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editorial

In this issue, we are privileged to publish two Pastoral Letters of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines which are the result of their recently concluded 67th Bishops' Plenary Assembly. The letters contain the Church's response to some challenges facing her today.

The ongoing process towards reunification and peace in the country which unfortunately some elements seem to undermine, and the government's aggressive program on Family Planning spurred the Bishops to declare their position on these issues. These they did with courage and fidelity to Christian doctrine.

We are also reprinting the address of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical "Providentissimus Deus" and the 50th anniversary of Pius XII's Encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu." In the said address, Pope John Paul II pointed out the indispensable role of the Holy Spirit in the Church's role of interpreting and living God's word.

For canon law enthusiasts and scholars, Boletin carries another allocutio by the Holy Father, on the 10th anniversary of the promulgation of the New Code of Canon Law. He reminds everyone on the need for a proper hermeneutics of Church law when he states: "In the Church's renewed effort for the New Evangelization in view of the Third Christian Millennium, canon law, as a specific, indispensable institution of the Church's structure, will not fail to make its effective contribution to the Church's life and mission in the world if all the Church's members know wisely how to interpret it and faithfully apply it."

One pressing concern which the Church cannot afford to neglect is the religious formation of the Filipino youth who, we all know, comprise the great majority of our population. Since most of the young people are in the schools, it is there where they imbibe their religious formation. Aware of the fact that a great number of students in public schools do not have access to religious education, the Philippine Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education issued a position paper on this matter, offering the government some valuable suggestions.

Lastly, we feature the article of Fr. Jordan Aumann, O.P., in view of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on the Institutes of Consecrated Life. Recalling the "aggiornamento" initiated by Vatican II and Pope John XXIII, Fr. Aumann presents some challenging options Institutes have to make if they are to continue existing.

As the new editor of the Boletin, I, with the rest of the new Staff, am sending my personal greetings to all our readers. The Boletin would like to thank Fr. Roman Carter, O.P. and his Staff for ably handling the publication during their incumbency.

HONORATO CASTIGADOR, O.P.

Bible Experts Must be Guided by Spirit*

John Paul II

Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies, the Heads of Diplomatic Missions,
Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission,
Professors of the Pontifical Biblical Institute,

1. I wholeheartedly thank Cardinal Ratzinger for the sentiments he expressed a few moments ago in presenting the document prepared by the Pontifical Biblical Commission on the interpretation of the Bible in the Church. I joyfully accept this document, the fruit of a collegial work undertaken on Your Eminence's initiative, and perseveringly continued over several years. It responds to a heartfelt concern of mine, for the interpretation of Sacred

*The 100th anniversary of Leo XIII's Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* and the 50th anniversary of Pius XII's Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* were celebrated by Pope John Paul II at a special gathering of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See and professors of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. The Commission, led

by its President, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, presented the Holy Father with a copy of its comprehensive study entitled, *L'interprétation de la Bible dans l'Eglise*.

The Holy Father then spoke at length on the great encouragement these two Encyclicals gave the Catholic biblical studies, as he thanked the Commission for its recent study and for all the work it has accomplished since its establishment in 1902. The Pope also addressed several important issues in current biblical research, particularly that of inculturation. Here is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was given in French.

Scripture is of capital importance for the Christian faith and the Church's life. As the Council well reminded us: "In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them. And such is the force and power of the word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting source of spiritual life" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 21). For men and women today the manner in which biblical texts are interpreted has immediate consequences for their personal and community relationship with God, and it is also closely connected with the Church's mission. A vital problem is at issue and deserves all your attention.

2. Your work is finishing at a very opportune moment, for it provides me with the opportunity to celebrate with you two richly significant anniversaries: the centenary of the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, and the 50th anniversary of the Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*, both concerned with biblical questions. On 18 November 1893, Pope Leo XIII, very attentive to intellectual problems, published his Encyclical on scriptural studies with the goal, he wrote, "of encouraging and recommending them" as well as "orienting them in a way that better corresponds to the needs of the time" (*Enchiridion biblicum*, n. 82). Fifty years later, Pope Pius XII gave Catholic exegetes further encouragement and new directives in his Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*. Meanwhile, the papal Magisterium showed its constant concern for scriptural problems through numerous interventions. In 1902, Leo XIII established the Biblical Commission; in 1909, Pius X founded the Biblical Institute. In 1920, Benedict XV celebrated the 1500th anniversary of St. Jerome's death with an Encyclical on the interpretation of the Bible. The strong impetus thus given to biblical studies was fully confirmed at the Second Vatican Council so that the whole Church benefited from it. The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* explains the work of Catholic exegetes and invites pastors and the faithful to take greater nourishment from the word of God contained in the Scriptures.

Today I want to highlight some aspects of the teaching of these two Encyclicals and the permanent validity of their orientation through changing circumstances, in order to profit more from their contribution.

1. From 'Providentissimus Deus' to 'Divino afflante Spiritu'

3. First, one notes an important difference in these two documents, namely, the polemical, or to be more exact, the apologetic part of the two Encyclicals. In fact, both appear concerned to answer attacks on the Catholic interpretation of the Bible, but these attacks did not follow the same direction. On the one hand, *Providentissimus Deus* wanted especially to protect Catholic interpretation of the Bible from the attacks of the rationalistic science; on the other hand, *Divino afflante Spiritu* was primarily concerned with defending Catholic interpretation from attacks that opposed the use of science by exegetes and that wanted to impose a non-scientific, so-called "spiritual" interpretation of Sacred Scripture.

This radical change of perspective was obviously due to the circumstances. *Providentissimus Deus* appeared in a period marked by vicious polemics against the Church's faith. Liberal exegesis gave important support to these polemics, for it made use of all the scientific resources, from textual criticism to geology, including philology, literary criticism, history of religions, archaeology and other disciplines besides. On the other hand, *Divino afflante Spiritu* was published shortly after an entirely different polemic arose, particularly in Italy, against the scientific study of the Bible. An anonymous pamphlet was widely circulated to warn against what it described as "a very serious danger for the Church and souls; the critico-scientific system in the study and interpretation of Sacred Scripture, its disastrous deviations and aberrations."

4. In both cases the reaction of the Magisterium was significant, for instead of giving a purely defensive response, it went to the heart of the problem and thus showed (let us note this at once) the Church's faith in the mystery of the incarnation.

Against the offensive of liberal exegesis, which presented its allegations as conclusions based on the achievements of science, one could have reacted by anathematizing the use of science in biblical interpretation and ordering Catholic exegetes to hold to a "spiritual" explanation of the texts.

Providentissimus Deus did not take this route. On the contrary, the Encyclical earnestly invites Catholic exegetes to acquire genuine scientific expertise so they may surpass their adversaries in their own field. "The first means of defense", it said, "is found in studying the ancient languages of the East as well as the practice of the scientific criticism" (*EB*, n. 118). The Church is not afraid of scientific criticism. She distrusts only preconceived opinions that claim to be based on science, but which in reality surreptitiously cause science to depart from its domain.

Fifty years later, in *Divino afflante Spiritu* Pope Pius XII could note the fruitfulness of the directives given by *Providentissimus Deus*: "Due to a better knowledge of biblical languages and of everything regarding the East, ... a good number of the questions raised at the time of Leo XIII against the authenticity, antiquity, integrity and historical value of the Sacred Books ... have now been sorted out and resolved" (*EB*, n. 546). The work of Catholic exegetes "who correctly use the intellectual weapons employed by their adversaries" (n. 562) has borne its fruit. It is for this very reason that *Divino afflante Spiritu* seems less concerned than *Providentissimus Deus* to fight against the positions of rationalistic exegesis.

5. However, it became necessary to respond to attacks coming from the supporters of a so-called "mystical" exegesis (n. 552), who sought to have the Magisterium condemn the efforts of scientific exegesis. How did the Encyclical respond? It could have limited itself to stressing the usefulness and even the necessity of these efforts for defending the faith, which would have favored a kind of dichotomy between scientific exegesis, intended for external use, and spiritual interpretation, reserved for internal use. In *Divino afflante Spiritu*, Pius XII deliberately avoided this approach. On the contrary, he vindicated the close unity of the two methods, on the one hand emphasizing the "theological" significance of the literal sense, methodically defined (*EB*, n. 251), and on the other, asserting that, to be recognized as the sense of a biblical text, the spiritual sense must offer proof of its authenticity. A merely subjective inspiration is insufficient. One must be able to show that it is a sense "willed by God himself," a spiritual meaning "given by God" to inspired text (*EB*, nn. 552-553). Determining the spiritual sense then, belongs itself to the realm of exegetical science.

Thus we note that, despite the great difference in the difficulties they had to face, the two Encyclicals are in complete agreement at the deepest level. Both of them reject a split between the human and the divine, between scientific research and respect for the faith, between the literal sense and the spiritual sense. They thus appear to be in perfect harmony with the mystery of the incarnation.

II. The harmony between Catholic exegesis and the mystery of the incarnation

6. The strict relationship uniting the inspired biblical texts with the mystery of the incarnation was expressed by the Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* in the following terms: "Just as the substantial Word of God became like men in every respect except sin, so too the words of God, expressed in human languages, became like human language in every respect except error" (EB, n. 559). Repeated almost literally by the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (n. 13), this statement sheds light on a parallelism rich in meaning.

It is true that putting God's words into writing, through the charism of scriptural inspiration, was the first step towards the incarnation of the Word of God. These written words, in fact, were an abiding means of communication and communion between the chosen people and their one Lord. On the other hand, it is because of the prophetic aspect of these words that it was possible to recognize the fulfillment of God's plan when "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). After the heavenly glorification of the humanity of the Word made flesh, it is again due to written words that his stay among us is attested to in an abiding way. Joined to the inspired writings of the first covenant, the inspired writings of the new covenant are a verifiable means of communication and communion between the believing people and God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This means certainly can never be separated from the stream of spiritual life that flows from the Heart of Jesus crucified and which spreads through the Church's sacraments. It is nevertheless its own consistency precisely as a written text which verifies it.

7. Consequently, the two Encyclicals require that Catholic exegetes remain in full harmony with the mystery of the incarnation, a mystery of the union of the divine and the human in a determinate

historical life. The earthly life of Jesus is not defined only by the places and dates at the beginning of the first century in Judea and Galilee, but also by his deep roots in the long history of a small nation of the ancient Middle East, with its weaknesses and its greatness, with its men of God and its sinners, with its slow cultural evolution and its political misadventures, with its defeats and its victories, with its longing for peace and the kingdom of God. The Church of Christ takes the realism of the incarnation seriously, and this is why she attaches great importance to the "historico-critical" study of the Bible. Far from condemning it, as those who support "mystical" exegesis would want, my Predecessors vigorously approved. "*Artis criticae disciplinam*," Leo XIII wrote, "*quippe percipiendae penitus hagiographorum sententiae perutilem*, Nobis vehementer probantibus, nostri (exegetae, scilicet, catholici) excolant" (Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae*, establishing the Biblical Commission, 30 October 1902, *EB*, n. 142). The same "vehemence" in the approval and the same adverb ("*vehementer*") are found in *Divino afflante Spiritu* regarding research in textual criticism (cf. *EB*, n. 548).

8. *Divino afflante Spiritu*, we know, particularly recommended that exegetes study the *literary genres* used in the Sacred Books, going so far as to say that Catholic exegesis must "be convinced that this part of its task cannot be neglected without serious harm to Catholic exegesis" (*EB*, n. 560). This recommendation starts from the concern to understand the meaning of the texts with all the accuracy and precision possible and, thus, in their historical, cultural context. A false idea of God and the incarnation presses a certain number of Christians to take the opposite approach. They tend to believe that, since God is the absolute Being, each of his words has an absolute value, independent of all the conditions of human language. Thus, according to them, there is no room for studying these conditions in order to make distinctions that would relativize the significance of the words. However, that is where the illusion occurs and the mysteries of the scriptural inspiration and the incarnation are really rejected, by clinging to a false notion of the Absolute. The God of the Bible is not an Absolute Being who, crushing everything he touches, would suppress all differences and all nuances. On the contrary, he is God the Creator, who created the astonishing variety of beings "each according to its kind," as the Genesis account says repeatedly (*Gn* 1). Far from destroying differences, God respects

them and makes use of them (cf. *1 Co* 12:18, 24, 28). Although he expresses himself in human language, he does not give each expression a uniform value, but uses its possible nuances with extreme flexibility and likewise accepts its limitations. That is what makes the task of exegetes so complex, so necessary and so fascinating! None of the human aspects of language can be neglected. The recent progress in linguistic, literary and hermeneutical research have led biblical exegesis to add many other points of view (rhetorical, narrative, structuralist) to the study of literary genres; other human sciences, such as psychology and sociology, have likewise been employed. To all this one can apply the charge which Leo XIII gave the members of the Biblical Commission: "Let them consider nothing that the diligent research of modern scholars will have newly found as foreign to their realm; quite the contrary, let them be alert to adopt without delay anything useful that each period brings to biblical exegesis" (*Vigilantiae*, *EB*, n. 140). Studying the human circumstances of the word of God should be pursued with ever renewed interest.

9. Nevertheless, this study is not enough. In order to respect the coherence of the Church's faith and of scriptural inspiration, Catholic exegesis must be careful not to limit itself to the human aspects of the biblical texts. First and foremost, it must help the Christian people more clearly perceive the word of God in these texts so that they can better accept them in order to live in full communion with God. To this end it is obviously necessary that the exegete himself perceive the divine word in the texts. He can do this only if his intellectual work is sustained by a vigorous spiritual life.

Without this support, exegetical research remains incomplete; it loses sight of its main purpose and is confined to secondary tasks. It can even become a sort of escape. Scientific study of the merely human aspects of the texts can make him forget that the word of God invites each person to come out of himself to live in faith and love.

