and of Students. Fr. Robert Ramos was Spiritual Director. Of the first batch of six seminarians, four have been ordained priests: Fr. Alejandro Amayun, Fr. Celso Lagasca, Fr. Bienvenido Umandap, and Fr. Virgilio Velasco.

The Decree of Creation contemplated an entire college curriculum for graduates of non-seminary high schools, and very soon, the seminary admitted freshmen. From the beginning, the Diocese of Ilagan also sent seminarians to the Formation House.

As soon as the Rule of Formation (Ratio) was drafted, copies were sent to the Episcopal Commission on Seminaries and to the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and for Seminaries. The Archdiocese of Tuguegarao, in its 1990 Quinquennial Report, informed the Holy See of the status of the seminary. The Holy See responded most graciously: it not only confirmed the Rule of the seminary but expressed interest in its existence and in its mission.

The Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Bruno Torpigliani, visited the seminary in 1991. Informed that seminarians from other ecclesiastical jurisdictions were also admitted to the Formation House, Monsignor Rañola, who was the Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio suggested that Rome be asked to allow the seminary to admit candidates from other ecclesiastical jurisdictions. I wrote Rome and the Holy See responded by distinguishing between regional seminaries *de jure* and *de facto*. It allowed the Formation House to continue the practice of accepting seminarians from other jurisdictions and acknowledged its status as interdiocesan, *de facto*. Both communications received from Rome were published in *Boletín Eclesiástico* (January-February 1992 issue).

It has always been my position that the formation of seminarians centers around three points: Prayer, Study and Discipline. Although many had reservations about this, I insisted that seminari-

ans stay as much as possible in the seminary — effecting some sort of “*stabilitas loci*” — while explaining to the seminarians the reason for the rule against prolonged home leaves: the desire to lead them to detachment from their families and to re-orient their priorities and value hierarchies, considering especially that they were in the seminary after their crucial formative years (high school).

It was noticeable to all members of the Formation Staff that new-comers had difficulty following the courses since ideal study-habits were never formed in them — or at least in a majority of them. This is the reason that study periods were strictly supervised, reading assignments regularly given and tests, constructed in such a manner as to provoke them to critical and creative thinking.

In terms of philosophical formation, I stressed the need for the seminarians to be familiar with the Thomistic patrimony of the Church but insisted at the same time that emphasis be given contemporary philosophy so as to enable the seminarians to grapple with the issues of the times and to confront the ways of thinking of the contemporary world.

I found it most important to have a cohesive formation team. I must pay special tribute to Fathers Deogracias Lampad, Adalbert Barut, Engelbert Gammad, Domingo Langcay and Robert Ramos. They helped tremendously in shaping what is now the Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary.

Thanks to the generosity of benefactors here and abroad (among them Missio, Kirche in Not, Propaganda Fide and Prof. Jan Van der Veken), we built a seminary building that allows the seminarians to live a more closely-knit life as a community.

While I am at it, let me express my thoughts on something that seems to have become the fad: the so-called “Summer Apostolates.” In many ways, these ventures have been costly and to my mind — unproductive excursions. I think that our seminarians should spend their summers, if not in study, then in their parishes where they may assist their pastors and at the same time find the support they need from their own families. Apostolate — they will have aplenty at some later stage of their formation; we must be sure, however, that before they start their work, they are prepared for it and while piety and good-will might have been sufficient in the past, these certainly will

not do to build the credibility of the clergy in the face of a Church that has now more intelligent, informed and sophisticated laity as members. If the priest, by charism, is to be leader of the community, years of study, training and intellectual growth are most precious — and this is exactly what many seem averse to, notwithstanding the euphemisms they may coin for giving some excuse to leave one's study table and classroom.

It is certainly most important that there be qualified personnel to direct the seminary. *Qualified* does not mean primarily "financial expertise," for if our bishops do want seminaries, they must be willing to bear its cost. It will certainly not do to staff our seminaries with intellectual mediocres, no matter their dexterity at finances.

I can say that my most satisfying years as a priest were spent in formation: being entrusted with the sublime gift of the priestly vocation in young men who certainly could have lucrative opportunities elsewhere, nurturing the vocation and cultivating mind and heart to be ready to proclaim the gospel *opportune et importune*.

At the end of April, I shall no longer be Rector of Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary, but it in no way means that I shall take myself away completely from the immensely fulfilling — if trying — task of formation.

The Colegio de San Jacinto

Virgilio D. Pobre-Yñigo*

[Editor's Note: With some hesitation and a liberal application of my proverbial "blue pencil" I have decided to publish this rambling but colorful piece about an institution, the Colegio de San Jacinto, which has passed into history but has not, thank God, passed from memory in Tuguegarao and Manila. Let it be known to the Philippines and the world! Judge Pobre's account is not only touching in its loyalty and graphic in its details. It "brings back" so clearly persons long departed and a place once "jumping" with young humanity that it has held me spell-bound from the first reading. This piece makes no claim to scientific history but it transcends mere anecdote. I hope our readers will find it as fascinating as I have found it and join me in praising it as "delightful"!]

I entered the Colegio de San Jacinto in Tuguegarao, Cagayan when I was in the Second Grade in June 1918. I had taken Kindergarten and the First Grade in the Sacred Heart Academy which was a school exclusively for girls but admitted boys in the two lowest grades. This school was run by St. Paul Sisters, and was later called Sacred Heart of Jesus Institute, then St. Paul College of Tuguegarao. It is now St. Paul University.

The Colegio de San Jacinto was run by the Dominican Fathers who usually numbered as many as twelve at any particular time.

*Retired Regional Trial Court Judge and Knight of St. Sylvester.

It was housed in a very imposing concrete two-storey building. This was the biggest and most beautiful single edifice in the entire Northern Luzon until the Second World War. If it had not been razed to the ground by American bombing (because it was falsely reported as the headquarters of the Japanese army), it would still be imposing even among the three and four storey buildings of the present time.

The Dominican Fathers were all Spaniards and spoke only Spanish. I never heard any of them speak English, and we students (even in the lowest grades) always spoke to them in Spanish. When I entered, the *colegio* had not only the *primera enseñanza* and *segunda enseñanza* (elementary and secondary) but also a *colegiado* which granted the degree of *Bachiller en Artes* after the *sexto año* (this involved academic caps and gowns at graduation). In 1918, its Seminario had just opened. It was officially called the *Colegio-Seminario de San Jacinto de Polonia*.

The *colegio* must have been opened around the year 1902. When I entered the *colegiado* it had been in operation for some time. I knew various men who claimed to have earned their togas there. The *colegio* had the most spacious lot in the whole town, bigger than any of those occupied by the provincial capitol, the provincial high school and the Constabulary barracks. But what San Jacinto was most celebrated for, even by national standards, was its Museum of Natural History which was considered the biggest outside Manila. I remember that it had a fossil or skeleton of some large animal. It even contained instructional materials for sculpture (although I never knew this subject or course to be taught), a big laboratory for physics, biology and astronomy.

In our Second Grade classroom there were large instructional charts called *Tabla de Restar* and *Tabla de Multiplicar*, and wall maps of the Philippines in Spanish. In the Second Grade practically all instruction was in Spanish as our Filipino teacher had been totally educated at San Jacinto and did not speak English. However, in the class in Geography we were beginning to learn English terms. For our Spanish reading class, we had a book called "*El Camarada*." While English was the medium of instruction from the Third to the Seventh Grades, Spanish Grammar and Spanish readers which came from Spain, were used for regular subjects in all grades. Religion was taught totally in Spanish.

Books and the medium of instruction were all in Spanish for

Algebra, Geometría, Biología and Física in the high school department, as the instructors were all Dominican priests. In the Seminary all instruction was in Spanish and Latin. *Historia Natural*, *Historia de España*, and some other subjects in the college department were in Spanish. Even regular conversation among students outside the classrooms was mostly Spanish, even when they were quarreling. Of course, Ilocano and Ybanag were spoken also, but not Tagalog for this was totally unknown in the locality except to us who had Tagalog ancestry. From the Second Grade up, we students always talked to the priests in Spanish in various degrees of perfection and imperfection, even when we met them outside the school premises.

Most of our grade school teachers had not finished the *Segunda Enseñanza* but this was not unusual because at that time, so few Filipinos had reached the upper grades. The provincial public high school had Americans teaching almost all the subjects. Even government officials, such as the Provincial Commander of the Constabulary, the Postmaster, the successive Judges of First Instance, and the only licensed surveyor in town were all Americans. When we arrived in town in 1917, my Father was the only Filipino lawyer, the four or five other lawyers were all Americans including one Negro. Other Filipino lawyers came later on, beginning in 1922.

Because of their academic limitations, our grade school teachers adopted a method of instruction very different from what is current today. However, they were very strict and classroom discipline was practically perfect. Spanish and Religion were taught by Dominican Fathers to all grades and meant mostly memory work in Spanish. But in the English subjects (Reading, Spelling, Arithmetic, Geography and Good Manners and Right Conduct) the whole period was spent in recitation but we were allowed to open our books. Thus, while one student was reciting, all the others were reading their books each getting ready for the time he will be called. Five-minutes spelling tests were given almost daily, while Arithmetic was mostly blackboard work, four or five boys simultaneously solving the same problems on the blackboard while the rest of us worked on it with paper and pencil. Thus, the whole class was solving problems during the entire period.

Geography was the most interesting subject because aside from the maps and numerous pictures, there were descriptions of the various people in the country, their agriculture, trade and products,

and there were even stories of the lives of Mountain peoples and the Negritos. Geography books were very large, about twice the size of ordinary books, and they were changed from year to year.

Each morning upon entrance, all students from the First to the Fifth Grades lined up against the wall and sang for fifteen minutes with a teacher beating time. The loud singing over, the boys joyfully scrambled to their seats in their respective rooms ready and eager for recitation. It was a very effective motivation for the start of the learning process. The Sixth and Seventh Grades and the high school department had their own singing in their own wing of the huge building.

Since the whole day was spent in recitation with open books (in the Second to the Fifth Grades), the result was that every student read the entire lesson in every subject the whole day through, so that classes were full time study periods. Nobody ever missed a single lesson. Studying the lessons each night in preparation for the following day was a practical impossibility because of inadequate lighting in the homes. There was as yet no electricity. Furthermore we all grew up doing various chores in the house during evening hours. In the Third and Fourth Grades there was Dictation in English, or *Dictado* in Spanish. The teacher dictated something and all the students wrote it down. Many new words were learned and handwriting was perfected. In the Fifth Grade we concentrated on Spanish conjugations and mastered the regular verbs. We mastered irregular verbs in the Sixth Grade. With only this as my background in Spanish, I entered the University of Santo Tomas six years later and proved myself more than a match against the many Spanish mestizos who not only spoke only Spanish in their homes but had studied high school Spanish at Letran, San Beda, Ateneo or La Salle. For one thing I never floundered in reading words with *acento ortográfico*, my writing was practically perfect in spelling, and in conjugating irregular verbs I never committed mistakes. With my grades always "Excellent" I felt proud to be a San Jacinto product.

In the Sixth Grade, there were readers such as *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* and *Scudder's Book of Legends*. By then there was electricity in town, and we were assigned stories to read at home. The common type of recitation was to "Tell the story in your own words." After each story, the next question was, "What is the moral

of this story." Without their knowing it, teachers were constantly teaching values. In the Seventh Grade, we wrote original compositions. I remember one particular composition which I wrote entitled "My Country and What It Means to Me" was long remembered and praised. I remember another one that I wrote, "Our Farmers and What We Owe to Them." This training stood me in great stead in theme writing under American teachers during the four years of high school, and later under the American Professors James H. Bass and John Siler at UST.

By the time I had finished the Third Grade, the college department had its last graduation rites and was phased out. Of the last nine graduates three became physicians, Doctors Juan Llopis of Baguio, Santiago Mendoza of Agoo, La Union, and Ricardo Pagulayan of Enrile, Cagayan, two of whom died well advanced in age. Among graduates as *Bachiller en Artes* known personally to me were Atty. Nicanor Carag who successively became a member of the House of Representatives, Governor of the Mountain Province, Governor of Cagayan, and Philippine Consul in Spain, Atty. Silvestre Macutay who became Representative for Isabela; and Atty. Cesar Flor Mata who was a member of the Constitutional Convention.

When we finished the Seventh Grade, they had the last graduation from the high school department. So we had to take our secondary course at the provincial high school. The last secondary graduating class was had less than a dozen, and they were mostly taken into government offices mainly because of their command of both Spanish and English. One of them, Josefín de Alban from Tumauini, Isabela, took up Law in the University of Santo Tomas and became an attorney who lived to an old age. Among those who finished the secondary course in San Jacinto and were successful in life were Attys. Conrado Singson, Representative for Cagayan, Alfredo Catolico, RTC Judge. Medical Drs. Virgilio Aguinaldo, long a practitioner in Camalaniugan, Cagayan and Benito Valdez who practiced in Manila after winning distinction in the University of Santo Tomas as poet laureate in Spanish as Pastor Lim and Florencio Vogel who headed branches of the *Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas* in Cagayan and Isabela, were also known to me.

When the high school department was phased out, the students went to the Cagayan High School. The first ranking student was one of five who were exempted from final examinations in all subjects.

But he was not granted any honors because of lack of residency. We found out that none of the transferees from the San Jacinto failed in their courses although many other students did.

Meanwhile, while we were in high school, the continued Seminary ordained its first priests, namely: Frs. Domingo Alindayu, Salvador Baua, Ricardo Jamias, Francisco Boado, Guillermo Lucas, Celedonio Remudaro, Salvador Saquing and Estanislao Singson. All but Father Boado (who was an excellent painter) lived long in the service of God and celebrated their golden jubilee. The first three named all obtained the Licentiate from the University of Santo Tomas. Father Jamias later became a Domestic Prelate of the Pope with the title "Monsignor."

The elementary department went on for a number of years after we left San Jacinto. The Seminary was closed in 1932 or 1933 after ordaining many more priests, one of whom, Fr. Mariano Bacud is still living as a retired but conventual priest, and another, Fr. Roque Fidel died recently. Our first Cagayan bishop, Most Rev. Teodulfo Domingo, Archbishop Emeritus of Tuguegarao, was in his advanced studies when San Jacinto Seminary was closed. He went to Vigan to finish his course and to be ordained.

Now, what about our San Jacinto Dominican Fathers? When I enrolled in Second Grade, the Rector was an old priest whom I came to know only as Padre Jose. I have personal memories of him although he stayed with us only in that year. One day, he came to our class and personally picked about a dozen boys, then arranging a place for us in a wide corridor, proceeded to give catechetical instruction in Ilocano and Spanish, holding this special class for one period every morning until we were ready for confession and first communion. He was an extremely kind and gentle teacher, and we intensely missed him when he was no longer with us the following year.

Father Dario Montesinos was Rector for the next two years. He was tall and handsome and was well liked not only by the students but also by the people in town. He preached occasionally at the Cathedral, and, during Holy Week ceremonies, performed the role of "Archpriest" next to the Bishop. With his loud and resonant voice he would call out, "*Oleum Infirmorum*" and then the ceremonies for the blessing of the holy oils began. Later he called "*Oleum ad Sanctum Chrisma*," and "*Oleum Catechumenorum*." The Rector's office was in

the middle of our building, and many times he would stand at his window watching the students. Whenever we entered the gate and were approaching the Rector's window on the way to our classroom, we removed our hats and as we came near, we held our hats high and greeted him. He always answered our greeting, bowing and smiling. Even when he was not there, we removed our hats just the same and we did not put them back until after we had passed his window.

Our next Rector was Father Julio Vicente who was already regarded as the most eloquent preacher among the Dominicans. It must be remembered that at that time any audience in Tuguegarao understood Spanish, As late as 1943 when Senator Benigno Aquino Sr. spoke before a large open-air crowd in Spanish, he asked the translator in Ybanag to stop when he saw that the people were responding correctly with laughter or with applause at his words. This was owing to the education they had received in San Jacinto for there was no other school in town until the public elementary school was opened in 1908 and the Cagayan High School in 1911. Spanish was not even taught in these schools.

Padre Julio was a popular figure in town and was present in every public program presented by the Sacred Heart College as well as the frequent plays given by the *Federacion Catolica de Mujeres de Tuguegarao* (which preceded by many years the Catholic Women's League in Manila) in their own building in town. But after some years he fell ill and had throat surgery in Manila. After that he had to stop preaching. His charisma never left him, however, and he continued to teach and train his students for all plays they staged to the exquisite delight of the public.

When I went to UST for Pre-Law and during my Law course, Fr. Julio was Rector of the Seminario Central and he always responded "Poor man, poor man," whenever I greeted him, in reference to my family name. He lived to an old age in Spain, and retained a good memory for his friends in Tuguegarao.