On this point the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* recalls the special nature of the Sacred Books and their consequent need for interpretation: "The Sacred Books," he said, "cannot be likened to ordinary writings, but, since they have been dictated by the Holy Spirit himself and have extremely serious contents, mysterious and difficult in many respects, we always need, in order to understand

and explain to them, the coming of the same Holy Spirit, that is, his light and grace, which must certainly be sought in humble prayer and preserved by a life of holiness" (EB, n. 89). In a shorter formula, borrowed from St. Augustine, *Divino afflante Spiritu* expressed the same requirement: "*Orent ut intelligant!*" (EB, n. 569).

Indeed, to arrive at a completely valid interpretation of words inspired by the Holy Spirit, one must first be guided by the Holy Spirit and it is necessary to pray much, to ask in prayer for the interior light of the Spirit and docilely accept that light, to ask for the love that alone enables one to understand the language of God, who "is love" (1 Jn 4:8, 16). While engaged in the very work of interpretation, one must remain in the presence of God as much as possible.

10. Docility to the Holy Spirit produces and reinforces another attitude needed for the correct orientation of exegesis: fidelity to the Church. The Catholic exegete does not entertain the individualist illusion leading to the belief that one can better understand the biblical texts outside the community of believers. The contrary is true, for these texts have not been given to individual researchers "to satisfy their curiosity or provide them with subjects for study and research" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*, EB, n. 566); they have been entrusted to the community of believers, to the Church of Christ, in order to nourish faith and guide the life of charity. Respect for this purpose conditions the validity of the interpretation. *Providentissimus Deus* recalled this basic truth and observed that, far from hampering biblical research, respect for this fact fosters authentic progress (cf. EB, n. 108-109). It is comforting to note that recent studies, in hermeneutical philosophy have confirmed this point of view and that exegetes of various confessions have worked from similar perspectives by stressing, for example, the need to interpret each biblical text as part of the scriptural canon recognized by the Church, or by being more attentive to the contributions of patristic exegesis.

Being faithful to the Church, in fact, means resolutely finding one's place in the mainstream of the great Tradition that, under the guidance of the Magisterium, assured of the Holy Spirit's special assistance, has recognized the canonical writings as the word addressed by God to his people and has never ceased meditating on them and discovering their inexhaustible riches. The Second Vatican Council

asserted this again: "All that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church, which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the word of God" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 12).

It is nevertheless true — the Council also states this, repeating an assertion of *Providentissimus Deus* — that it "is the task of exegetes to work, according to these rules, towards a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture in order that their research may help the Church to form a firmer judgment" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 12; cf. *Providentissimus Deus*, *EB*, n. 109: "*ut, quasi praeparato studio, iudicium Ecclesiae maturetur*").

11. In order better to carry out this very important ecclesial task, exegetes will be keen to remain close to the preaching of God's word, both by devoting part of their time to this ministry and by maintaining relations with those who exercise it and helping them with publications of pastoral exegesis (cf. *Divino afflante Spiritu*, *EB*, n. 551). Thus they will avoid becoming lost in the complexities of abstract scientific research which distances them from the true meaning of the Scriptures. Indeed, this meaning is inseparable from their goal, which is to put believers into a personal relationship with God.

III. The new document of the Biblical Commission

12. In these perspectives, *Providentissimus Deus* stated, "a vast field of research is open to the personal work of each exegete" (*EB*, n. 109). Fifty years later, *Divino afflante Spiritu* again made the same encouraging observation: "There are still many points, some very important, in the discussion and explanation of which the intellectual penetration and talent of Catholic exegetes can and should be freely exercised" (*EB*, n. 565).

What was true in 1943 remains so even in our day, for advances in research have produced solutions to certain problems and, at the same time, new questions to be studied. In exegesis, as in other sciences, the more one pushes back the limits of the unknown, the more one enlarges the area to be explored. Less than five years after

the publication of *Divino afflante Spiritu*, the discovery of the Qumran scrolls shed the light of a new day on a great number of biblical problems and opened up other fields of research. Since then, many discoveries have been made and new methods of investigation and analysis have been perfected.

13. It is this changed situation that has made a new examination of the problems necessary. The Pontifical Biblical Commission has worked on this task and today presents the fruit of its work, entitled *L'interpretation de la Bible dans l'Eglise*.

What is striking on first reading this document is the *spirit of openness* in which it was conceived. The methods, approaches and interpretations practiced today in exegesis have been examined and, despite occasionally serious reservations which must be stated, one acknowledges in almost every case, the presence of valid elements for an integral interpretation of the biblical text.

For Catholic exegesis does not have its own exclusive method of interpretation, but starting with the historico-critical basis freed from its philosophical pre-suppositions or those contrary to the truth of our faith, it makes the most of all the current methods by seeking in each of them the "seeds of the Word."

14. Another characteristic feature of this synthesis is its *balance and moderation*. In its interpretation of the Bible, it knows how to harmonize the diachronic and the synchronic by recognizing that the two are mutually complementary and indispensable for bringing out all the truth of the text and for satisfying the legitimate demands of the modern reader.

Even more importantly, Catholic exegesis does not focus its attention on only the human aspects of biblical Revelation, which is sometimes the mistake of the historico-critical method, or on only the divine aspects, as fundamentalism would have it; it strives to highlight both of them as they are united in the divine "condescension" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 13), which is the basis of all Scripture.

15. Lastly, one will perceive the document's stress on the fact that *the biblical Word is at the work speaking universally, in time and*

space, to all humanity. If "the words of God ... are like human language" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 13), it is so that they may be understood by all. They must not remain distant, "too mysterious and remote for you ... For the word is very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out" (*Dt* 30: 11, 14).

This is the aim of biblical interpretation. If the first task of exegesis is to arrive at the authentic sense of the sacred text or even at its different senses, it must then communicate this meaning to the recipient of Sacred Scripture, who is every human person, if possible.

The Bible exercises its influence down the centuries. A constant process of *actualization* adapts the interpretation to the contemporary mentality and language. This concrete, immediate nature of biblical language greatly facilitates this adaptation, but its origin in an ancient culture causes not a few difficulties. Therefore, biblical thought must always be translated anew into contemporary language so that it may be expressed in ways suited to its listeners. This translation, however, should be faithful to the original and cannot force the texts in order to accommodate an interpretation or an approach fashionable at a given time. The word of God must appear in all its splendor, even if it is "expressed in human words" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 13).

Today the Bible has spread to every continent and every nation. However, in order for it to have a profound effect, there must be *inculturation* according to the genius proper to each people. Perhaps nations less marked by the deviances of modern Western civilization will understand the biblical message more easily than those who are already insensitive as it were to the action of God's word because of secularization and the excesses of demythologization.

In our day, a great effort is necessary, not only on the part of scholars and preachers, but also those who popularize biblical thought: they should use every means possible — and there are many today — so that the universal significance of the biblical message may be widely acknowledged and its saving efficacy may be seen everywhere.

Thanks to this document, the interpretation of the Bible in the Church will be able to obtain new vigor for the good of the whole

world, so that the truth may shine forth and stir up charity on the threshold of the third millennium.

Conclusion

16. Finally, I have the joy of being able, as were my Predecessors, Leo XIII and Pius XII, to offer to Catholic exegetes, and in particular, to you, the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, both my thanks and encouragement.

I cordially thank you for the excellent work you have accomplished in service to the word of God and the People of God: a work of research, teaching and publication; an aid to theology, to the liturgy of the word and to the ministry of preaching; initiatives fostering ecumenism and good relations between Christians and Jews; involvement in the Church's efforts to respond to the aspirations and difficulties of the modern world.

To this I add my warm encouragement for the next step to be taken. The Increasing complexity of the task requires everyone's effort and a broad interdisciplinary cooperation. In a world where scientific research is taking on greater importance in many domains, it is indispensable for exegetical science to find its place at a comparable level. It is one of the aspects of inculturating the faith which is part of the Church's mission in connection with accepting the mystery of the incarnation.

May you be guided in your research by Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, who opened the minds of his disciples to the understanding of the Scriptures (*Lk* 24:45). May the Virgin Mary serve as a model for you not only by her generous docility to the word of God, but also and especially by her way of accepting what was said to her! St. Luke tells us that Mary reflected in her heart on the divine words and the events that took place, "*sympallousa en te kardia autes*" (*Lk* 2: 19). By welcoming the Word she is the model and mother of disciples (cf. *Jn* 19:27). Therefore, may she teach you fully to accept the word of God, not only in intellectual research but also with your whole life!

In order that your work and your activity may make the light of the Scriptures shine ever more brightly, I wholeheartedly give you my Apostolic Blessing.

Church Law Essential to Pastoral Work

John Paul II

Your Eminences and Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Distinguished Professors of Canon Law,
Judges of Ecclesiastical Tribunals,

1. I am happy to receive you at this special audience concluding the International Symposium with which you wanted fittingly to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law. I greet each of you most cordially and thank Archbishop Vincenzo Fagiolo for the thoughts and sentiments he expressed in the name of all.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers of and speakers at the Symposium for the contribution they have made,

An International Canon Law Symposium was held at the Vatican from 19-23 April to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the promulgation of the New *Codex Iuris Canonici*. The main reason for the meeting, which brought together over 70 professors of canon law from around the world, was to discuss the ecclesiological teaching of Vatican II on which the new Code was based, with special consideration for the sacramental, theological foundation of law in the Church. In addition to these doctrinal considerations, the Symposium included pastoral questions, for as the Pope has said: "In effect, *juridical-canonical work is pastoral by its very nature*" (Address to the Roman Rota, 18 January 1990).

This theme was taken up again by the Holy Father in his address to the Symposium's participants on Friday, 23 April. Stating that the *munus regendi* is also part of the Church's pastoral activity, he pointed out how canon law, when properly understood and applied, contributes to the Church's life and ministry.

Here is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was given in Italian.

through this programme, to reflecting on the influence that the Code of Canon Law increasingly has on the Church's life and mission.

2. In this light it is above all necessary to recall how many people devoted their efforts to promoting the renewal of canonical legislation, welcoming the urgings, directives and requests of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. First among them all was the Supreme Pontiff John XXIII, of venerable memory, who on 25 January 1959, the same day on which he announced the Ecumenical Council, also indicated his intention to reform the *corpus* of canon law then in force, which had been promulgated on the feast of Pentecost in 1917; subsequently, on 29 March 1963, he established the Commission for the Revision of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, to which great impetus was given by my Predecessor Paul VI, of happy memory.

Ecclesiological elements of Code were focus of attention

It is necessary to remember and thank the Cardinals who were Presidents of the Commission, its capable Secretaries and their coworkers, the Fathers of the plenary congregations, the experts and the consultors. The excellent collegial spirit in which the work was conducted and completed was shown to be valuable and particularly fruitful in the consultation of the entire Episcopate, the dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the ecclesiastical universities and faculties and the Unions of Major Superiors. As I said 10 years ago when I promulgated the new Code, today again I want publicly to express to everyone my feelings of sincere gratitude, as I commend to the Lord's goodness all who have left us after giving faithful, generous service to the Church.

3. The joy and comfort of the past are confirmed and repeated today with the happy celebration of the 10th anniversary of the new Code's promulgation, made especially solemn by this *International Symposium*, on which the choice of topics, the well-known erudition of the speakers, and the attendance of so many distinguished scholars confer, along with the aspect of universality expressed by the various schools, the importance of a highly ecclesial event of doubtless scholarly value. A purely academic event was not desired, nor were prestigious goals sought in order to do honor, even to this Apostolic See. However, as was clear from the beginning when the proposal

was made and presented, the *Symposium* intended to focus its work on the foundational elements and essential structure of the Code as the basic innovation of the Second Vatican Council, in continuity with the Church's legislative tradition especially regarding ecclesiology (cf. Apost. Const. *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, 25 January 1983: AAS 75 [1983], pars II, XI). This led to an indepth treatment of the themes characterizing and distinguishing the new Code: above all, *communio* in the dimension of the universal Church and in that of the particular Church, with the comparative study of *ius universale* and *ius particulare*, and of the *ministerial priesthood* and the *common priesthood*, with specific reference to the *pastoral administration of the sacraments* and the *ecclesiastical ministry*.

I am pleased that in the context of the Symposium room was also found for the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, which I had the joy of promulgating in 1990. In fact, this attention corresponds to my often repeated wish that the whole Church breathe with the two lungs. The Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, which faithfully follows all that I wrote in the Apostolic Constitution *Sacri canones*, gives practical evidence of this: the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches is not only "to be considered as a new complement to the teaching presented by the Second Vatican Council, by which the canonical legislation of the universal Church is finally completed" (Apost. Const. *Sacri canones*, 18 October 1990: AAS 87 [1990]: 1038), but along with the *Codex Iuris Canonici* and the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia *Pastor bonus* represents one of the three components of the universal Church's sole *corpus iuris canonici*. Knowledge of this whole corpus as I stressed on 25 October 1990 at the last Synod of Bishops, must be appropriately promoted in priestly formation, and in the first place, in all the faculties of canon law. Indeed, this knowledge can only enrich scholars and enable the canonical science practiced in the universities to "correspond fully to degrees that these faculties confer" (Address, 25 October 1990, n. 8: AAS 83 [1991]: 490).

After 10 years an examination is needed

4. The *Symposium* has joined the pastoral aim to the scientific, both in the choice of topics and speakers, among whom are diocesan

Bishops, and in the vision of the needs inherent in the Church's life and mission.