Padre Bautista (I am not sure if his first name was Francisco or Juan) was *Director de Externos*. We the small boys were afraid of him because of a big red mark on one side of his face down to the neck. When we were in Second Grade, he taught Spanish and Religion in the Third Grade and we dreaded the time when we would be under

him. But nothing strange happened in his class except that it was unusually quiet and orderly due to the mere sight of him. However, he did not teach us when we went to the Third Grade. Once two or three of us dared to enter his room (in San Jacinto we were always free to enter the room of any priest) and to our surprise he received us in a jolly mood, even playfully showing us his birds in a cage with frequent exclamations of "*Afu Santa Maria, Afu Santa Maria*" in imitation of a common expression, just to show us that he had a knowledge of Ybanag. Padre Bautista is remembered as having introduced the game of soccer, not only to San Jacinto and the entire town.

Padre Cesareo Lobo succeeded him as *Director de Externos*. He was a very gentle priest. I passed many of my recess periods in his room, sometimes looking out the window just to show the rest of the students moving around in the school grounds that I was in that exalted place.

Padre Arnaiz for many years the Seminary Director was not only a theologian but a master of music and science at the same time. The high-class laboratory was his domain throughout the day outside his hours in the Seminary. (The seminarians were joined by the high school students in some subjects). He was the only priest who lived in one of the rooms of the seminary which was located in the west wing of the building to which other students never strayed. Padre Arnaiz had a deep bass voice and always sang with the seminary choir at the Cathedral. In the chanting of St. John's Gospel during Good Friday ceremonies, Padre Arnaiz always performed the role of the *Christus*. Padre Arnaiz had a long term as seminary head, and when his place was taken by Padre Carra, I had very few chances to see or know anything of the latter before I left San Jacinto.

Padre Jesus Lerma was easily the most colorful priest in San Jacinto not only because he was the smallest in size but because he was also the musician *non pereil* not only in San Jacinto but in the whole town. Where piano accompaniment was needed, he was the only player at all programs at San Jacinto. I passed many of my idle hours in his room which was located at the far northern end of the building in virtual isolation and silence. Here I listened to his piano playing, and whenever he stopped I tried out the several wind instruments in his room (which he himself did not play) until I learned to play the scale of notes on each. I was only learning to play

the piano at home when my stay in San Jacinto was cut short by my transfer to the Cagayan High School. When I visited him again (during summer vacation) I was already in college, and could play a few pieces from the masters. So Padre Lerma gave me as a gift a copy of Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique which it did not take long for me to learn. On certain occasions, he called me to participate in the closing program of the seminary, providing accompaniment for some vocal solos and then joining him in a combined organ and piano accompaniment of the whole student body.

Padre Lerma was a composer. He composed some sacred music, in four voices, and a martial march dedicated to the student cadet corps of the school. Every year parades were held on July 4, US Independence Day, November 11, World War I Armistice Day, and December 30, Rizal Day. The police platoon, constabulary company, and Cagayan High School battalion were all in khaki uniforms, but the San Jacinto companies were resplendent in white coats and pants and white visored caps and bore fancy wooden guns manufactured in Manila. During the feast of San Jacinto on August 16, the San Jacinto cadets joined in full uniform but without their guns. Padre Lerma must have been the longest resident in San Jacinto. Like Padre Julio he lived to an advanced age in Spain never forgetting the people in Tuguegarao.

When I entered San Jacinto, there was also a *Director de Internos* but I never knew his name. He was the Infirmarian for the *Internos*, but he also treated any *Externo* brought to him, and once I myself was brought to him for treatment of a wound in my foot. Once he cut the hair from the head of a big *Externo* to expose to view a big wound he had on his scalp caused by a stone. Then he applied medicine and put bandage on the wound. His successor as *Director de Internos* was Padre Ricardo Rodrigo, a robust man who looked as if he was forever in a good mood, but he had a very queer habit. Whenever he felt some surprise he jerked his head upwards just as a person would do when trying to look afar. The boys started calling him "Padre *Tangac*" which is the Ybanag word for the Tagalog "*tingala*." He heard this so often till he came to know the meaning, and then, he would get angry at the mention of the word and sometimes he would pinch the offending boy if the latter did not succeed in running away. One afternoon a classmate of mine who was almost an adult already (I was then ten years old) was teasing

a Chinese student by singing "*Tonga, Tonga*" repeatedly, this being a Chinese name featured in a comical song which was popular at the time. Padre Rodrigo was just coming out of the Fathers' refectory, and he jerked his head upwards when he heard the song. Of course I knew that he thought it was "*Tangac, Tangac*" so I felt there would be something to pay. The student and I entered our room for it was the end of recess, and took our seats but I watched, and soon enough Padre Rodrigo entered, located the offender and without a word gave him a whack at the back of the neck while the boy was bending over his book. The priest left. "What did you do?" our teacher asked. "I don't know, sir," the boy answered in utter perplexity. He was an *externo* and did not know the *Tangac* story which was known only to the *internos* and I also knew it because I was a *medio-interno*. I asked him if the stroke gave him any pain and he said, "No, but I was sure surprised." Then I gave him the explanation and we had a good laugh.

Padre Rodrigo was a singer too and always joined us when we rehearsed our songs, *La Gondola Azul*, *La Aurora*, *Ma Adentro*, etc., featured as important parts in our programs under the title "*Orfeon a Cuatro Voces*." This was a very large choir and sometimes other priests would come to join us which showed that the songs must have been popular in their schools in Spain. I still know the *La Aurora* in all its four distinct voices.

Padre Balbino Pontecha was *Secretario* for many years, but we never saw him except when he was in his office near the lobby on the ground floor of the building, bending over his desk busy at work. It seems there was also a Padre Alcazar, and a Padre Cuadrado for a brief time. Padre Gavilan was a stout one who taught many subjects in the high school department.

I was still in San Jacinto when the first Dominicans who had studied in the United States came to town. On the first Sunday, Padre Candido Fernandez caused a sensation in the cathedral when he delivered a sermon in American English. It was a bombshell! Every head was turned upwards to the pulpit gazing in rapt admiration. We the *colegiales* were prouder than at any other time in our lives. Now we had Spanish teachers who could match the American teachers in the public high school in their own tongue. The other English-speaking newcomer was none other than Padre Jesus Cas-

tañon who later became Rector Magnificus of the University of Santo Tomas. Another San Jacinto Rector who also held that position at UST was Padre Vidal Clemente who also knew English. And still another San Jacinto Rector was Padre Agustin Rihuete who became Treasurer of UST.

Then there was Padre Toldos, a red-faced robust fellow, who was the last *Director de Internos* I knew. He made himself popular with us when he taught and prepared a drama on the life of San Jose de Calazans, wherein we the *externos*, surprisingly, were given the largest number of roles including that which represented the saint. After rehearsal in the evening Padre Toldos after would distribute candy and accompanied us until we reached the main commercial street which was well lighted and was near to our homes, because San Jacinto was quite far from the center of the town and the streets were dark because there was as yet no electricity. With "*Adios niños*," the kind priest would then walk back to the school. After Padre Toldos left Tuguegarao, we were saddened to know that much later he fell a victim in the Spanish Civil War.

If Padre Julio and Padre Lerma were the most popular among social circles in Tuguegarao, Padre Julian Malumbres was easily the best loved and most remembered by the great bulk of the people not only because he wrote "*Historia de Cagayan*," but more because he did not like to leave Cagayan and remained to live alone in the huge building of San Jacinto when it was definitely closed and all the other Dominican Fathers had left the place. Even before the San Jacinto opened its doors as a school, he had served as parish priest in certain towns. It was this long stay in the province that enabled him to write the history of the place. I heard it often said that he also wrote "*Historia de Isabela*" but I never saw a copy of the book. He had a mastery of the Ybanag dialect, and every Wednesday morning in all the years that I was in San Jacinto, the entire student body (except the seminarians) assembled at the beautiful college chapel, at the far end of which was a large framed picture marked "*Beato Francisco de Capillas, Protomartir de China*" which showed him baptizing an adult. Padre Malumbres spent a whole period giving a talk in Ybanag. In the cathedral, whenever the celebrating priest saw him among the *colegiales* at the pews (if was customary for a few Dominican Fathers to accompany the students to their Sunday Mass at the Cathedral), he would send a sacristan to whisper to him a request to give the sermon, and he always readily consented. He

never taught any subject in San Jacinto for there were enough younger priests to do the work, but he was the common confessor of almost all the students because of his command of Ybanag and Ilocano.

When San Jacinto finally closed and all the priests left (the seminarians who had not completed their studies transferred to Vigan), Padre Malumbres refused to leave, and was left alone in the big building probably with a cook for a companion. I do not know how many years he spent in that monastic seclusion (for I was then in Manila) but before he died in this town, he was given the honor of a resolution by the provincial board declaring him an adopted son of Cagayan. Only one other individual was ever given that honor. That is Bishop Constant Jurgens, some twenty years later. I know because I worded that resolution.