This leads to the hope, which I share, for a more widespread and precise study of the new Code of Canon Law, not only to involve academic centers and practitioners of the law, but to become a concrete task for every ecclesial community, in order to realize the need for an examination, 10 years after the promulgation of the Code, which translates the Council's directives into living experience.

Let communities first of all question themselves on the application and observance of the norms that the *Codex* has enacted for carrying out the decisions and directives of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Let them also see and examine whether the new Code's influence in their life and in the mission they exercise in the Church corresponds to the development and intentions of the Council itself.

5. Your Symposium will have thus contributed to increasing esteem for and trust in the Code as an instrument well corresponding to the Church's nature. "Indeed," as I said 10 years ago, "in a certain sense this new Code could be understood as a great effort to translate this conciliar ... ecclesiology into canonical language" (cf. Apost. Const. *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, 25 January 1983: AAS 75 [1983], pars II, XI).

In fact, it reflects and gives juridical form and structure to the clear conciliar teaching on the Church as the People of God who live and work in the organic community of all her members under the guidance and protection of hierarchical authority, which perpetuates in the ecclesial community the Good Shepherd's service for the integral salvation of the flock. Because of the source from which these truths flow, because of the Christological and ecclesiological content characterizing them, and because of the saving purpose they imply, they also emerge today from the legislative structure of the new Code, which therefore should be recognized as having rendered a useful service to the ecclesial community. You have brought out the need, even the necessity, of a *communio disciplinae* to support the Church's life and mission by emphasizing how essential the institutional structure is to the charismatic, in order to work jointly towards

achieving that *salus* in which all the Church's elements — theological, liturgical, pastoral or juridical — find their *raison d'être*. "In the life of the Church," my Predecessor Paul VI, of happy memory, stated "we see that the function of law is not foreign to the *mysterium salutis* ... but finds its place in the divine plan of salvation. Consequently, the economy of salvation embraces ... the whole heritage of law, for this latter is bound up inextricably with justice and with the human person" (cf. Address, 25 May 1968: AAS 60 [1968]: 338).

'Munus regendi' also part of Church's pastoral activity

6. Canon law is thus shown to be related to the Church's very nature; it is essential for the proper exercise of the *munus pastorale* in the triple sense of *munus docendi, sanctificandi, regendi*. In the Church of Christ — the Council said repeatedly — together with the spiritual, eternal aspect, there is the visible, external one. The clear assertion of canon 375, section 1, on the basis of which Bishops "are constituted pastors so that they are teachers of doctrine, priests of sacred worship and ministers of governance" (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 20c), seen in the light of the whole canonical tradition and that of Vatican II's Magisterium, while confirming for us the intrinsic pastoral nature of canon law, also tells us that not only the *munera docendi* and *sanctificandi* are pastoral, which the Council preferred to call *pascendi*, connecting it to John's text narrating the conferral of the primacy on Peter (cf. *Jn* 21:17; *Lumen gentium*, n. 18; can. 331).

Respect for canonical legislation, expressed by observing its norms, contributes to the growth of ecclesial communion. In fact the latter achieves its fullness when the baptized are joined with Christ "by the bonds of profession of faith, of the sacraments and of ecclesial governance" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 14b; can. 205). Indeed, through the body of canonical legislation, the latter regulates the Church's life and mission, the duties and rights of her members and all that is useful and necessary to her visible structure. This gives rise to the demand, expressed by the Code as an obligation, that all the faithful, "even in their own patterns of activity, always maintain communion with the Church" (can. 209, sec. 1); and apostolic action is always to be carried out in communion with the Church (cf. can. 675, sec. 3).

Renewed canon law helps in mission of New Evangelization

7. Conceived, structured, interpreted and applied in this way, canon law not only helps the Church fulfil her mission but also acquires a dimension of *exemplarity* for civil society, spurring it to consider power and its institutions as a service to the community, in the supreme interest of the human person. Just as man, redeemed by Christ and constituted a person in the Church by Baptism "with duties and rights proper to Christians, in keeping with their condition" (can. 96), is at the center of the canonical system, so too civil societies are invited by the Church's example to put the human person at the center of their legal systems, never departing from the demands of natural law so as not to fall into the trap of arbitrariness or false ideologies. The demands of the natural law are indeed valid for every place and for every people, today and always, because they are dictates of *recta ratio*, wherein lies the essence of natural law, as St. Thomas explains: "Every human law has just so much of the nature of law, as it is derived from the law of nature" (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 95, a. 2). Classical thought had already grasped this, as Cicero expressed it: "True law is indeed right reason according to nature, imparted to all, constant, everlasting, calling to duty by commanding and deterring from crime by forbidding; however it neither commands nor forbids the upright without effect, nor does it move the wicked by its commands or prohibitions" (*De re publica*, 3, 33; *Lact., Inst.*, VI, 8, 6-9).

In the Church's renewed effort for the New Evangelization in view of the Third Christian Millennium, canon law, as a specific, indispensable institution of the Church's structure, will not fail to make its effective contribution to the Church's life and mission in the world if all the Church's members know wisely how to interpret it and faithfully apply it. May the Lord Jesus grant this, he who desired the Church as a new Israel, journeying through this world toward the future, lasting city, under the guidance of pastors whom he himself appointed to govern his people, endowing them with means adapted to this task (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 9).

I accompany this wish with a special Blessing that I impart to you here present and to all in the various fields related to canon law who make their own contribution to accomplishing the Church's mission in the world.

Position Paper on Religious Instruction in Public Schools

*Episcopal Commission on Catechesis
and Catholic Education (E.C.C.C.E.)*

Praenotanda

Though this Position Paper presents the view of the Philippine Catholic hierarchy concerning the Religious Instruction of its young generations, its authors believe that the ideas herein expressed reflect also the stand of all major religious Confessions in the Philippines about this important aspect in the education of our children and youth, regardless of the particular tenets of each Confession.

1. The Present Deplorable Moral Situation in the Philippines

It is a common perception that our society has undergone a worrisome moral deterioration. The crime rate has increased, and there is a high degree of corruption at all levels. The lack of social justice and of civic awareness sadly characterizes our society.

Such a lamentable situation has surely several causes and deeproots. But some mainroot-causes are surely the ignorance of sound moral principles, the disregard of spiritual values, and the lack of strong motivation for upright and honest behavior and a practical concern for the common good.

2. Attempts to Remedy the Situation at the Educational Level

It is in order to improve the moral fiber and behavior of our people that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) in these past years has undertaken a series of initiatives. The most notable and far-reaching has been the preparation of a comprehensive Values Education Program, and the inclusion of Values Education in the elementary and high school curricula.

This is definitely a step in the right direction.

3. Values Education Needs Proper Foundations

But any values education program needs to be adequately grounded. Now, such an adequate basis can be found only in God as the source of all values, the supporter and rewarder of all moral efforts. It is only in God that the unique dignity of every human being, as well as all the values that emanate from, and gravitate around the human person and civil society, find their solid basis and final explanation.

4. Importance of Religious Faith and Religion

It is only faith in an eternal and moral God — by whatever name He may be called, and with whatever rituals He may be worshipped — which can give objective meaning and direction to our personal and social moral life.

This faith finds concrete expression in the different religions—the institutionalized systems of beliefs, moral and spiritual attitudes and practices that have characterized human history, and which can be found in every civil society.

5. Relevance of Religion in Philippine History and Present Day Society

In the Philippines there exist several major religions: Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Muslim, Buddhist... In spite of the many differences, all of them share the belief in the existence of a good, omnipotent God, Creator of all that exists, who is just and promoter

of justice, and who will reward each individual according to his/her intentions and deeds.

All of these religions, as well as the other minor religious faiths, have contributed each in its own way, to the history and culture of our people. Even now they can be powerful instruments in the formation of every individual Filipino and in nation building through the convictions they implant (or instill), the superior motivation they inspire, and their organizational community structures.

6. Importance of Religious Faith in the Life of the Individual

A person's religious faith affects all aspects of his/her life. It provides a "vision" and a framework which orient the whole life of the person. Religious faith grounds a deep sense of self-worth, and offers the ultimate justification for any form of commitment to worthy causes, including love of country, service to the poor and efforts to build a national and an international community based on mutual respect, justice and cooperation.

7. The Need for Religious Instruction

Religious faith is like a precious treasure which is handed on from one generation to another, from the elders to the younger members of a family.

The new generations need to be instructed in the content and implications of the religious faith handed on to them by their elders. Without proper instruction, religion can degenerate into either private devotional feelings devoid of any social commitment, or superstitious beliefs which enslave people rather than liberate them.

8. Responsibility of Imparting Religious Instruction

It is the primary duty and responsibility of parents and/ or guardians to instruct their children in religious faith. It is in the home that children receive their initial religious formation.

It is also the duty of the leaders and qualified ministers of every religious community or organization to supplement the religious instruction children have received in their own family with a deeper and more articulate teaching of the main tenets of the religion to which they belong.

9. The State and Religious Instruction

The State and each religious Confession have their own rights and duties, objectives and priorities. Both the State and religious Confessions have the right to operate autonomously in the areas of their specific competence, without external interference, but also with due respect for the rights of the other institutions. This is the essence of the principle of separation between State and organized religions/Churches. There is no "state religion," imposed on all citizens; rather there is a guaranteed "freedom of religion."

However, since the State and the Churches exert to promote the welfare of the constituents cooperation between the two types of institution is not only possible but called for, in view of the greater good of the common constituency.

As regards religious instruction, the State should not interfere either with regard to the content, or the methods used in imparting it, for as long as these do not run counter to the principles of accepted social living and the common good. But insofar as religious instruction is perceived as a positive and necessary contribution to the intellectual and moral formation of the youth, the State should also consider it its duty to encourage and facilitate it.

Such encouragement and facilitation, however, should be done without favoring any religious group, and without discriminating against any of them, according to the principle of freedom of religion and separation between State and Churches.

10. The Constitutional Provision on Religious Instruction in Public Elementary and High School

The preceding principles are clearly in agreement with the spirit and letter of our Constitution concerning the relationship

between the State and the different Religions in our country, including the exercise of their basic right to offer religious instruction to their members.

Article XIV, Sec. 3, par. 3 of the Constitution tackles expressly the topic of religious instruction not within the families or the premises of religious institutions, but within the educational environment of the public elementary and high school campuses.

We see in this Constitutional Provision a remarkable instance of the following:

- a. a clear recognition of the right of the parents or guardians to educate their children or wards in the religion of their choice;
- b. a clear, though indirect, recognition of the positive role of religious instruction in the formation of the new generations;
- c. the impartiality of the State vis-a-vis all religious confessions. No specific religion is favored, none is discriminated against;
- d. a commendable effort on the part of the State to facilitate the religious instruction of all its young citizens by putting at the disposal of the different religious Confessions which wish to avail of them both the public school facilities (classrooms), and adequate time to impart religious instruction *within regular class hours*.

This last point undeniably implies that the teaching of Religion in public elementary and high school is to be considered part of the *ordinary curriculum* for all those students whose parents have expressed in writing their option to that effect.

11. Present Praiseworthy Emphasis on Values Education

The efforts being made by the DECS to instill basic values in the students of the elementary and high school levels are praiseworthy, for our youth in a special manner need to learn and assimilate both universal and traditional Filipino values.

The present DECS values framework, however, does not seem to be comprehensive enough, and definitely is in need of more solid foundations which only a sound anthropology and theology can offer.

12. Values Education and Religious Instruction

Proper Religious Instruction can offer Values Education the necessary *foundation* and inspire superior *motivation* which are indispensable for living out the values proposed in school.

Values Education, for its part, can offer Religious Instruction the needed inculturation and contextualization that make the universal truths and values of every religion relevant to our concrete historical and sociological Philippine situation.

Yet Values Education and Religious Instruction, though complementary in some ways, are clearly different and distinct in their basis content, their sources, objectives and motivations.

Moreover, Values Education classes are meant for *all students*, whatever their religious affiliation, while Religion classes should be given separately to the students of the same religious faith whose parents or guardians have formally applied for it. This is a further reason to keep the two subjects separate and distinct in the allotment of time and classrooms.

These clarifications are necessary in view of the fact that some school authorities consider religion classes superfluous on the ground that - in their perception - the same subject matter is already treated in Values Education classes.

13. Inadequacy of DECS Orders Concerning Religious Instruction in Public Schools

Shortly after the approval of the Constitution in February 1987, the DECS issued Order No. 39, s. 1987, with a view to implement the Constitutional Provision on Religious Instruction in public elementary and high school. Said DECS Order clearly stated that religion has to be taught *within regular class hours*, as specified in the Constitution, Article XIV, sec. 3, par. 3.

The same DECS Order also specified that Religion should not be taught for more than 90 minutes a week.

A similar instruction was repeated in DECS Order No. 69, s. 1990, and DECS Order No. 94, s. 1991.

Neither DECS Order No. 39, s. 1987, nor the two subsequent orders, specify the minimum number of minutes per week which should be guaranteed to Religious Instruction. Presumably the former Secretaries of the Department of Education assumed that the minimum of time allotment would have been close enough to the ceiling of 90 minutes per week.

Unfortunately, in many instances that has not been the case. Not infrequently religion classes have been given only 40 minutes, divided into two periods of 20 minutes each, or even as low as 20 minutes per week. It has also happened that those 20 minutes were allotted systematically either before the intermission or immediately before the end of classes.

This has made a sad joke of the right to have Religious Instruction in public schools which is explicitly mentioned in our Constitution.

The reasons that have led to such an abuse have different origins. The main ones seem to have been the following:

- a. the opposition of some local school authorities against a certain religious Confession;
- b. the allotment by the DECS of 5 compulsory periods a week for Values Education in all elementary and high schools.

The former reason (letter a.) clearly shows that the minimum time allotment for Religion classes cannot be left to the discretion of local school authorities.