The Colegio de San Jacinto had a colorful life while it lasted. Many of the prominent citizens of Cagayan especially public officials and employees studied in San Jacinto at one time or another. You could easily recognize this from their efficient command of the Spanish language, which was used in all official communications including decisions of the courts of justice. Even mere clerks had to know Spanish or they would not have been able to handle papers and communications. In the higher strata of society Spanish was for a long time the common language. As late as 1951 when Bishop Alejandro Olalia came to town, he was surprised that nobody spoke with him except in Spanish.

In April 1986, on the occasion of the installation of Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan as Archbishop of Tuguegarao, I was asked to offer a toast to the Nuncio Most Rev. Bruno Torpigliani, the visiting Prelates, civil officials of Cagayan and Isabela, and selected visitors from the social sectors of Manila, at the Bishop's *palacio*, and I gave my "*brindis*" in extemporaneous Spanish taking care to make it a little bit long just to display my San Jacinto language, and as soon as I finished the Manila visitors rushed to congratulate me expressing their joy that Spanish was still spoken and understood in Tuguegarao. On the other hand, the Nuncio himself began his response thus: "I cannot speak Spanish as well as Judge Pobre, so I will speak in English..." which rather surprised us because he always conversed with us p73 in Spanish. Our Archbishops Talamayan and Domingo (Emeritus), many of our priests and Msgr. Domingo Mallo all knew Spanish. Msgr. Mallo was the most adept in the Castilian tongue.

The San Jacinto had a lively impact on community life. Several parades were regularly held during each year, and the San Jacinto cadets always stole the show in their resplendent white uniforms. In a grand parade commemorating the discovery of the Philippines, held in 1921, the San Jacinto float won first prize against so many floats entered not only by other schools but also by organizations and government offices. In the annual processions for the Holy Rosary (October) and the Immaculate Conception (December) the San Jacinto student body marched after the *ciriales*, and the girls of the Sacred Heart Academy behind them. There was a literary contest held in English and Spanish, and the entries in Spanish of Dionisio Lorenzo and Juan Llopis, both students in the college department, won first and second prizes. Lorenzo had a prose essay while Llopis submitted a poem the first stanza (as I remember) of which ran:

*Vedla alli! Cuan esplendida amanece
De su marcial y arrolladora prenda;
Brisa feliz el polve desvanece
De su heroica leyenda!*

The Dominican Fathers served the diocese a signal service during Holy Week. On Holy Thursday a Bishop always celebrated Mass and the blessing of the "Santos Oleos" at the cathedral with a required assistance of a given number of priests. In the cathedrals of Vigan, Lipa and Naga this presented no problem for the towns in those places are near to each other, there is easy land transportation and priests from the different towns can assist the bishop. But Cagayan is a large province, the towns are far from each other, and at that time the transportation between towns was by *lancha* along the rivers and it was impossible then as now to call in priests from the other towns for they would not be able to go back to their towns for the Good Friday services. There were only two Filipino priests in Tuguegarao convent and here the Dominicans came in handy to fill all the needed slots in the sanctuary, while the rest sat at the pews and received Communion at the Communion rails together with the faithful.

The most touching incident that I can recall about our beloved Dominican Fathers took place during the severe cholera epidemic that ravaged the whole world right after World War I. Deaths were so common in Tuguegarao that you could hear weeping in neighbo-

ring houses and the dead were put on a platform carried by four men who brought the coffin directly to the cemetery without bringing it to church. No one even accompanied the four carriers. There was an *interno* named Tiburcio Belleza, eleven years old, an only child of one of the wealthiest couples in the whole province, Don Victorino Belleza and his wife who owned a large hacienda in barrio Cumao, Gattaran, where they erected a church and school such that it became the first barrio in the province to be granted the status of a parish with a resident priest. Until now that barrio remains a parish with the name of Nabaccayan. Since it was customary for the *internos* (as well as the *internas* in the Sacred Heart Academy) to go out to relatives once a month, Tiburcio must have gone out to a relative and have eaten not only in the house of that relative but also took some refreshments outside. He caught cholera and the relative rushed him back to San Jacinto, but a chronicle written about him at that time said that "*apenas llegaba al colegio ya era cadaver!*" And the writer went on to say, "*Cuantos padres derramaron lagrimas!*"

When a number of Dominicans came to Tuguegarao during the canonical coronation of the Virgin of Piat in 1954, a number of barrio women approached me and asked, "Are these, our priests, coming back to us?" Just think, they were mere barrio folks and called the Dominicans "our priests." Truly, the Dominican order is well-loved in Cagayan, and it is a historical fact that Cagayan and Isabela did not revolt against Spain due to the treatment received by the people from the Dominican Fathers.

Cases and Inquiries

Excelso Garcia, O.P.

Manipulation in Religious Elections

Our Congregation will soon hold its General Chapter in which the Superior General and Councillors will be elected. According to the Constitutions, the members of each local community shall elect their representatives to participate in the election as well as in other business of the Chapter. Furthermore, local Superiors attend ex officio. All this is normal and legal, I suppose, in all religious Congregations. But what happens usually among us in this kind of elections is the following: previous to the General Chapter there is a sort of a campaign, which is not constitutional and which I believe, should not be allowed. Human manipulations are obvious, a clear sign of human weakness and religious relaxation. Conditions for giving individual votes to those who will represent the community as well as promises of those who aspire to higher positions, shown in various ways, are expressed without any shame. This has become the usual practice before each General Chapter. What do you think about it? If it is wrong, how can it be corrected?

A Religious Superior

The election of the Superior General in a religious institute is a very serious and important communitarian act, wherein not only

the participants in the election itself, but the whole Congregation must be greatly interested, since the good of the whole Congregation is at stake. The voters from representative groups, therefore, as well as all elected representatives themselves, Superiors and other participating in the election according to the Constitutions, are supposed to fulfill their duties faithfully according to their own consciences. When we read the above case, we chose to think that the consultant's was perhaps exaggerating a little. In any case we decided to answer the case and give our humble opinion, whatever the real facts might be, basing our judgment on the data contained in the case as it was sent to us be they accurate or exaggerated.

The reading of the case leaves the sad impression that the election of representatives for the General Chapter in the consultant's Congregation are a mere imitation or parody of what happens in civic elections in some countries. The sacredness of the vote is disregarded to such an extent that the outcome of the elections must necessarily be highly detrimental to the spiritual good of the Congregation.

Even in civic elections the vote is considered sacred. Each voter is supposed to vote for the person he or she judges to be best qualified for the office or duty to be filled or discharged. To vote for a non-qualified person would be to cooperate in the harm which surely would be caused to one's own country. If such voters dictate a majority, the temporal ruin of the motherland must sooner or later follow. If this kind of voting is to be reprovved in civil elections, with greater reason it is to condemned should it happen in ecclesiastical elections, since the harm caused to the Church belongs to a higher order, the spiritual order; and were such things to happen in a religious Congregation, a select group in the Church which aspires by religious profession to Christian perfection and holiness, the irreparable damage would be immeasurably greater.

The way of electing representatives for the General Chapter, as described by the consultant is, religiously speaking, really deplorable, because those going to participate in the General Chapter due to their promises to those who voted for them, will try to use the same tactics in the election of the Superior general and other officials of the Curia. Things being such, what will the future of the Congregation be? If those who are expected to serve the Congregation seek and succeed in getting higher position in immoral ways, what kind of service will they offer to the members of the Congregation, especially

those who did not help them attain their ambition. They will of course try to help those who voted for them and were promised their help. However, they are supposed to serve the whole Congregation without self interest and with no strings attached to their service.

Aspiring to occupy high offices and positions is not bad in itself, as long as one does not seek one's own profit or comfort through harm and detriment to others. Jesus, whose example is to be closely followed by all religious, said: "You know how those who exercise authority among the gentiles lord it over them: their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. Such is the case of the Son of Man who has come, not to be served by others, but to serve, to give His life as a ransom for the many" (*Mt* 20:25-28; *Mk* 10:42-45).

Thus, both voters and those who seek the votes of others in order to hold higher positions as set forth in this case are far from truly following in Christ's steps. Voters are supposed to cast their ballots for religious who are competent to fulfill their difficult duty of choosing and electing a person fully qualified to govern the whole Congregation. Votes must be given without expecting any earthly reward. The only real reward for an honest election will certainly come from God. If electors contemplate some reward in time and space from person elected, they will surely lose the heavenly reward.

The Church legislation foresees the possibility of the existence of this kind of manipulation. Thus canon 172, § 2 states clearly: "Conditions attached before an election are to be considered non-existent." Hence those who have a right to vote should know that promises made to them by persons who solicit votes in their favor and whom they intend to vote in order to obtain something in exchange have no binding force, should they be elected. All electors are supposed to cast their vote only in favor of religious who in their opinion are competent and will fulfill their duty faithfully. On the other hand, those who solicit votes in their own favor and make any promise and succeed in becoming representatives should consider before God that their only duty is to serve the Congregation, not making any discrimination in favor of those who voted for them.

As a rule, in the Constitutions or Directories of religious institutes there are some norms prescribing that during the celebra-

tion of Provincial or General Chapters all communities of the institute should pray for the success of such an important event, meaning that they should pray that only competent and well qualified religious be elected, so that the common good of the religious province or institute be promoted according to its particular end and charism. Moreover, the votive Mass of the Holy Spirit is said in all communities or at least in the convent where the Chapter is held on the same day of the election so that the electors follow God's inspiration. Unfortunately quite often all this is done in a routinary way: everything is taken for granted and not done with true religious spirit, and the participants manipulate things in such a way that they follow their own interest rather than their conscience. It is said that St. Teresa of Avila in one of her frequent conversations with the Lord complained to Him, saying: "You made me understand that in the election of the Provincial Fr. Gracian (holy religious) would be elected; the result of the election has been different." The Lord's answer to her was: "Yes, I know. I wanted Fr. Gracian to be elected for the office, but the electors thought otherwise." This indicates how human manipulations, based on human freedom, prevail sometimes even in sacred affairs.

My advise to the consultant religious Superior is the following. If, as Superior, he is going to participate in the election of the General as well as in other business of the Chapter, he should not hesitate to speak out against what he thinks should be corrected in the future. He should try his best to see that some norms be enacted by the Chapter for the whole Congregation in order to counteract and eradicate the pernicious custom of campaigning in the way is done at present. In this way divisions and animosities among the members of the Congregation will disappear, and union and fraternal love will be fostered and strengthened instead. And of course, we should always pray that the new elected General and other officials of the Curia will work with zeal and true religious spirit for the common good of the Congregation. Never forget that God, in spite of crooked human manipulations, can still shower His blessings upon the Congregation.

Duty of the Bishop's Delegate in a General Chapter

In our General Chapter recently held in our Mother House the Bishop could not preside at the election of the Superior General, as

he has done in the past. He sent his Delegate to preside at the election. However, the Bishop's Delegate performed his duty in such a way that what is established by our Constitutions was entirely overlooked. For instance, our Constitutions say that the members of the Superior General's Council should be elected under the presidency of the new Superior General. He decided instead that their election, as well as others should be done immediately after the election of the Superior General. Moreover, he performed the role of scrutinizer of all elections, counting the votes with the other two scrutinizers elected by the members of the General Chapter. It is the first time this has happen to us. Never before the Bishop has interfered in these elections. May I ask you whether this has been changed in the Church's new law? Our own Constitutions were approved by the Bishop some years ago.

A Delegate to the General Chapter

We will explain what the new Codex states concerning this matter. Canon 625 § 2 reads: "The supreme Moderator of the institute is to be designated by canonical election, in accordance with the constitutions.... The Bishop of the Mother House of the institute presides at the election of the supreme Moderator of an institute of diocesan right." Note that the religious institute of our case is one of diocesan right.

After reading the foregoing canon 625, the consequence that one can logically deduce is that the Bishop presides at the election of the supreme Moderator of the institute only. Once such election has taken place, he should allow the members of the General Chapter to proceed with whatever business they have during the General Chapter, which usually last several days, according to their own constitutions.

The election of the members of the new supreme Moderator's Council should be done according to the constitutions of the institute, since the Church's law says nothing on the matter. Hence, once the election of the Superior General is over, the Bishop's Delegate has no further duty in the General Chapter. This should proceed normally according to the constitutions under the presidency of the new Superior General of the institute.

Concerning the scrutinizers' designation canon 173, §1 is very specific, stating: "Before the voting begins, two scrutinizers at least are to be designated from the members of college of group." The

Bishop's Delegate does not belong to the college or group. He, therefore, cannot act as one of the scrutinizers who count the number of votes for the election of the Superior General. He merely presides at the election, so that nothing unlawful can happen during the election.

In no sense do we imply, however, that the fact that the Delegate performed the role of scrutinizer made the election null and void. The Church's law does not contain any irritating or invalidating clause. He did not participate in the election itself. Otherwise canon 169 should apply: "For the election to be valid, no one can be admitted to vote who does not belong to the college or group." He presided the election, although he arrogated the role of scrutinizer, which he should not have done.

His participation in counting the votes, might affect in some way the freedom of the election because he was not a member of the electoral college. In such case, the norm of canon 170 could apply: "An election whose freedom has been in any way whatsoever constrained is invalid by law itself." We hope, however, that such effect was not present in our case.

Summing up, we can say that the duty of the Bishop's Delegate was to preside at the election of the Superior General of the institute only, nothing else.

Festal Homilies for May and June 1993

Roman Carter, O.P.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 2, 1993

Readings: *Ac 2:14, 36-41*

1 Pt 2:20-25

Jn 10:1-10

Response to the saving message, Christian reaction to negativity and the repeated image of the Good Shepherd "place" today's readings. Their overall impact should be that in the light of Resurrection glory new and better modalities of faith and action are both called for and feasible. In some ways these Sundays after Easter give through the liturgy of the Word more viable norms for Christian living than do those of the ordinary time, for this "light of glory" on earth is comparable with the incessant aid denominated in the same manner which makes possible the sight of the beatific vision in heaven.

What Peter proposes in Acts is not only a faith of mind and heart but a faith made sacramental through concrete response. Jesus in his abnegation and his exaltation has been proclaimed. Now the hearers demand a norm for action. The interior (well-nigh formal) element of this action must be metanoia repentance through "turning around," but the outward sign must be baptism, "taking the plunge" into a cleansing bath. The effect as normative in its finality

as, anything formal or material, is "forgiveness of sins," pardon for the past and hope for the future. But the "added extra" is a bonus beyond telling. For the promise of the Holy Spirit already present and fulfilled in the apostolic band, will come to be the gift par excellence bestowed on their converts. This predestined election is manifested and confirmed in time as the community expands through additional members. The turning around is away from rejection of Christ and the practice of idolatry. The baptismal bath is made cogent by the saving name of Jesus called upon by the baptizers and the baptized alike. The very name carries with it the power of the Person, power to forgive made real by death. But what saves the participants from the hellish fate of the rest of their generation is the transcendent gift of the Spirit which can be bestowed by the Risen Christ alone.

Turning to I Peter we face head on one of the greatest difficulties of our ongoing temporal reality in the realm of grace. This difficulty verges on dilemma. For on the one hand, we "taste and see" a realized grace and glory both here and now; on the other, we are pestered by the negative reactions of unbelievers and evil-doers. Only by looking to Christ can we find a way out of this irksome puzzle and keep its conundrums from making us feel aggrieved from on high. Given that Christ, as God's Servant, has borne injustice with patience and exemplarity we are enabled by him to be patient and follow his example. His suffering (on a grand scale) is a pattern for ours (brought down to size). But it is not only a pattern. It is a source of our power to do likewise. And the power of grace has already proven itself sure in that we have returned to our Good Shepherd.

The Gospel makes clear both the authenticity and the concern of Jesus as Good Shepherd. And both factors are unique. This uniqueness is based on knowledge only Jesus can have, for his voice sounds in a different way from that of any Pharisee, self-appointed guru or other false guide. The elect recognize this voice when they hear it, and they reject all others. Evidently those who hear this but reject it have difficulties. Thus, John has Jesus change the metaphor and become "gate" or "door" used by the owner and legitimate Shepherd, the Father. All other claimants to entry and exit are inauthentic and lying. The sheep pay them no heed, for they have interloped into the enclosure and do not belong there. Only those who made use of Jesus as gate will be safe and saved. For he is no thief but the very giver of life.

From these three readings we can see that initial faith and sacramentality will be blessed by ongoing forgiveness and increase in the surprising gift of the Holy Spirit. But we must be patient and endure even as Christ did, knowing he (and he alone) is the source of our strength. His unique love and care will never forget or disappoint us. But our reliance must stand firm in him. To find the haven of salvation we must follow his firm and gentle voice and disregard all others. Christ is our norm. What is consonant with him can be allowed a hearing. All else is passing static. This Fourth Sunday of Easter is a day of great hope. We have a Lord who has died for us and risen again. We have norms for life and for dealing with whatever goes wrong. Best of all, through his Holy Spirit we have the promise of Christ's guiding presence in our lives forever.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 9, 1993

Readings: *Ac 6:1-7*

1 Pt 2:4-9

Jn 14:1-12

The practical flexibility of the primitive community is meant by Luke in Acts to be a paradigm for future developments. John's Gospel, likewise, shows Christ himself willing to adapt his answers to the obtuse questions of the apostles and give a self-identification which will be enduring and memorable. And Peter in the second reading is far from engaging in a flattery redolent of rabbinic exaggeration. Rather he sees the Church herself in her members at her highest worth as agent of Christ and temple of God.