The latter (letter b.) reveals a well-meaning but disproportioned emphasis on Values Education, which results in the practical impossibility for most principals to find time slots for subject matters like Religious Instruction, questionably labelled as "optional."

14. The Need to Specify a Minimum of Time Allotment for Religious Instruction

All those involved in teaching know that a certain amount of time is needed to set the students in the proper "learning mood," especially if they are rather young. If the duration of the class period is too short the students will profit little and the teacher will be frustrated.

There are surely sound pedagogical reasons for fixing the average duration of a class period at about 40 or 45 minutes. These reasons cannot be ignored when it comes to Religious Instruction.

To say that more than 20 minutes a week cannot be granted simply because there are no more time slots available clearly shows a lack of appreciation for the importance of religious formation in the life of a student, and a disregard for the specific provision enshrined in our Constitution. To assign to Religious Instruction too short a class time (such as 20 minutes per week) not only makes that class time unmanageable and fruitless, but also makes a mockery of the constitutional mandate.

Therefore, just as in the Labor legislation provision is made for a reasonable *minimum wage*, so should a "minimum class time" be specified for Religious Instruction.

15. The Need for Moral Support by the School Authorities

The allotment of enough time for Religious Instruction should be accompanied by the moral support extended by the school authorities both to this subject matter and those who teach it.

Such a "moral support" will be, first of all, a sign of respect toward all religious faiths and will inculcate the important value of tolerance toward the convictions of others. This "moral support" will find its manifestation in various ways. Among them:

- a. respect accorded to the religion teachers even when they do not have academic degrees recognized by the DECS;

b. as much as possible, assigning prime time to Religion classes;

c. avoiding attitudes and actions which might give the impression that Religious Instruction is just "tolerated" or "magnanimously allowed" by the local school authorities, like a sort of benign condescension which could be denied at will.

One major fact should always be kept in mind by all those concerned: religious instruction of their children in public schools is a right of the parents or guardians which is formally recognized by our Constitution.

16. Facing Practical Difficulties and Trying to Find a Fair Solution

We are aware of the many practical difficulties encountered by the public school authorities, like having two shifts and even three shifts of classes in the same school facilities.

This challenging situation obviously forces them to shorten the class periods allotted to subject matters. We understand all this and we decry that our public school system has deteriorated to such an extent. But we cannot accept that the teaching of Religion be among the first to be sacrificed because of the lack of adequate facilities. We cannot accept the fact that Religious Instruction be given only 20 minutes a week while Values Education is allotted 5 periods a week.

This is a clear case of unfairness, contradictoriness and short-sightedness. It is *unfair* because of the glaring imbalance in the time allotment between the two subjects in question, and in spite of the fact that the right to have Religious Instruction in public school is guaranteed by the Constitution, and is actually the only subject matter explicitly mentioned in our Charter.

It is *contradictory* because, while on the one hand, DECS claims to uphold values, it belittles a value like religious faith which is one of the basic and most far-reaching dimensions of human life.

It is *shortsighted* because eventually the practical downplaying of the importance of Religious Instruction will result in the failure of

Values Education, as is shown by the collapse of the Communist system which tried to build a completely secular society without religious faith.

17. The Need to Rationalize the Teaching of Religion in Public Schools Through Appropriate Legislation

Such a lamentable situation definitely points to the need that the implementation of the Constitutional Provision on Religious Instruction in public schools be spelled out by a law discussed in the Congress, and which specifies details that could not be included in the Constitution for obvious reasons. Such a law is both imperative and urgent.

Such legislation will guarantee impartiality in the application of the Constitutional Provision on this matter, and will offer DECS the clear legal framework within which to issue its operational Orders, keeping the proper order of priorities.

Such a legislation will also give the different religious Confessions in the country a clearer perception of their rights and duties in the area of Religious Instruction in public schools. This will be a great help to them in the recruitment and formation of their religion teachers, as well as in the preparation of didactic materials to be used in religion classes.

We find the content of Senate Bill 509 fully in agreement with the vision and solutions outlined in this Position Paper. This does not deny that the bill, like all others, is open to improvement and refinement through the contribution of our Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.

We sincerely hope that this Position Paper may be of help in providing a wider horizon within which the teaching of Religion in public schools should be considered and rationalized.

We remain available to offer any further contribution and clarification that may help toward a better grasp of the implications of this complex issue, and thereby foster a wise and long overdue rationalization of this important matter.

For the members of the Episcopal Commission on Catechesis
and Catholic Education,

(Sgd.) Bishop Manuel Sobreviñas, DD
Chairman

A Time of Pruning the Vines

Jordan Aumann, O.P.

It is almost thirty years since the close of the Second Vatican Council, and they have been years of turbulence and confusion for religious institutes in the first world. This is especially true as regards the active religious institutes of men and women, although some contemplative communities have likewise experienced tensions and chaos. Many people outside religious life — both clergy and laity — have been greatly surprised to see the drastic decrease in vocations to religious life, the number of religious who no longer live in community, the lack of a distinctive religious garb, the abandonment of the institutes's apostolate such as teaching or nursing in favor of some form of social work. In some respects the religious life has become a completely secular life. Can this trend be reversed so that religious life will continue to be an eschatological sign of the holiness of the Church?

Legislation of the Church

According to the revised *Code of Canon Law* (1983), the religious life is a stable, permanent form of life in which the faithful make public profession of a vow to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in accordance with the constitutions of an institute approved by the Church (cf. can. 573). The evangelical counsel of poverty "entails a life which is poor in reality and in spirit...[and] involves dependence and limitation in the use and the disposition of goods, in accordance with each institute's own law" (can. 600); chastity "involves the obligation of perfect continence in

celibacy" (can. 599); and obedience "obliges submission of one's will to lawful superiors, who act in the place of God when they give commands that in accordance with each institute's constitutions" (can. 601). The evangelical counsels are lived in imitation of Christ, who was poor, chaste and obedient during his earthly life.

A fourth essential element of religious life, mandated by the law of the Church, is community living. It is a distinctive and essential element of religious life that distinguishes religious from hermits, consecrated virgins living in the world, and the members of secular institutes. Moreover, there are marked differences among the numerous types of religious institutes approved by the Church. Consequently, there will also be differences in the observance of poverty, obedience, and common life, as is evident, for example in the life-styles of Benedictines, Carthusians, Franciscans, Passionists and Jesuits. These things pertain to the "consecration" aspect of religious life.

Various documents since the Second Vatican Council have spoken of "consecration and mission." Each religious institute has a mission in the Church, some sort of service to the People of God. The contemplative cloistered religious, completely separated from the world, exercise an *indirect* apostolate of prayer and penance. The active, apostolic institutes, on the other hand, are in direct contact with the faithful through the performance of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy. Since religious make a public vow to live and work according to the constitutions of their institute, they have an obligation to do their utmost to observe and preserve what their constitutions stipulate concerning consecration or life-style and mission or apostolate.

The *Code of Canon Law* explicitly states that religious are to observe faithfully "the intention of the founders and their determination concerning the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the institute which have been ratified by competent ecclesiastical authority as well as its wholesome traditions, all of which constitute the patrimony of the institute itself" (can. 578). The fundamental code or constitutions of a religious institute "is approved by the competent authority of the Church and can be changed only with its consent" (can. 587, §2).

Adaptation or Transformation?

The Second Vatican Council called for "renewal and adaptation of religious life" but it also stated that the essential and substantial elements of life in a religious institute should be protected and preserved. The Council did not therefore mandate the founding of a new religious institute by the updating or *aggiornamento* of the institute so that it could be a vital and productive element in the Church and better serve the People of God.

Any kind of change that results in a transition from one style of life to another is usually accompanied by some degree of crisis. For some, the crisis is seen as a danger to be feared and avoided; for others, it may be interpreted as a challenge for greater progress and perfection. Those religious who are stout defenders of traditional observances and former customs will see the prescribed changes and adaptations as destructive influences that must be resisted; those who look to the future and see the need for creative innovation, will welcome the opportunity to restore to their institute the vitality and dynamism of the founder's charism. A religious institute in which the members disagree on the evaluation of the crisis as a danger or a challenge will inevitably experience tension and division. It is now almost thirty years since the close of the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of the documents calling for the adaptation and renewal of religious life. The tensions still exist and in some cases the division has become solidified with the passing years and the stubborn resistance of both sides.

The results of a study on the future of religious life in the United States were published in September of 1992. The research was done by Father David Nygren, C.M., and Sister Miriam Ukeritis, C.S. J., two psychologists at De Paul University in Chicago.¹ Two of the areas that they investigated are of special importance for resolving the conflicts in religious institutes and for starting out on the path to reconciliation: role clarity and leadership.

¹The results of the study by Nygren and Ukeritis have been published under the title, *Future of Religious Orders in the United States*, but the quotations given in this article are taken from a summary that appeared in *Origins*, September 24, 1992.

Nygren and Ukeritis define role clarity as "the individual's perceived level of understanding regarding his or her purpose and function within the current structure of the Church." Role clarity therefore, has to do with one's sense of identity as a member of a religious institute. Who are we and what is our mission in the Church and in the world? The statistics are interesting and revealing. The percentages of *high role clarity* are as follows: 55% among religious women; 65% among religious brothers; 68% among religious priests. In terms of the type of religious life, 77% of contemplative nuns and 64% of monks had high role clarity while only 59% of active religious and friars have a clear understanding of their role. On the basis of age, 52% of the young religious men and women had high role clarity, compared to 71% of the older members. Finally, the more highly educated and those engaged in specialized work had a lower role clarity as religious. The researchers then offer some comments on the effects of low role clarity:

Other research has demonstrated that ambiguity regarding role can, in general, lead to anxiety, reduced ability to meet role requirements, decreased ministerial satisfaction, lower trust and self-confidence, increased sense of futility and greater propensity to leave a religious order. The lack of role clarity that a high percentage of religious experience may contribute to a further diminishment in number of members in religious orders. There may also be some connection between statistics reflecting the equal numbers of women and men entering religious life (in contrast to the approximately 3-to-1 ratio of prior years) and the greater numbers of women who experience low role clarity. Taken together, *this data signals the essential need for role clarity if religious orders in the United States are to be revitalized* [italics added].

Leadership

Another critical factor in the renewal and adaptation of religious life is that of leadership. It is a common lament, not only in religious life but throughout the Church, that there is a need for strong leadership. Conversely, there is also a great need to follow the

leader and have a healthy sense of community. Largely as a result of the movement toward greater democracy in religious institutes, there is, as Nygren and Ukeritis put it, "the increasingly widespread use of consensual processes and team leadership. The findings indicate that, while potentially effective, such approaches can often lead to mediocre management, representing the least-common denominator within an organization. Uninformed implementation of consensual methods often paralyzes the visionary leader."

The researchers have hit upon one of the dangers and weaknesses of democracy, namely, the exercise of leadership and authority by a small group who do not necessarily share the ideals and aspirations of the community as a whole. As a result, what is called "team leadership" can easily become a government by a clique, and this is a divisive factor in any community. This phenomenon occurs in both civil and Church leadership but it could be avoided in religious institutes if both the leaders and the members of the institute had a clear perception of the charism of the founder, the mission of the institute, and were conscientious in working for the common good.

The researchers point out that "both female and male religious expressed a slightly higher degree of satisfaction with individual leaders than with leadership teams. Women were generally more satisfied with their leadership than were their male counterparts, and individual leaders are rated more highly than leadership teams by members."

The leader of a religious institute will be either outstanding or typical, but in both cases he or she will need certain "threshold competencies" that are listed by the researchers as follows: "an ability to articulate the mission of their congregations, an inclination to act efficiently, basic conceptual and analytical skills, self-confidence and avoidance of impulsive or emotional expression. These can be regarded as foundational competencies for leaders of religious orders." The qualities listed are not simply a *priori* creations of Nygren and Ukeritis; they are the result of a series of regional meetings with leaders of religious communities, a special session of leadership competency and feed-back from the members of religious institutes. Their evaluation of all this material is an invaluable help for the

renewal and adaptation of religious life. It deserves the widest possible circulation.

The Future of Religious Life

When we read that in 1965 there were slightly more than 180,000 active religious women in the United States, but in 1990 the number was only slightly more than 100,000,² we may well be tempted to predict the demise of religious life in the United States. But when we look at the Church universal, we find that there are countries in which religious life is flourishing and vocations are surprisingly numerous. Even in the United States there are some religious institutes that annually admit large classes of postulants and novices. At the same time, we must have the honesty to assess the situation in those communities that attract one or two vocations or none at all.

There was a story making the rounds several years ago. It was said that someone had asked Father Kolvenbach, the Superior General of the Jesuits, whether he was concerned at the lack of vocations to the Society of Jesus in some countries. He replied in the negative, saying that while there is a dearth of vocations in some areas, there are ever-increasing vocations in other parts of the world.

It would be simplistic to say that the cause of the confusion and secularization of religious life is due entirely to the liberal, progressive members of religious institutes. They had heard the call of the Second Vatican Council to renew and adapt their life, and they were willing to accept changes that are sometimes painful. When Pope John XXIII called for *aggiornamento*, he surely realized that it would require an understanding of the world in which we live and the adaptation of various elements of the Church to the needs of the times.

We are living in an age that is materialistic, sensate and ruggedly individualistic to the point of selfishness. All Christians, and especially consecrated persons, are challenged to be a countersign to our contemporary culture. Unfortunately, many religious not only

²Elizabeth Mc Donough, O.P. "Beyond the Liberal Model: Quo Vadis?" in *Review for Religious*, March/April, 1991, pp. 171-188.

went forth to meet the world, but they embraced the world. The abandonment of the distinguished religious or clerical garb, the disintegration of community life, and the functioning of religious superiors and their councils as if they were executives of large corporations — all this is indicative of the secularization of religious life. Little wonder that some religious institutes have lost their sense of identity and individual religious have a problem with role clarity.

Another destructive factor is the lack of fidelity to the charism and mission of the religious institute. For example, since the emergence of active religious institutes, there have always been religious who are totally dedicated to the service of the poor and to the promotion of social justice. If, however, a religious institute was founded for teaching, nursing, or some other apostolate, is it not incumbent on superiors and members to be faithful to their constitutions? Or if a teaching or nursing Sister takes a position in a city hospital or a public school, what happens to her image and life-style as a religious?

What does the future hold for religious life? It holds what the members and leaders of religious institutes want to make of it. There are numerous options, although in some cases the only viable solution may be the suppression of a religious institute. Those who want to preserve their dwindling religious institute could consider merging with another institute. Thus, a Congregation of active Dominican Sisters should have no difficulty in merging with another Dominican Congregation. One could also conceive of a merger between some of the modern active religious institutes that have the same charism, life-style, and apostolate and differ only in secondary matters.

Where there is an irreconcilable division between two factions within the religious institute, the solution may be found in a juridical separation and the founding of a new religious institute by one of the groups. This process may involve the refounding of a religious institute, as was done in the past by the older religious orders when they set up a house or congregation of reform; for example, the Capuchins, the Discalced Carmelites and the Recollect Augustinians.

Finally, if one of the factions is determined to abandon its former charism, lifestyle or apostolate, but still wants to be recognized by the Church as a form of consecrated life, several options are available.

First, if the members of the group want to be recognized by the Church as religious, they would have to incorporate in their lives the life-style prescribed by the laws of the Church (cf. cans. 607-704). Secondly, they can still remain consecrated persons and dedicate themselves to a very fruitful apostolate if they seek approval as a society of apostolic life, which is described in canons 731-746. Finally, they may apply for recognition as a secular institute, which is described in canons 710-730.³

After almost thirty years of self-study, dialogue and experimentation, it is time to move on. This is the hour of decision. It can also be a new springtime in the Church, when the various forms of consecrated life will burst forth in bloom to give glory to God and beautify the Church. The author of the Song of Songs gives expression to the sentiments that should be in the heart of every consecrated person: "For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come and the song of the dove is heard in our land" (Sg. 11 - 12).

³The eminent canonist, Father Jean Beyer, S.J. an Expert on Secular institutes, has written a very important article on the change of a religious institute into a secular institute. See J. Beyer, S.J., "Religious Life on Secular Institute," in Supplement to the Way, June, 1969, pp. 112-132.

pastoral words

Peace in our Time

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

PASTORAL LETTER

Peace will be but an empty sounding word unless it is founded on truth, built according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity, and put into practice in freedom (Pacem in Terris, 167).

Beloved People of God:

When set in the context of our current situation, the above words written thirty years ago at Easter, 1963, by Pope John XXIII are words that both convict and inspire. They convict because the very absence of peace in our day implies the lack, too, of the values that make for peace: order, truth, justice, love and freedom. But those same words stir our hope. We need not look far and wide for the road to peace. The directions are there — in the very practice of those same components of peace. How easily said, how terribly difficult to do, and live!

Yet constantly, unceasingly, mightily must we “seek peace and pursue it” (*Ps* 34:24; *1 Pt* 3:11; cf. our pastoral letter of January 31, 1990). Peace is the cry and anguish of our people. It is also the prayer-greeting of the Risen Lord: “Peace be with you” (*Lk* 24:36).

Although we have written you many times in the past about peace (e.g. pastoral statements of November 21, 1986; January 26,

1987; pastoral letter of January 31, 1990), still we must continue exhorting you, beloved People of God, that we might work together towards peace in our times. Together then, let us reflect, pray, and act on "the things that make for peace" (Lk 19:42).

Order

It was the great St. Augustine who first defined peace as the "tranquility of order" (*De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 13). How true this is! There can be no tranquility when there is disquiet, unrest, confusion, disharmony. And there can be no order unless there is authority, law, obedience to it, discipline.

And yet we read everyday in our newspapers reports that seem to describe, not order, but anarchy: kidnappings, massacres, the involvement of "peace officers" in serious, even violent crimes. Our people cry out, "If such is the case, who can keep the peace? Who can enforce law and order?"

Again and again, we must say that keeping the law and observing order are the responsibility of each and everyone of us. We are not dispensed from this obligation, simply because there are police and military officers whose professional work is precisely to defend and promote law and order. To them we proclaim the words of the Lord: "Repent and believe in the Gospel!" (Mk 1:15).

Truth

The order on which peace is to be founded cannot itself be founded on a lie, on untruth. Order must be built on truth. "Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace..." (Zc 8:16). Otherwise order will collapse, it will disintegrate. And a most fundamental truth is about the human person: human dignity, human worth, the human imaging of God who is Truth.

Yet when we look around us, we are barraged by various offenses against human dignity and worth, such as the glorification of sex and violence in cinema and television. Woman is degraded. Human life is bereft of immortal value. The truth about the human

person is under siege. We exhort you, our brothers and sisters in the Lord, to join hands in a concerted and systematic campaign to cleanse our media of such untruth.

Justice

If to respect the truth of the human person is to honor and esteem God's gift of dignity and worth, it follows that we must give what is due to another. This is justice in its most fundamental sense. There are duties to oneself, to other persons, to the community, to the nation, to God.

Yet we are appalled by the many injustices that are being committed, even more by the apparent lack of conscience with which they are perpetrated. Services, development, rights that are due to the people are not given. The wheels of justice turn agonizingly slowly, especially for the poor, and often not at all. Reports tell us of scams in government projects, "hoodlums in robes," ill-gotten wealth, the looting and plunder of public coffers past and present, billions of taxes not being paid. Such reports describe a people reeling under the weight of injustice.

It is along the lines of justice that we have to reflect on loving forgiveness and reconciliation. Authentic love requires the exercise of justice. When thus a person repents — has a change of heart — and resolves to restore/restitute what has been taken unduly from another, or from the community of nation, forgiveness and reconciliation follows. Without justice, love and reconciliation would simply be hollow.

Charity

Charity is love. There is first of all the love we must have of God. And God himself said that love for him is shown in obeying his law (cf. *1 Jn* 5:3), in keeping his word. But his word is also concerned about loving others as oneself, for if one hates his brother how can one say he loves God? (cf. *1 Jn* 4:11, 20). Love demands the kind of concern that will drive one to sacrifice self for the good of others. "Greater love has no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (*Jn* 15:13).

But, alas, what do we see around us? A driving ambition for wealth and power at the expense of the law of God, the self-aggrandizement of the few at the expense of the many, exploitation of laborers, of farmers and tribal communities, the lack of concern for the "little people" who are already without voice and power, vendettas, kidnappings, massacres, crimes against persons and property. The law, the love of God and neighbor are thrown by the wayside in favor of power, possession and pleasure.

A return to God and one's neighbor is, therefore, absolutely necessary for peace to be restored. "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble" (*Ps* 119:165). Every measure taken in the achieving of peace will always fall short without the fundamental ingredient of love.

Freedom

Peace cannot last when it has to be forever imposed and sustained by sheer force. This is one of the dramatic and tragic lessons of the breakdown of peace in many parts of the world today. We must, therefore, establish an order in which we freely choose the way of peace, freely do what needs doing for its attainment.

Military operations and armed insurgencies cannot establish such an order. This is why we are led to reflect at this moment on the ongoing efforts for peace in our land.

Today's Peace Efforts

In the first three months of this year, a national consultation was conducted by the National Unification Commission. The *haves* and the *have-nots*, professionals and the basic sectors, people of various ideologies ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right all had their say. Unprecedented in its coverage the consultations resulted in the drawing up of a truly *people's agenda* for peace. And their voices resounded as one, naming the root causes of unpeace such as poverty and economic oppression, unequal power and its abuse — all traceable to a fundamental lack of truth and justice, the lack of freedom and charity.

One and all they expressed a strong desire and will for peace. We support and shall foster such desire and will. We welcome new initiatives and developments at peace-making resulting from the popular consultation. We pray that the holding of talks between dissident groups and the government be pursued to a just and peaceful conclusion. •

We shall, by the means available to us, help sustain a climate of dialogue. We would only ask that solutions agreed on be not purely political *quid pro quo* compromises but always geared to the real good of the people — what makes for their peace, their development, the improvement of their living conditions. Let the people be the “third party” to the talks, whether they are bodily present or not. They must not be left out.

Social Pacts

From the experience of the recent past we have learned how futile it is to create peace without people's participation. This is why Pope John Paul II, referring specifically to the Philippines (cf. Letter of Pope John Paul II on the eve of his birthday, 1991, to the Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See), suggested “a new forum of solidarity”:

It is surely not beyond possibility that in many countries — including the Philippines — there might be established a new forum of solidarity, a social pact as it were, between those responsible for public life, those who control the economy, those engaged in education and scientific and technological development, and other forces within society; a pact in which all would agree to work for improved conditions, but in a way that would benefit even greater numbers of their fellow-citizens by educating them for increased participation in economic and civic life.

The actual social pact arrived at in recent months has specified the Pope's suggestion regarding “other forces of society”: Not just government and business and the more affluent private sectors are to be brought into the pact but the basic sectors themselves as well, labor, urban poor, peasants, fisherfolk, tribal communities, such of our people as suffer from inequities of our social order.

The pact looks ultimately to the re-structuring of our political-economic system, more immediately to the redressing of wrongs and the honoring of rights. All this by actual *doing*, but concerted action.

We encourage and will help promote the forging of similar pacts at all levels of society: not only at the national, but also at the regional, the provincial, the municipal, all the way down to the *barangay*.

A new forum of solidarity, people coming together to bring about a new social order — it is from such a process that peace will flourish forth. This is why Pope John Paul II is supremely confident that peace is the fruit of solidarity (cf. SRS, 39).

Christ our Peace

No human effort, no matter how brave, sincere and well thought of, can alone achieve the peace we desire. The making of peace is a journey that must be made with Christ. "Christ is our peace... that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace" (*Ep* 2:14-15). This is the reason that peace making initiatives cannot do without prayer to the Lord, who himself builds the house of peace. We, therefore, commend and continue to encourage the many groups of the faithful who have organized themselves to pray for peace. We ask that at the parish level such groups be also organized.

But even more, we remind the whole Church to be closely united to Christ — "you will have peace by being united to me" (*Jn* 16:33). Separated from him, our efforts will be puny and futile.

United with one another, united with Christ. Such is true people power, inspired and infused by faith. Once in our recent history seven years ago at EDSA, in a manner that astounded the world we demonstrated what people in solidarity can do.

Today it is a challenge that is thrown at us once again: by our faith to our faith. May we all rise to this challenge and be equal to it.

May God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, give us
grace, mercy, and peace; may they be ours in truth and love (2 *Jn* 1:3).

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines:

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

12 July 1993
Tagaytay City

Save the Family and Live

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

A PASTORAL LETTER ON THE FAMILY

To our dear Catholic Families:

Introduction

The United Nations has declared 1994 as the International Year of the Family. We welcome the event. It provides us with an occasion to focus on the Family, to heighten our awareness of its importance for society and the Church, and to clarify the identity of marriage and the family.

Identity

In concept, we may have no hesitation about identifying marriage or the family. It is a stable union between man and woman in view of children. But current practices, particularly among the young, have challenged one or another of those elements. And the United Nations has declared its openness to give recognition to a diversity of forms of "family."

We can thank God that our people as a whole can still discern the *truth* about family from deviations. But a growing minority is already challenging this truth by the lifestyles they flaunt.

Let us join the Holy Father in welcoming the year with high hopes. This year will be a year of grace for our families: one year in an ongoing process of renewal for our families. And we start by listening first to what *God's Revelation* tells us about the family, and then what *Nature* says.

What Revelation Says

Human love is caught by divine love. That earthly reality of the mutual love between spouses is turned into a sacrament. So that espousal love is now moved by God's Covenant with his people, of Christ with his Church. In the family there is created a true Church in microcosm. Theologically, it is the family that is the basic ecclesial community. It is the Sacrament of the Covenant that has made of the family a true Church. The children are holy because they are children of the covenant. This is the first Church for every Christian.

It is here where the first steps in faith-life are taken, where all journey together in their pilgrimage. Is it by chance that significant religious affairs touching individuals — such as Baptism, First Communion and Weddings are also celebrated as family events? Or that major statues of Saints, of Our Lady and of Our Lord, used in parish processions are owned by private families? Or that some holy image in a home can create a center of devotion? And this is what revelation says of the Christian family: it is the first Church of every Christian, where he/she should experience what it is to be Church.

What Nature Says

Nature tells us that it must exercise some control over creatures if they are to survive and to propagate. And the lower the level of the creature, the more absolute nature's control. The young fish, soon after their birth, are left on their own, completely guided by instinct for their survival and nurturance. On a higher scale, young birds must be cared for and protected by their parents until they can fend for themselves. But even with birds, instinct still regulates.

Among humans, instinct merely initiates the relations between offspring and parents. Thereafter, there develops a freedom of choice in the action and reaction between offspring and parents. There are

sites that nature has chosen for the different events in the nurturance and maturation of new human life — from womb to breast to family to society. We do not yet fully know the ultimate penalty for disturbing this process. It has been said that God forgives, but Nature never! But the most crucial in the development of a person is the development of his/her affectivity. The behavioral sciences tell us this. One of the primary educative tasks of parents is the development of the affectivity in the child.