With the account of the designation of the helpers or "deacons" Luke introduces into Acts the first note of internal dissension. No community grows without dissent. But dissent need not involve rebellion. It can be contained not by mere compromise but by wise concession. Time and again when this principle has been invoked the peace and unity of the Church (or whatever level was involved) has been maintained. Just who the "Greeks" and "Hebrews" of the passage were has caused much scholarly head-scratching. The important thrust of the passage remains that through a Christian concept of service a worthy solution was found to a pressing problem.

In John 14, part of our Lord's farewell discourse at the Last Supper, words so familiar that we might be tempted to skip over them tell of Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly grandeur put, as it

were, into action. Jesus goes before us to prepare a place prophetically. He will return to take us there as heavenly priest. In priestly mode, he is himself the Way. Not only does he give access to the Father as Way, or priest, however. He is also Truth, and as prophet makes known what the Father wills to reveal. Furthermore, as King he is the Life. This means that the royal gift of eternal life can be bestowed by him alone.

In I Peter the strands of our service and Christ's role are, if you will, knit together. The image the apostle uses is architectural. Christ is the foundation stone (a living stone, at that) and we are the temple. What is offered in the temple is our sacrifice. And so we are priests. But it is offered through him, the true High Priest and God-man. It is offered in faith and, therefore, from a prophetic stance. But the rock on which this edifice is based is regal in that once rejected (King David by and in Israel) it has become the very corner stone of obedience to God. Thus we are rendered "chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation" for we have come out of the darkness of Satan's rule into the light of Christ.

There is much and urgent call for apostolate and evangelization in the world today as the Church faces the third millennium. More and more this must be done by "helpers" not themselves members of the hierarchy but truly commissioned and committed people. Without their service we shall be crippled and hindered in our service both to God and to our neighbor. In many countries a "permanent diaconate" of married men has arisen out of the Church's concern for critical needs. But service need neither be exactly stratified nor precisely defined. Rather, where there are needs we should meet them, at first in an *ad hoc* fashion lest our apostolic opportunities be lost. Such service as this may involve will receive heavenly blessing and ecclesial cooperation we hope.

However, we must never lose sight of Christ the Lord. Unless Jesus is the Way, the "my way" of each one may become first imperative and then detrimental to the work. Unless what is taught is his revealed Truth brilliant theories as passing as the moment may usurp the place of sound doctrine. Unless we live in him who is Life we are bound not only to die ourselves but to pass on moribund elaborations on the Gospel instead of its life giving message.

God the Holy Spirit is forming us into a house based on Christ. Each of us to be suitable material for this temple structure must

somehow resemble him, the rock from whom we are hewn. Once built up, however, we must assume the priestly, prophetic and royal roles bestowed on us in baptism when we were first conformed to and incorporated in Christ. Then, indeed, the very stones of the house will shine like jewels. Our faith will issue forth in those "spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God" which involve the service of the whole world. And Jesus as Way, Truth and Life will shine forth from and through us to dispel darkness and attract all destined to the obedience of God.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 16, 1993

Readings: *Ac 8:5-8, 14-17*

1 Pt 3:15-18

Jn 14:15-21

Last Sunday the idea of service as pertaining to a special group or "order," that of deacons, was introduced, and it is complimented today by our vision (in the first reading) of one of them named Philip at work. His mission field is Samaria and far from "waiting on tables" he is preaching, working miracles, exorcising and healing. All this seems so "apostolic" that we should have thought of it as work of the Twelve and their direct successor alone had we not known that deacons from the first have done such things. Nonetheless, Philip's ministry, however initially solid and valid it may be reckoned, is not enough. Peter and John must come to Samaria and lay hands on the deacon-baptized to impart and confirm the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel makes clearer to us just who the Holy Spirit is and what role he plays in the mystery of salvation. For true followers Jesus will request of the Father the Third Person to be their second paraclete (advocate, sustainer, comforter, help). He himself is the first. Until he returns in glory Christ leaves us not as orphans, alone and guideless, but as cherished friends in whom the Spirit actually dwells. He dwells in us as life, as means of knowledge and as divine love.

I Peter brings out the beauty of this mystery of pneumatic activity by showing how in the very Person of Jesus himself it is accomplished. He further shows how this activity because of the presence of Christ in our hearts can make us both forbearing and effective in our apostolate. Whatever suffering is Christian (once Christ has

died) is suffering for right-doing not for offense. The "body" in which Christ died is the unglorified humanity which in ourselves is naturally subject to death, sin and illness and which in him is voluntarily made so subject. The "spirit" is not the Holy Spirit as such but the reality, the actuality, the new presence before God of Christ's own risen life which we are called to share.

A humble acknowledgment of our own limitations, whatever we may accomplish in this present life, is the very basis of Christian service. What we sow others may well reap. What we begin others will finish. So I must let the deacon in me give way to the apostle in my bishop. I may baptize but he normally will confirm. I must leave coordination and decisions to superior powers. But I must never stop preaching, teaching, doing the works for which I was sent. Any tension here should be solved by balance and mutual deference based on discernment.

How grim would be an attempt to follow Christ or know the Father without the aid of the Holy Spirit! Thank God the Spirit is always at work in us that we can both know and do God's "good pleasure" and that, if we are loyal to Christ, he will never leave us.

Comforted as we are, however, we must face inevitable difficulties. Our courtesy and good conscience must counter balance false accusations and other forms of petty persecutions. This can only occur if our lives in the Spirit have true integrity. For all wrong doing deserves punishment, while right doing is ever meritorious in God's eyes. Just as Christ broke down the gates of the prison house of the dead by preaching to the "spirits" there, so we are released and made permanently free by the reality of his saving action. Let us recall that that action is both performed in sacrament and applied indeed in this Mass. For Jesus Christ our Lord has sent us the Spirit in power. We are learning and striving according to God's plan made dynamic by the same Spirit within us. And when time ends our conformity to Christ will be total. We, too, shall be "raised in the spirit" to glorify Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever. Amen!

SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION

May 23, 1993

Readings: Ac 1:1-11
Ep 1:17-23
Mt 28:16-20

The mystery of the glorious Ascension of our Lord is no far-fetched tale of "theandric disappearance." Rather, it ushers in a new age, the age in which we live. And as we are all affected directly by the Ascension we should probe its meaning with reverential awe. In this first year of the cycle the readings greatly aid us in this; for, although the first two are fixed for all three years, the contrasting Matthaean teaching of the Gospel brings out a side of the mystery we should overlook if Lucan "factuality" and the Pauline "theologizing" of Ephesians were to stand alone.

Nothing could be more Lucan than the opening lines of Acts which we must, therefore, interpret with a severity which is real but not prejudiced. Luke is trying to "tell a story" not to write a history. His story has a profound theological content which he appreciates in faith more than he understands with finesse. Luke is not a Jew but a convert from paganism. He has a limited knowledge of Jewish number schemes and their symbolism. He is very weak on Palestinian geography and has more sense of *kairos* (almost as a break with time rather than a sacred time) than of *chronos* (clock and calendar time in the strict sense). Curiously these very words are used in v. 7. What he knows of Jerusalem includes some landmarks which he automatically takes to be "holy places." His sentiments are correct, but his scenarios both in Acts and in his Gospel are all-too-often contrived. Thus he tells us (almost in so many words) that on the Mount of Olives Jesus some forty days after his Resurrection was lifted up to heaven on a cloud and passed from the sight of eleven men, the apostles. It took the church nearly four centuries to agree with either his geography or his chronology let alone with his descriptive artistry. But the deep meaning of the passage which gathers both end-time and ongoing-time sayings is that the Church (empowered by the Spirit) will endure in time and be extended in space until the Lord returns.

Paul's picture is at once more grandiose and more theologically cosmic. In Ephesians the mystery of Christ's triumph, which is what the Ascension is really about, is delineated with incomparable inclusiveness. There it is not a matter of Christ's leaving the earth which concerns Paul. Rather, the concern is for his enthronement in heaven with all things, including every angelic power whether good or bad, under his feet. Christ as fullness and fulfillment is now ruler of all. The same Christ literally "heads" his Church. This means that ecclesial reality is of a dimension far exceeding any earth-bound

institutionalism. It is a celestial reality brought to earth in the Spirit by the very headship over it which is Christ's alone.