It is in the context of their affective formation that we, your Pastors, are to reflect on family-related disorders in our society. Child abuse or spouse abuse — would they not have been facilitated by a training in competitiveness, conquest, aggressiveness, toughness but also dependency? Those wanting in compassion: have they ever been tender or caring in their growing years? Formation in the earlier years can be crucial because once an adult, once can put on the face of compassion while harboring aggression in the heart. As a rule, in the education of the affective, the family can not be substituted for. But for the proper education of the child in affectivity, he/she will need to see adults who are caring and tender, while yet firm and uncompromising in the values they hold. And where might he/she find such adults if not in the family that nature had given him/her? This is what nature says of his/her family.

As the little Church is, so is the larger

It is then in the Church of the home where young Christians are formed to take their place later as adult Christians in the larger Church. To take their part in the rites of worship for which they were prepared by the life of worship in the home; to share in the social concerns of the larger Church, for which they were prepared by the active concerns of the Church in the home; to be involved in works of charity as was the lifestyle in the Church of the home.

Furthermore, what the model of the Church of the home is, will have its influence in shaping the larger Church. Was the Church of the home an institution? Or largely a prophet? Or a community where life and love held the primacy? This will tell on the contribution he/she will make towards the shape that e.g. the parish will eventually

take. The key to renewal in the Church is the renewal that takes place in the Church of the home.

There are two realities upon which the family is based: Love and Life. These two are intimately linked because lovemaking must always be open to the transmission of life. The most persistent attacks of evil today are on these two, because it is there where the image of God is to be found.

Life

A subtle attack on human life is the erosion of esteem for it under the guise of good. Thus to limit your children to two — for what end? To increase the quality of life. It is intriguing how much acceptance that has found. For today that standard of only two children per family has been accepted worldwide, irrespective of conditions of life, in poverty-stricken as well as affluent societies. What is replacing esteem for young human life is the appeal of the good life.

As against this calculation in how much love to expend, we must praise and give public recognition to parents even among the poor who manage to raise a large family responsibly. And we are heartened to see this good news proclaimed by not a few. The mothers are no less fulfilled as mothers.

This is not necessarily to deny material assistance to the poor. *But their stance is that of a beggar before Divine Providence.* This is the stance of the Church of the poor. And here we are affirmed by the witness of many couples. While thinking themselves poor, they actually possess the greatest gift one can have: to be able to love unselfishly.

Another indication that our people love children for their own sake is the readiness of couples to adopt the homeless or abandoned. Yes, even those with straitened incomes. And this despite the children they already have of their own.

We do not subscribe to the view that couples raise many children to serve as income supplementors. And that once their economic

situation improves, these couples will automatically opt for smaller families. Watching children about their chore in a playful mood, e.g. fetching water for the family, we can say that they do not feel they are merely being used by their parents. And fathers give testimonial to their love for children by the attention they themselves give to the children when in public with their wives, and in the care of family resources needed for the proper upbringing of children.

Love

We invite you first to reflect on conjugal love. The mutual love of husband and wife is both an institution and a mandate from the Creator for the increase of his family on earth. Marital love is sacred in its origin and destination.

Then reflect too on the quality of love that a woman gives to family. The womb qualifies a woman's quality to love. Although many women work merely to supplement family income, in urban areas at least, there is a trend for work — or career — to exert such an appeal as to begin to alienate women from their womb. We believe that many of our women are still oriented towards motherhood. But there is a drive — a sterilization drive — that will eventually wear away the esteem and appeal of maternity. This drive is being pushed even in the rural areas. How will this affect the quality of love of the women of our future families?

A Renewed Church

PCP-II invites us to renewal in our Church. It is calling us to join in that springtime in the universal Church that the 3rd Millennium will usher. This is the intuition and prayer of the Holy Father. Joyfully, we make that our own.

On what will the hope for renewal rest? On the growing awareness by the family of its nature: by God's design to be the Church in microcosm, that like the Church, itself Evangelizer. And so, the Holy Father points, evangelizing the family is at the heart of evangelization. "Evangelization, in fact, necessarily passes through the family." The family itself proclaims the gospel. And what in the

gospel does it specifically proclaim? It proclaims the very core of the entire gospel: that *God is Love*.

We can more readily accept his prediction that "as we look on the now imminent 3rd Millennium, the evangelization of families in the dioceses will intensify." This is what we now see happening.

Now God will no longer be thought of as only found in "sacred places, such as the chapels and churches. He will now also be found closer to all persons meaningfully in the Churches of the homes, in the families, and in the daily realities of their lives. And wherever, too, they extend themselves — their workplaces, markets, etc. There will no longer be purely secular realities. All earthly realities will have a religious meaning, and offer opportunities for experiencing of the sovereignty of God's love.

To find God in all things — his presence and his workings. To experience his covenant with his people in the day-to-day life. That is the gospel which the Church of the home is called upon to proclaim. It is the entirety of the Church in the entirety of Life that is being opened to the invasion of the Holy Spirit. Yes, let us proclaim the family this coming year, and thereafter!

A Cause for Alarm

We wish to register our strong and unqualified objection to actions of the government and its instrumentalities which (despite any contrary intentions) work towards the destruction of the Filipino family.

A blatant promotion of direct contraception and direct sterilization which separate the two aspects of the conjugal act — the expression of love and openness to the transmission of life — is contrary to the will of God. Already the evils spawned by these practices have been abundantly demonstrated by the experience of many nations where contraception has met with common acceptance. The acceptance of abortion, the breakdown of families, the encouragement of pre-marital sex, the increased incidence of sexually transmitted diseases are only some of the evil consequences.

We especially object to the promotion of contraception as an abrasive act of insensitivity to the sentiments of the majority Church whose ethical principles prohibit such practices. This manifestation of insensitivity comes at a time when the President of the Republic is asking us to unite and work together for our countrymen's welfare.

This insensitivity is compounded with injustice when the promotion of contraception is accompanied by undue pressure on health care workers to do acts which their conscience tells them are wrong.

We ask our people — pastors, religious and lay people alike — to stand up in a united way for the teachings of the Church on contraception, sterilization and abortion, and to refuse to promote contraception and sterilization and abortion should they be ordered to do so by their superiors. There are times when we must bear witness to Christ and dare to say, "We must obey God rather than men." (Ac 5:29). The government itself has said that it will not order health workers to perform acts violative of their consciences and that those who refuse to perform such actions will not in any way be punished. We ask Catholic health workers to report to us, the bishops, violations of this standing government policy.

Structuring the Apostolate

"Evangelizing the family is what we have at heart," confesses the Holy Father. And he insists on the central position that should be given the family apostolate in planning the activities of dioceses and episcopal conferences. And he adds, "No plan for organized pastoral work, at any level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family." And again, "the family should therefore, be at the center of the concerns of every diocesan community, of every parish and apostolic organization."

But importantly there must be the integration of all family-related activities into the one vision and orientation of the Diocese. "In the Dioceses then, it would be important to establish some efficient coordinating agencies... under the active and supportive intervention of the Bishops..."

We applaud many associations that are promoting family and child welfare.

The International Year of the Family

"The primary task then is to form the family so as to enable it to be... evangelizer," aspires the Holy Father. For our families to grow into the Churches that God wants them to be. To awaken them to the gifts they have been endowed with — of prophet: to proclaim the gospel of love — of servant: to witness to service of neighbor — of priest: to sanctify their world through the sacrament of their covenant — to establish the sovereignty of love over all that they touch. This year will be a year of grace for God's people in the Philippines. And this hope will rest on you, our families.

Let us on this occasion, entrust our inspirations and activities to the Holy Family for their blessing and guidance.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference
of the Philippines:

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

July 13, 1993
Tagaytay City

Interpret Law in Light of Tradition

John Paul II

Your Excellency the Dean,
Most Reverend Auditors,
Officials and Advocates of the Roman Rota,

1. I offer my respectful and cordial greetings to all. I thank His Excellency the Dean for the noble words he addressed to me in the name of the College of Prelate Auditors and of the whole Tribunal of the Roman Rota, and I congratulate him for the generous service he has given over many years marked by diligent and faithful devotion.

I am very pleased at the beginning of each judicial year to meet with those who do praiseworthy work in this Apostolic Tribunal. Indeed, as His Excellency the Dean pointed out, there is an important relationship between this Chair of Peter and the serious office entrusted to it of judging in the name and with the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

Like my venerable predecessors, I am happy to take this opportunity year after year to bring to your attention, and through

*Address of the Holy Father to the Roman Rota in the annual meeting which took place on January 29, 1993. The Pope met the Auditors privately in the library of the Apostolic Palace, and then they joined the officials and advocates in the *Sala de Concistoro*, where the Pope was greeted formally by the Dean, Archbishop Ernest Maria Fiore.

you to all those, in the Church who work in the specific area of administering justice, what my apostolic concern suggests to me.

2. With the recent prayer meeting in Assisi still resounding, a meeting attended by many brethren of the Churches and Christian Communities of Europe, as well as by other believers sincerely involved in the cause of peace, I cannot but emphasize that the principal fruit of your work too must always be to strengthen and restore peace in ecclesial society.

Law is the means, justice the end

The reason for this is not only, as the Angelic Doctor says following St. Augustine, that "all things desire peace," for indeed "it follows of necessity that whoever desires anything desires peace, in so far as he who desires anything, desires to attain, with tranquility and without hindrance, to that which he desires: and this is what is meant by peace, which Augustine defines as the tranquility of order" (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-IIae, q. 29, a. 2), but also because law, justice and peace relate to one another, form one whole and are mutually complementary.

The distinguished jurist, Francesco Carnelutti, wrote in this regard: "Law and justice are not the same thing. They are related as a means to an end; law is the means, justice the end... However, what is this end? People above all need to live in peace. Justice is the condition for peace... People reach this state of mind when there is order in and around them. Justice is conformity to the order of the universe. Law is just when it really serves to put order into society" (F. Carnelutti, *Come nasce il diritto*, 1954, p. 53).

3. These reflections are sufficient to prevent any yielding to inappropriate forms of an anti-juridical mentality. Law in the Church, as well as in States, is a guarantee of peace and a tool for preserving unity, although not in the sense of opposition to progress: Legislative activity and the work of jurisprudence actually help to ensure a necessary updating and to allow for a unified response to changing circumstances and evolving situations.

It is with this intent (which transcends the Church's external aspect in order to reach the innermost dimension of her supernatural life) that canonical laws are enacted: thus, in particular, the *Pio-Benedictine Code* was promulgated in 1917 for the Latin Church, and followed by the 1983 Code, prepared with lengthy, laborious study, in which the Episcopates of the entire world, the Catholic universities, the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and many teachers of canon law had a hand. In this regard I also had the joy in 1990 of finally promulgating the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*.

Nevertheless, the supreme goal of this legislative effort would ultimately have been in vain not only if the canons were not observed ("... by their very nature canonical laws are to be observed," I wrote in the Constitution promulgating the Latin Code), but also, and with no less serious consequences, if their interpretation and, hence, their application, were left to the arbitrary will of individuals or of those who have been entrusted with the task of seeing that they are observed.

Rotal jurisprudence meant to assist lower tribunals

4. We should not be surprised by the fact that sometimes, due to imperfections connatural to human efforts, the text of the law may give rise and in fact does give rise, particularly when a Code first goes into force, to problems of interpretation. The Legislator himself foresaw this possibility and consequently laid down precise norms of interpretation, even going so far as to anticipate situations taking the form of *legis lacunae* (can. 19) and to indicate the appropriate criteria to supply for them.

In order to avoid arbitrary interpretations of the Code's text, I followed the similar provisions of my predecessors, and on 2 January 1984 with the *Motu Proprio Recognitio Iuris Canonici Codice*, I established the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code, which I then changed with the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* to the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, and broadened its area of competence.

It is certain, however, that quite often situations arise in which the interpretation and application of canon law is entrusted to those

who exercise executive and/or legislative power in the Church. The office entrusted to tribunals is situated within this framework of the Church's legal system (cf. can. 16, § 3) and, in a particular way and for a specific purpose, it is entrusted to the Roman Rota, inasmuch as the latter "is concerned for the unity of jurisprudence and, by its own sentences, assists the lower tribunals" (Apost. Const. *Pastor Bonus*, n. 126).

5. In this regard it seems appropriate here to recall *some hermeneutical principles*; when they are disregarded, canon law disintegrates and ceases to be such, with dangerous results for the Church's life, for the good of souls, and particularly, for the inviolability of the sacraments instituted by Christ.

If ecclesiastical laws are to be understood first of all "in accord with the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context," it would, as a result, be totally arbitrary, even patently illegitimate and gravely culpable, to attribute to the words used by the Legislator, not their "proper" meaning, but one suggested by disciplines different from the canonical one.

Moreover, in interpreting the Code currently in force one cannot hypothesize about a break with the past, as if in 1983 there had been a leap into a totally new reality. In fact, the Legislator positively recognizes and unambiguously asserts the continuity of canonical tradition, particularly where his canons refer to the old law (cf. can. 6, § 2).

Certainly, many innovations were introduced into the present code. However, it is one thing to note that innovations were made regarding a number of canonical institutes, and another to try to attribute unusual meanings to the language in which the canons are formulated. In truth, the constant concern of the interpreter and of anyone applying canon law must be to understand the words used by the Legislator in accord with the meaning that long-standing tradition attributes to them in the Church's juridical system, using well-established doctrine and jurisprudence. Each term, then, must be considered in the text and context of the norm, in a vision of canonical legislation which allows for its uniform evaluation.

6. Specifically in matrimonial matters, the attempt at a none-too-well defined "humanization" of canon law must not depart from these principles that have also been sanctioned, as we have seen, by the same positive norm. With this line of reasoning, in fact, there is frequently an intention to endorse its excessive relativization, as if to impose, in order to safeguard alleged human needs, an interpretation and application of the law that thus ultimately distort its characteristic features.

Do not subject canon law to capricious interpretation

Correlating the majesty of canon law with those to whom it is directed is certainly not to be omitted or underestimated, as I recalled in last year's Address: however, this entails the need for a proper knowledge of the Church's legislation, but without forgetting, in the light of a correct Christian anthropology, the reality of "man" for whom it is intended. Subjecting canon law to caprice or inventive interpretations, in the name of an ambiguous and indefinite "humanitarian principle," would mean destroying the very dignity of man, even before the norm.

7. Thus, to give an example, it would could cause serious harm to the stability of marriage and so to its sacred nature, if the fact of simulation was not formulated concretely on the part of the alleged simulator in a "positive act of the will" (cf. can. 1101, § 2); of it the so-called *error iuris* regarding an essential property of marriage or its sacramental dignity did not acquire such intensity to condition the act of will, thus causing the consent to be null (cf. can. 1099).

However, in the matter of *error facti* too, specifically when it is a question of *error in persona* (cf. can. 1097, § 1), one may not attribute to the terms used by the Legislator a meaning alien to canonical tradition; even as *error in qualitate personae*, it can impugn the consent only when a quality, neither frivolous nor trivial, was "directly and principally intended" (cf. can. 1097, § 2), that is, as Rotal jurisprudence has effectively asserted, "*quando qualitas prae persona intendatur.*"

This is what I wanted to call to your attention today, dear auditors, officials and advocates of the Roman Rota, in the certainty

of this tribunal's constant fidelity to what is demanded by the seriousness and the authentic study of canon law, in the specific area proper to it.

In extending my cordial best wishes for tranquil and productive work, I impart to you all, as a sign of sincere esteem and as a pledge of God's constant assistance, the favor of my Apostolic Blessing.

consultative words

Cases and Inquiries

Excelso Garcia, O.P.

PRESUMPTION ON THE DEATH OF A MARRIED PERSON

Mario, a businessman, married Mercy, a school teacher. Both are Catholics. A few months after their wedding Mario went to the South on a business trip. He never came back. It seems that the jeepney used by Mario fell into the hands of left-wing insurgents in an ambush. This happened nine years ago. Mercy lost no time inquiring about the incident, but no concrete information was given to her, only rumors. According to the AFP's records a contingent of the armed forces had at that time and in that area an encounter with a strong group of insurgents seventeen of whom were killed with three or four civilians with them. No specification was given as to the identity of those who were killed.

A lawyer-friend of Mercy, has advised her to marry again, since she is still young and there seems to be no probability of Mario being still alive. She came to see me asking for advise. I told her that there is not much probability of Mario being still alive. Thus, she can decide to marry, if she wishes to do so. What would you suggest?

A Parish Priest

The process to be followed on presumed death, when one spouse disappears, is dealt with in canon 1707 of the new Codex. The

reason for this process is obvious. The spouse present cannot contract a new marriage until it has been proven that the previous marriage has already been dissolved by the death of the spouse who disappeared. Canon 1085, § 2 states that "it is not lawful to contract another marriage before the nullity or dissolution of the previous one has been established lawfully and with certainty." The need of the process arises only when the death cannot be proved by an authentic document, although other means can be used in order to ascertain the fact of the death.

Canon 1707 reads as follows: "§ 1. Whenever the spouse's death cannot be proved with an authentic ecclesiastical or civil document, the other spouse should not be considered as free from the marital bond, until after the diocesan Bishop has issued a declaration of the presumed death. •

"§ 2. The diocesan Bishop may issue the declaration mentioned in § 1 only when, the proper investigation having been done, moral certainty on the death of the spouse can be deduced from the testimonies of the witnesses, fame and conjectures. Prolonged absence of the spouse is not in itself sufficient.

"§ 3. In uncertain cases the Holy See should be consulted."

The presumption of death mentioned in canon 1707 is not a *praesumptio iuris*. It is not based on the prolonged absence of the spouse, no matter how lengthy it might be. It is rather a *praesumptio hominis*, fruit of logical way of reasoning, taking into account whatever reliable data are at hand as well as conjectures that might lead to some conclusion clarifying the uncertain fact of death. The conclusion reached by such logical discernment may be the *possibility*, or *probability* of the death of the person concerned, or even the *moral certainty* that his survival is highly improbable.

The *praesumptio hominis* is reached through the process indicated in canon 1707, § 2. Only the Church is competent to conduct this process, because the existence of a Christian marriage as well as the valid celebration of a second one to be celebrated by the spouse present are at stake. •

All Civil Codes contain some norms to determine the presumption of death, in order to allow the spouse present to marry again, if he/she wishes to do so and determine the consequent civil effects to both the presumed dissolution of the previous marriage and of the celebration of another wedding. The norms contained in the Civil Codes are mainly based on the length of the absence of the spouse who has disappeared and other circumstances to the disappearance itself. Such civil presumption of death is considered by the Church as insufficient with regards to Christian marriage, since it does not give moral certainty on the fact of death itself.

The pertinent norms on the matter contained in the *Family Code* of the Philippines are the following:

“Art. 41. A marriage contracted by any person during the subsistence of a previous marriage shall be null and void, unless before the celebration of the subsequent marriage, the prior spouse had been absent for four consecutive years and the spouse present had a well-founded belief that the absent spouse was already dead. In case of disappearance where there is danger of death under the circumstances set forth in the provisions of Article 391 of the Civil Code,¹ an absence of only two years shall be sufficient.

“For the purpose of contracting the subsequent marriage under the preceding paragraph, the spouse present must institute a summary proceeding as provided in this Code for the declaration of presumptive death of the absentee, without prejudice to the effect of reappearance of the absent spouse.

¹Article 391 of the Civil Code of the Philippines reads as follows: “The following shall be presumed dead for all purposes, including the division of the state among the heirs:

1. A person on board a vessel lost during a sea voyage, or an aeroplane which is missing, who has not been heard of for four years since the loss of the vessel or aeroplane.
2. A person in the armed forces who has taken part in war, and has been missing for four years;
3. A person who has been in danger of death under other circumstances and his existence has not been known for four years.

“Art. 42. The subsequent marriage referred to in the preceding Article shall be automatically terminated by the recording of the affidavit of reappearance of the absent spouse, unless there is a judgment annulling the previous marriage or declaring it *void ab initio*.

“A sworn statement of the fact and circumstances of reappearance shall be recorded in the civil registry of the residence of the parties to the subsequent marriage at the instance of any interested person, with due notice to the spouses of the subsequent marriage and without prejudice to the fact of reappearance being judicially determined in case such fact is disputed.”

It should be clearly borne in mind that the marriage between Mario and Mercy will not be dissolved by any possible subsequent marriage of Mercy alone. It will be dissolved only by death. In our case, therefore, their marriage will subsist as long as Mario is still alive. Mercy's sincere belief that he is dead is not sufficient ground to create moral certitude of Mario's death, unless her belief be based on real facts conducive to prove his death, as those mentioned in Article 391 of the Civil Code. The AFP's records give ground, to the belief that Mario might have been caught in the fight between the “military contingents and the strong group of insurgent rebels, resulting in the killing of seventeen insurgents and four civilians.” This event plus the fact of non-reappearance of Mario create, we think, moral certainty of his death.

Moral certainty of Mario's death does not, however, exclude by itself the possibility of his still being alive. Thus, in case of Mario's reappearance, any subsequent marriage of Mercy cannot be considered absolutely valid, but only to be a *putative* marriage, i.e. presumably valid as long as the good faith of Mercy about Mario's death can be sustained. Of course, Mercy's good faith could never coexist with Mario's reappearance.

The possible reappearance of Mario may bring about various problems both moral and temporal in case of a subsequent marriage of Mercy should take place. Temporal problems should be solved by the State's legislation; the moral ones fall under the Church's exclusive competence. Mario's marriage with Mercy still subsisting,

he is undoubtedly bound to notify his wife of his still being alive and of his whereabouts. His duty is to restore his marital life with Mercy.

The *Family Code of the Philippines* admits that in case of reappearance of the absent spouse "the subsequent marriage of the spouse present shall be automatically terminated," but some legal formalities are to be followed. What will happen if Mario, knowing that Mercy has married again during his absence, refuses to take any positive step to produce "the affidavit of his reappearance," by which the subsequent marriage contracted by Mercy would be automatically terminated? Mario's reappearance alone, on the other hand, makes Mercy's good faith, sustaining the subsequent marriage, untenable even before the civil legislation. Her Christian conscience will tell her she has no good faith, and that no second marriage can subsist.

Our answer, therefore, to the consultant Parish Priest is to advise Mercy to follow as a good Catholic the Church's norm: to bring the case before diocesan Bishop who will at once expedite in an administrative way what the *Family Code of the Philippines* requires for merely civil marriage. And her conscience will be at peace.

VALID BAPTISM ADMINISTERED IN NON-CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS CHURCHES

Romy, a Catholic, wants to marry Josephine, also a Catholic. During the previous investigation Josephine produces a baptismal certificate which shows that she was baptized by a Philippine Episcopal Church's minister. It appears that she was baptized in St. Luke's Hospital, where she was born. The certificate states that she was baptized in danger of death upon her own mother's request, because she was premature and might not survive. The baptismal certificate, quoting this information is signed by the parish priest of the place where her parents have always lived. In order to clarify the whole truth I called the parish priest who signed the certificate by phone and asked him whether he really signed it or not. He told me he had signed the baptismal certificate, giving the information recorded in the parish Book of Baptisms, nothing else.

May I ask: (1) Can I proceed to the celebration of the wedding of Romy and Josephine? (2) Is Josephine considered a Catholic having been baptized by an Episcopalian minister? (3) Do I to refer the case to the Curia, since her baptism was administered by a non-Catholic minister?

A Parish Priest

Three questions are raised by our parish priest consultant. We will try to answer them one by one to the best of our ability.

(1) *May the parish priest proceed to celebrate the wedding of Romy and Josephine?* The answer is yes. If during the previous investigation and publication of banns no diriment impediment has been discovered and they freely decide to go ahead with the wedding, the parish priest can proceed to celebrate the marriage. Our case is not among those mentioned in canon 1071 when the permission of the Ordinary is needed.

(2) The baptismal certificate produced by Josephine offers no problem. It merely proves that she has truly been baptized and that she is a Catholic, as was her mother who requested her immediate baptism. The fact that she was baptized by an Episcopalian minister, did not make her an Episcopalian too. Her mother requested her baptism, considering that she was premature and she might not survive. It was mere chance that the hospital chaplain was Episcopalian and baptized her. The intention of Josephine's mother, being Catholic was to make her daughter Catholic as she was, without the least intention of making her a member of the Episcopalian Church. Children of Catholic parents when baptized in danger of death are considered to be baptized in the Catholic Church no matter who is the person baptizing them.

(3) The parish priest can proceed to celebrate the wedding without referring the case to the Curia. Our consultant seems to be hesitant because baptism was administered by a non-Catholic minister. For his information and those who may have cases similar to this, we think it worthwhile to enumerate here the names of those religious denominations here in the Philippines which can administer baptism validly according to the Catholic Church's standards and have

entered into an agreement of mutual understanding on the validity of baptism. They are the following:

1. Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP);
2. Philippine Episcopal Church (PEC)
3. United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)
4. Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF)
5. United Methodist Church in the Philippines (UMCP)
6. Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC)
7. Presbyterian Church
8. Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Baptism administered by ministers of these Churches according to their Rites is to be considered valid. The Official Baptismal Certificate should be enough proof of its validity.

As for other Churches or religious groups in the Philippines, each case is to be examined individually. (Taken from Fr. Testera, O.P. *Canon Law Digest of the Philippines Catholic Church*, Manila, 1989, p.26.)

Philippine Episcopology: Addenda-Corrigenda, 1993

Charles Bransom

The following list updates and corrects entries in the *Philippine Episcopology* previously published in the *Boletin* and continues the *Episcopology* with the details of the episcopal ordinations of those bishops consecrated subsequent to the final installment and the 1991 Addenda-Corrigenda.

117. William Brasseur - consecrated on 24 August 1948 in Our Lady of Atonement Cathedral, Baguio City; died on 1 February 1993 in Baguio City.
142. Full name: Juan Nicolasora Nilmar - resigned as Bishop of Kalibo on 21 November 1992.
143. Arnulfo Arcilla - died on 25 October 1992.
153. Mariano Gaviola y Garces - born at Dansalan, now Marawi; resigned as Archbishop of Lipa on 30 December 1992.
163. Felix Zafra y Sanchez - resigned as Bishop of Tagbilaran on 21 April 1992.
165. Jose T. Sanchez - President of the Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of the Artistic and Historical Patrimony of the Church from 1 July 1991 to 4 May 1993.

172. Felix Perez Paz - died on 29 February 1992.
188. Concordio Maria Sarte - died on 21 November 1991, at Oxnard, California, U.S.A.
193. Jose C. Sorra - named Bishop of Legazpi on 1 March 1993.
195. Gaudencio B. Rosales - named Archbishop of Lipa on 30 December 1992.
206. Pedro Dean y Rosales - Apostolic Administrator of Calbayog until 10 February 1990.
218. George Eli Dion - resigned as Vicar Apostolic of Jolo on 11 October 1991.
212. Manuel C. Sobreviñas - named Bishop of Imus on 25 February 1993.
226. Gabriel Reyes y Villaruz - consecrated on 3 April 1981; named Bishop of Kalibo 21 November 1992.
230. Cesar Raval - resigned as Bishop of Bangued on 18 January 1992.
247. Ernesto Salgado y Antolin - named first Vicar Apostolic of Baguio on 6 July 1992.
251. Jesus Galang y Castro - named Bishop of Urdaneta on 7 December 1991.
254. Maximiano Cruz y Tuazon - named Apostolic Administrator of Calbayog on 10 February 1990.
255. Sebastian Dalis y Acol - became Auxiliary of the Vicariate of Baguio on 6 July 1992.
257. Alfredo Baquial y Banluta - died on 1 March 1993.