The Matthaean contrast with both Luke and Paul is sharp. For to Matthew the Messiah's presence is not mediated by time or space and is, in the glorified Christ, no longer a matter of physical or material reality. Is it, then, a mere "moral" presence, a sort of wistful memory of Jesus? By no means! It is the presence of one who came from Galilee in the flesh and returns to Galilee in risen glory. It is the presence of one endowed with "all authority in heaven and on earth," and it is a commanding, real and mystical presence. It is hard to deny that for Matthew this new presence is the Holy Spirit. It requires faith to perceive so subtle and implicit a reality. Thus, some of the eleven hesitate. But once the reality is disclosed Christian mission to all nations begins.

Our own lives are often beset by mysterious chronologies hard to fathom. But through them all an ageless message perdures. We cannot imagine the grandeur of heaven, but a few Pauline phrases can (if read in faith) convince us of it. Jesus who had "gone away" for the eyes of unbelief is constantly present in missionary thrust and the ineffable invocation of the Trinity. We, the baptized, know his presence in this Mass, in our lives, in all true prayer and Christians shall continue to know it till the end of time.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 30, 1993

Readings: *Ac 2:1-11*
1 Co 12:3-7 & 12-13
Jn 20:19-23

A basically Jewish commemoration, certain charisms conformed to faith and a divine Person (God the Holy Spirit) are themes in today's readings. The commemoration has offered as much difficulty to Christians as to Jews. Just what are we celebrating fifty days after Passover or after Easter? The feast seems to be agrarian in origin and thus involve offering from the spring harvest, especially a sheaf of wheat. By the time of Christ it may have been turned into a commemoration of law-giving at Sinai. Luke (or his source) seems to have this in mind. Moses ascends, receives the Law and descends with it as gift. Certainly for Christians it is a feast of fulfillment.

Christ ascended now sends the Holy Spirit from the Father's side. No doubt the wind and fire-like tongues are a theophany, a showing forth of the power of God. and when they come to man the Gift par excellence, the Holy Spirit, comes in fulfillment of promise and rounding off or completing all earthly aspects of the work of Christ. And yet, just as Pentecost seems to have been the sign for a return to normal routine for the Jews, so for Christians it ends our paschal season and makes way for an "ordinary time."

This ordinary time, however, is one as marked for Christians by charisms as it is marked by everyday but real observance of the six hundred and thirteen commands of Moses by Jews. Our "ordinariness" is, in other words, gifted. But gifted with what? Our editors leave out the list and merely tell us that they have variety attributed to the Spirit, aspects of ministry attributed to the Son and involve activity which, in turn, is attributed to the Father. Then, skipping the descriptive verses, the gifted Christians are said through baptism in the Spirit to inhere to one Body (that of Christ) and to have partaken of one spiritual drink. This is enigmatic to say the least as indeed is much else in 1 Corinthians chapters 11-14 the whole section needing careful analysis before any real conclusion can be drawn. The small snippets we have seem to refer more to unity as source and consequence of charisms than to anything charismatic as such. Here we see the grave disadvantage of bowdlerized texts and, indeed, of any tampering with the word of God.

In turning to the Gospel we enter another world, leaving far behind both Luke's penchant for dates and places and Paul's analytic acumen. This is the world of John and it is personalization wrought fine and ringing true. The risen Lord simply appears to his own, greets them, breathes on them and explains the deep symbolism of his action. So the Spirit comes for John in Christ-imparted peace, in the joy of vision, in sacramental awareness and with the guarantee of both pardon and jurisdiction for the Church. Only the very presence of Jesus could render all this possible at once.

Pentecost for us, then, is a date on the calendar when we remember how some things ended and others began. Pentecost for us should be a time of renewed quest for unity, a unity as theocentric in source as it is in finality. For if we are in Christ, however gifted we may be by the Holy Spirit, we are one in him who has but one body. And Pentecost should bring both peace and joy. We know and believe

the risen Christ is present in this state. We know that in this state alone breathes forth in glory the presence of the Holy Spirit whom we receive. And for our ongoing life, "ordinary" as it may be our joys will be blessed and our sorrows of sin, negligence and ignorance will be forgiven by God the Holy Spirit who fulfills in us the saving work of Christ which is both fulfilled and, in a sense, inaugurated on the day of Pentecost.

TRINITY SUNDAY

June 6, 1993

Readings: *Ex 34:4-6 & 8-9*

2 Co 13:11-13

Jn 3:16-18

The sparse content of the three readings we have just heard and which are invariable for the three years of the cycle is not really explicable in terms of the mystery we proclaim today but rather in the pointed and succinct manner in which this mystery (implicit from the first word of Genesis to the last of Revelation) can surface in scripture with minimal controversy. What we must avoid saying is that there are three Gods. What we must announce is that three Persons are one God. The Old Testament knows the Trinity in a personal sense only in a basic monotheism which does not distinguish Person from Nature. St. Paul in 2 Corinthians knows the Trinity in communitarian doxology, perhaps not original to himself. John knows the Trinity most dynamically and specifically in terms of Spirit-inspired faith taking us to the Son and through him to the Father. We do well to remember that what we believe took three and a half centuries for the Church to define and ever since screeds have been written and lengthy utterances heard for and against our common Catholic usage (shared by the vast majority of Christians) which calls God: Trinity.

The first reading takes us into an atmosphere of heartfelt but somewhat wavering prayer. It is less about the nature of God than about what Moses can perceive and possibly be misled by. This forthright, humble attitude is (in itself) a good approach to the Trinity. For who knows God except through his revealed attributes? God is concealed by a cloud. His being is remote. And yet Moses is present to God and hears his voice in a self-description of incredible tenderness and love. For this experience Moses can ask for forgive-

ness and what we could call the "grace of adoption." In effect he pleads for Sonship without using the term. So we have the hidden Father, the God-manifesting Word and the interior movement inspiring Moses to both adoration and repentance. The movement could only come from the Holy Spirit for it implies a good thing exceeding human possibility and earthly desire.

2 Corinthians is a hodge-podge of a letter (if it is that) but it ends on a note that rings true. Indeed Fr. O'Rourke in the *Jerome* specifies this note as: "the richest and most final blessing in the Pauline epistles." And it is this not for its mention of the Trinity as such but for the appropriations to divine Persons of gifts of grace, love and togetherness. That which is true of the Father (endless love), that which is his by nature and won for us by the Son (amazing grace) and that which is the typical work of the Spirit in our hearts (the unity in service of our fellowship) all come together and make us pause and the wonder of the selflessness of the Three in One and One in Three.

When we turn to the Gospel, however, we enter another world. Here it is no longer Old Testament fear (no matter how filial) or New Testament fellowship (however close-knit) that are important. Rather, the dynamics of man's rightful and redeemed relationship with God are both specified and underlined. John 3:16 is probably the best known verse in the New Testament. In Madrid there is a church named after it. In this verse divine compassion reaches out beyond all bounds and Father and Son are seen in gift preserving all who have faith from perishing with this passing world and bringing them to that eternal life which would be God's alone had it not come to be shared. This sharing involves God's gratuitous love and our inspired response of faith. But the only begotten Son mediates both by his Person and his saving work. Unbelief carries its own bad judgment, but true faith begins a process here and now which will never end.

And so on this Trinity Sunday we like Moses are moved to sentiments of unworthiness and repentance. We like Paul find God in love and grace and our communion with him and one another. Best of all, we like John lay hold on eternal life through a dynamic process initiated in our hearts through faith in Christ which assures us of the pleading of the Spirit and of our return step by living step to the Father. Most adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit we hail and acknowledge you as one God!

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

June 13, 1993

Readings: *Dt 8:2-3, 14-11*
1 Co 10:16-17
Jn 6:51-58

Our readings on this Sunday which otherwise would have been the Eleventh of Ordinary Time are consonant with the great Solemnity (originally celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday) which we are keeping. One on the "heavenly food" called manna in the Old Testament is symbolic in what it foretells and is meant as real in what it remembers. The second is of food and drink real both in their liturgical context and in their binding force for Christian unity. The Gospel (as is the case so often when it is from John) takes us up to a broader perspective and here we see a food of earth made heavenly, a drink transformed into covenant blood and both together as effective for eternal life. Living forever can only come, of course, from live food. If we eat dead things we shall die. If the Body and Blood of the risen Christ are our food and drink, eternal life is ours.

We could (quite wrongly) reduce the Eucharistic presence and species to a merely objective viaticum, food for our earthly journey, drink to support us till death. Holy Communion would thus fall in the same category as manna, a miraculous food in time of "emergency" if thus we were to look at life here below. But the very text of Deuteronomy contradicts these notions. If we are not to live by bread alone (however heavenly that bread) by what are we to live? The Word of God, Christ present as bread. The Eucharistic banquet then is more than his memorial. It is his commemoration and because it is Christ himself we are really sustained both in our journey through this life and for the eternal life he promises in this sacrament.

St. Paul makes it clear that what is involved is communion, and by this he means not only what links us (as it were) to Christ before and beyond us (past and future mysteries) but to one another in a body which is ours because it is his. This effect of the Eucharist, unity in Christ, is overlooked to our peril. For "communion" is more than canonical status. It is more than a sort of exterior tolerance of one another. The communion which results from Holy Communion, actual partaking in the true body and real blood of the risen Lord, is both the fruit of deep interiority and the cause of an eventually universal oneness. Each one has a share because of the infinite

resources of the prime sharer and because of an identity in faith of all with him.

St. John shows how bread can be flesh and wine can be blood by the "formality" (the interior quality of limitless self-giving) of the Word. Why is Christ's flesh bread and his blood drink? Because he says so and this very saying itself is a word of life. And here for John is the important distinction. Eat manna and you will still die. Partake in Eucharistic food and drink and you will never die but be raised up on the last day. The reason for deathless resurrection is the very reality of Christ present in the most holy sacrament of the altar. He is the sole and exclusive cause of so great an effect.

We in our lives have received countless blessings from God but most of these favors have little consequence beyond the easing of earthly pain. We also have been initiated into the Christian community by baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion which makes us share Christ with one another. But on this great solemnity I believe God wills something more and better for us. He wants us to discover in the Eucharistic flesh and blood of his Son (given to us through the invocation of the Holy Spirit) that eternal life which is its pledge and promise. He wishes us to see through and beyond our Corpus Christi celebrations into the banquet hall of heaven where we shall feast with him and his Son and the Holy Spirit amid the company of angels and saints forever.

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 20, 1993

Readings: *Jr 20:10-13*
Rm 5:12-15
Mt 10:26-33

The return to ordinary time took place this year the day after Pentecost but affects our Sunday liturgy for the first time today. All of the readings in this first year of the cycle touch upon in one way or another, the insoluble problem of evil. The problem in Jeremiah is couched in purely personal (albeit prophetic) terms. St. Paul in Romans pushes his argument to a cosmic level. In the Gospel Matthew has Jesus pronounce generalities applicable to any devout reader. While Jeremiah equates "evil men" with all his former friends in Jerusalem, Paul in talking of Adam as singular and Christ as

singular is really talking about two "races": that of the unredeemed and that of the redeemed. One is the race of death, the other of life. Jesus in Matthew talks of the hidden and the revealed, of supposed worthlessness and true worth and of faith held as faith professed.

Despite its context we would do ill to think of Jeremiah's saying in Chapter 10 as based merely on his natural experience of life. What we have is real prophecy meaning that God's intervention leads the prophet to a crisis of conscience. It also leads him out of this crisis, not by solving his problems but by giving him a new sense of trust despite these problems and even in their very midst. All Jeremiah can claim in his precarious situation is that God is truly at and on his side. In this attitude of trust he hopes for eventual vengeance for his enemies and vindication for himself. His hope becomes a song of praise and of thanksgiving for a not yet accomplished but no less real deliverance.

In Romans 5 Paul constructs a scenario including three actors: Adam, Moses and Jesus Christ. Adam sins against a command. Thus he is a law-breaker and the cause of sin and death for all his descendants. Moses gives the law which is effectively ineffectual. Christ comes with grace and life. Moses recedes to the background. Adam and Christ take the center stage positions but Christ is "taller" than Adam, for whereas in Adam all sinners must die, the abundance of grace in Christ outweighs in terms of life that inevitable mortality which all inherit from Adam. One man, Adam, and one man, Christ, are contrasted and Christ comes out victorious showing himself the true and lasting protagonist of the drama. Adam's fall is both outweighed and outdone by Christ's grace.

Turning to the Gospel, Matthew has Christ tell us of three types of evil: secret malice, persecution to death and disowning the Lord. The secret malice that will be revealed takes us in imagination to the end of time but it also governs the ongoing proclamation of the Christian message which is always open to all, loud and clear. Even though relatively few people could hear his message during Jesus' earthly life, his disciples are commissioned to proclaim it till the end of time. The surprising "dualism" of the second saying, dichotomizing body and soul as it does, is merely a popular pagan way of talking about death. Probably the providence over sparrows and human hair is more to the point. Whatever happens to us in life or in death never

takes us beyond the all-encompassing realm of God's care. If we accept a command to openly declare Christ and we are willing to suffer in the process we shall be acknowledged by the Father. If we fail in these lesser things we shall be disowned before the Father by Christ himself. So both the message in its content and the dire reaction which may ensue are subordinated to a faith in Christ which remains both paramount and central.

None of us will ever solve the problem of evil. But we can live with it by looking beyond it either as Jeremiah does in "praising God, anyhow" or as Paul does in seeing the triumph of good as given in Christ. Better still we can become vocal about our faith, whatever the odds against us. We need not fear even death if we can cling in Christ to the Father's care. Then our declaration of faith will take us as acknowledged disciples into the very presence of God, forever.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 27, 1993

Readings: 2 K 4:8-11 & 14-16

Rm 6:3-4 & 8-11

Mt 10:37-42

Earthly kindness rewarded, transcendental principles with both heavenly and earthly rewards and the life and death relationship of all Christians with our Lord are the three themes of today's readings. In all three reward as a sort of ongoing reality is the element most stressed. But the reward in each case is anything but fame and fortune as seen through worldly eyes. Elisha promises a son to the Shunamite. Our Lord promises a life to be found because of loss of life and earthly reward for the most insignificant gestures of benefactors here below. St. Paul promises through death, whether Christ's in temporal reality or ours configured to his in baptism, a new life in which we live for God in this world and the next.

There is a great deal of Israelite *delicadeza* in the first reading. A married woman would never normally enter a bachelor's bed chamber. She would merely stand at the door and, instead of being directly addressed by Elisha, would heed the words of Gehazi the prophet's servant. The reward of a son originates in the divine purpose, is relayed by prophetic gift and proclaimed by one of humble position, lesser in social degree than either the woman or the

prophet. How often this is the way with what God wants made known. For while the truth issues forth from his throne of glory it is mediated by prophetic verbalization which is in turn proclaimed by someone seemingly extraneous to the message. The truth of the message continues to be both divine and efficacious despite the "filters" through which God deigns it to pass.

In the Gospel temporal realities such as excessive family bonding are made to give way to eternal reality precisely through loss. Loss of what? Loss of unworthy clinging by way of preference to blood relatives in the first place; loss of "face," reputation, good name in the second. To "take up one's cross" is to lose all these things. Only condemned criminals bear crosses. If the central motif of Christianity is the imitation of Christ all of us must expect to be disgraced fairly constantly because of it. If the penalty is admittedly great the reward is even greater. For through our loss we find something of greatest value. This "something" is no mere "pie in the sky," however. It has, rather, a legitimate temporal component reaching from the kindly treated disciple to Christ and hence to the Father both in kindness given and kindness rewarded.

Baptism as our initial sacramental encounter with Christ involves a real rather than merely metaphysical or moral configuration with him. We go into tomb through water and are raised to glory through words, Christ's words applied to us forming us anew for a new life. But only through real death to sin (which can be no token gesture) can we quell death's power through Christ's grace operative within us. Christ died only once, but we must renew his death within us by resisting temptation, fleeing from the occasion of sin and keeping virtue intact every day of our lives. This is no easy task. Therefore, we must rely not only on the initial grace of baptism, effective though it is, but on many other graces, gifts and virtues which will never be denied us if we sincerely call on the Father for them in Jesus' name. We can expect the Holy Spirit, in answer to our prayers, to supply all in which we are naturally deficient.

Kindness given and kindness received make up great and noble parts of our relationship with God and our neighbor. Some kindness has an immediate reward, but most kindness implies at least something which transcends time and space. Kindness

becomes a sign of grace, for it is graceful. Following Christ by taking up our cross means great self-surrender but it also means fellowship with those who treat us well, those who will be rewarded because of us. If by baptism we have been radically conformed to Christ in death and in life, all our earthly life can become a canticle of glory with and through Christ. And by the enabling power of the Spirit, we shall sing forever what grace has begun our song shall end in the very glory we proclaim.