The following episcopal ordinations took place since the publication of the 1991 Addenda-Corrigenda:

265. 1992, 6 January, at Rome, Saint Peter's Basilica. Pope John Paul II, assisted by Msgr. Giovanni Battista Re, Titular Archbishop of Vescovio and by Msgr. Josef Uhac, Titular Archbishop of Tharros, consecrated: Msgr. *Benjamin de Jesus, O.M.I.*, Titular Bishop of Bladia, Vicar Apostolic of Jolo, born at Hulong, Malabon, Metro Manila) 25 July 1940; OMI 30 May 1960; professed perpetually 31 May 1964; priest at Cotabato 29 December 1967; named 11 October 1991.

266.-

267. 1992, 25 November, at Baguio City, Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral. Msgr. Gian Vincenzo Moreni, Titular Archbishop of Torre in Mauritania, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan, Archbishop of Tuguegarao, and by Msgr. Ernesto Salgado y Antolin, Titular Bishop of Buruni, consecrated: (1) Msgr. *Carlito Cenzon, C.I.C.M.*, Titular Bishop of Scebatiana, first Vicar Apostolic of Tabuk, born at Baguio City 25 January 1939; CICM 31 May 1959; professed perpetually 31 May 1962; priest 9 June 1965; named 6 July 1992.

consecrated: (2) Msgr. *Brigido Galasgas*, Titular Bishop of Leptiminus, first Vicar Apostolic of Bontoc-Lagawe, born at Bokod (Baguio) 15 September 1940; priest 28 December named 6 July 1992.

In Memoriam

Since the publication of the 1991 installment of addenda and corrigenda, two good and holy priests who were instrumental in the preparation of Philippine Episcopology have died.

On 28 March 1992, Father Isidore Perraud, C.S.Sp., a co-author of Philippine Episcopology, died in Saint-Nazaire, France at the age of 84. During the years of his priestly ministry, Fr. Perraud was a missionary in French-speaking Africa, Procurator of the French

Seminary in Rome, and editor of *l'Annuaire de l'Eglise Catholique*, a yearbook of the Church in Africa, from 1955 until his death.

As readers of the *Boletin* already know, Father Pablo Fernández, O.P., died on 1 June 1992. This holy priest and eminent ecclesiastical historian gave freely of his time to assist the authors of *Philippine Episcopology* to complete many entries in the work and it was he who suggested that it be published in the *Boletin*. Fr. Fernández meticulously proofread and footnoted the text, offered excellent suggestions on the presentation of the entries and additions to the text, and continued to provide documentation on changes in the hierarchy of the Philippines until shortly before his death.

May God reward these two faithful servants with eternal peace and happiness.

God's Word for tomorrow

Festal Homilies for September and October 1993

**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
September 5, 1993**

Readings: *Ez 33: 7-9*
Rm 13: 8-10
Mt 18: 15-20

Fraternal Correction: A Prophetical Task

The liturgy of today speaks about fraternal correction. "Win your brother over!" we are told in the gospel.

To say this in a colorful way, the First Reading uses a parable: In the defense system of Palestine there were watchmen posted on the hills, at regular distances, to warn people with a trumpet blast, if enemies would approach so that everybody could be on guard.

This parable is applied by Ezekiel to any prophet. Every prophet, he writes, has been appointed watchman over the house of Israel. He must warn the people; he must tell them if they do something wrong so that they can amend their ways. If people do not listen and die (a spiritual death) it is their own fault; the prophet has done his duty and is guiltless. But if the prophet does not warn people and they die (spiritual death) it is the prophet's fault; he is held responsible.

Is not this reasoning applicable to us today? Surely, it is.

Aren't we all prophets, after all? Is not our vocation, indeed the vocation of every Christian, to spread the good news of salvation, to proclaim it by becoming living witnesses of the faith we profess? This is what being prophets is about.

A Prophet is not a seer or someone who foretells the future nor is he a misfit in society, or in the Church, who enjoys protesting. Neither is a prophet the professional revolutionary who is always against the system; nor is a propensity for dramatic gestures sufficient to make one a prophet.

On the other hand, the true prophet is the person who is not after his/her own interests, but God's; the person who has the capacity to see and listen to the historic present (Christian sensitivity); the person who actualizes the Word of God since he/she is capable to read events from it; the person who, being not primarily a teacher of doctrine but an evangelizer, transforms human history into salvation history; the person committed to the cause of justice and peace who places himself/herself in the perspective of the poor, either when proclaiming salvation or denouncing injustice and sin. In short, the prophet is... any Christian. You and me.

Fraternal correction is, then, primarily an act of charity. Towards whom? Towards my neighbor. "And who is my neighbor?" The one who in any instance here and now is in need of my love and help is my neighbor. The parable of the good samaritan illustrates this point very well.

"Am I my brother's keeper," you may object. Yes, you are. Actually, we are responsible for one another. No exclusion; no room for indifference here. What seems clear in the case of parents toward their children, or superiors toward their subjects is also applied to other situations: a bishop for his diocese, a parish priest for his parishioners, a teacher for his students, an educator for his pupils, the officials of the government for their subjects. And to a certain degree we are responsible for those who, being not our subjects, are "just" our brothers and sisters.

Fraternal correction is also a matter of justice, since it pays the debt of love we owe the others. Besides, charity cannot exist without justice. It is here where love takes the form of prudence: in fraternal correction one must keep a certain order. Today's gospel is very meticulous about it: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone...But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church..." Correction is necessary, since any sin affects the Community. But, first, correction should be done privately so as not to cause shame unnecessarily (the purpose is to win the brother!).

You may have experienced that correction is an art; a challenging art, I must say. It requires a lot of courage and a great deal of love. Couldn't this be the reason why nowadays instead of practicing genuine fraternal correction, we often easily shift to petty reporting, anonymous denunciations and the like? Such procedures are severely proscribed in the Bible. We know the reason: they open the door to vicious, untrue charges for motives of rivalry, resentment or revenge, against which there is no defense. This is not for sure the best way to win the brother back! And certainly this is not the way indicated by today's gospel.

Finally, correction may be given also by one's exemplary life thus making it easier for the offender humbly to accept correction. Sinners that we are, we have the obligation to humbly accept the correction coming from our brothers. Not only because they are fulfilling a duty involving our own salvation, but also based on gratitude towards those who take the trouble to correct. The contrary would be a sign of pride.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity. It binds us together; it makes us one. As members of the same family we asked God's forgiveness at the beginning of this Mass for the selfishness, indifference and lack of concern for one another that at times invade us. While giving thanks to the Lord together, we renew our commitment to amend our ways and to help others to do the same.

Such is our mission as prophets.

JAVIER GONZALEZ, O.P.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
September 12, 1993

Readings: *Si 27:30-28:7*
Rm 14:7-9
Mt 18:1-35

*Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sinned against us*

The liturgy of the word of the 24th Sunday in ordinary time brings us to the a problem of reconciliation and atonement. Man as sinner feels that he is powerless to attain forgiveness for his sins. He prays to God, he begs from God forgiveness of his sins. But God first in the Old Testament and more clearly in the New Testament put as a condition that he too forgives his enemies.

It is easy for man to ask pardon from God. He can kneel down as a sign of repentance and promise God that he will not commit the same sin again. What is not so easy is for man to forgive those who have done something wrong against him. Often times we hear someone say: "I forgive him but I do not want to have anything to do with him again," which simply means that "no matter what he does or what may be the situation, I will always remember the wrong he did to me." Thus we may ask: Do we really forgive in this situation? What does forgiveness mean to us? Is there any relationship between forgiveness and forgetting? In human life and human relations there is the experience, the life situation, which is part of us and which we cannot put aside. The evaluation of this experience as good or bad in reference to us, is part of our experiential self, as well as that sense of revenge which moves us to overcome evil. Forgiveness is the counterpart of anger. Anger is the emotive response to something evil which is coming and apprehended as capable of rejecting us. When a person is hurt, or when someone does something wrong against another person, the natural reaction is, out of anger, reject the wrong which has been done. As long as the hurt remains, as long as hurt remains in the heart of man, anger is aroused wanting to destroy the source of that evil. Thus, for as long as there is pain there is no possibility of forgiveness. To forgive means to stop considering that

the person who has caused the pain is a source of evil. For this reason the first reading reminds us: "wrath and anger are hateful thing."

Why does man need to forgive his neighbor? Or why did God command us to forgive those who wrong us? It seems that God has put himself on the side of the sinner and the innocent man suffers double jeopardy in today's readings. He is injured, hurt, and then he has to extend his hand to the one who has offended him. He who is hurt, he who is injured needs healing and healing is not possible unless the wound is cured. Man's heart is not cured by vengeance, nor by hate. Man's heart is cured and made whole when the hurt is removed from it. The heart of man is made to love and revenge and hate are the opposite of love. It is in the act of love that man's heart is recreated, reoriented according to its original design.

Yet someone may say: "But this is unfair, the unjust man goes free because he is forgiven." Let us say that there are two aspects to be considered when an injustice is committed. The injustice itself, and the offense that the injured man suffers. In the first consideration the order of justice is broken and that order must be restored by those who have the commission to maintain justice. For this reason there is no possibility of forgiveness between the State and those who break the order of justice. When the State say that in line of reconciliation let us forgive those who have committed criminal acts, the State is defaulting in its primary duty to maintain justice and peace. To do so will not bring about forgiveness and reconciliation but condone injustices (notice that we say criminal act and not an act of political dissent).

But in the second consideration there are two acts: forgiveness on the part of the offended party, and repentance on the part of the offender. Thus forgiveness is between two persons: the one who commits the unjust act and the injured man. Forgiveness is the act of the offended party by which he overcomes the hurt, the injury, with an act of love by which he manifests himself as a true human being, as a true son of the living God. While repentance is the act of the offender who regrets the injury he has caused to the offended party. Reconciliation between two persons needs both forgiveness and repentance. But forgiveness and repentance can be achieved

independently. Thus, in today's liturgy of the word, we are asked to forgive no matter what attitude the offender maintains. It means to take the initiative and extend the hand to him who has injured you.

Why then does God give as condition for the forgiveness of our sins the forgiveness of those who sinned against us? What is the relation between God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of man? It is a requirement so that man may become whole again. The Church prays that "God will make us whole." And this will be accomplished as God forgives the sins of man and man in turn forgives his enemies. Both forgiveness, God's and man's, complement each other to heal man. Previously, we saw how man's forgiveness is needed to cure and heal the wound caused by the offense. The offended man cannot be healed unless he forgives. In God's forgiveness, man is the beneficiary. God who is the offended party does not suffer any diminution of his integrity, wholeness, glory. God remains the same, whether we are his friends or his enemies. But it is different for man. Man's life have no meaning and final complement except in God. If man is separated from God because of his sins, he needs to be cleansed from them. Does God forgive our sins if we are not willing to forgive our neighbor? The answer is no, because the forgiveness of God is not for God's cure or healing, but for man's. The forgiveness of sins by God is taken from the point of view of man who offended God. Man cannot be restored to the friendship of God unless he removes from him that which is opposed to the love of God. Thus man cannot be forgiven by God unless he repents, unless he shows willingness to fulfill the will of God and he cannot be made whole again unless he forgives. In man's reconciliation with God, two dimensions are to be integrated: man repents his sin committed against God and forgives his neighbor and in that way man acts like God. He who is unwilling to accept this doctrine of Christ will hear the angry words of the master: "You worthless wretch! I canceled your entire debt when you pleaded with me. Should you not have dealt mercifully with your fellow servant as I dealt with you?"

Thus as man prays the Lord's prayer he should pause after "give us today our daily bread..." and reflect in his actual disposition to forgive those who have offended him. If he is not willing to forgive his neighbor, he should not continue the Lord's prayer, otherwise he will

ask God to condemn him because he is not capable of forgiving his neighbor. His reflection should be a natural consequence of what he had prayed before: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And the will of God is for man to forgive his fellow men, thus we pray: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us."

MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 19, 1993

Readings: *Is* 55: 6-9
Ph 1: 20-24, 27
Mt 20: 1-16

Situation. While it is always easy and convenient to pretend to know God externally, to be able to internalize this knowledge is another story. It is common to come across apparently "good" Christians who go to Mass daily loaded with stacks of novenas and garlands of the most catching rosaries. But these same "good" Christians are paradoxically the worst homemakers, eternally at odds with their spouse, hard on the children, and harder still on the servants.

Or one comes across the "active" parishioner enrolled and active in all Church organizations, "friendly" with the pastor, and a constant help in all Church activities. But, surprisingly, the same "active" Christian is most sensitive and demanding, the source of irresponsible gossips, instigator of friction among the parishioners or these latter with the pastor, hard to please and actually, most often only a "rider" but never a doer.

One can go on forever, but the point that needs to be illustrated is the apparent ignorance of how to internalize what is expressed or exhibited on the outside. Many Christians somehow do not seem to know how to practice what they believe in — in short, there is no congruence between what is preached and what is done — what St. Paul means when he exhorted the Philippians that Christ should be

"exalted through me whether I live or die" (2nd Reading). Real life in Christ is totally missing since it is only living with Christ which is expressed *not only in living but also in dying with him where one really has "so much to give"* (2nd Reading).

We should rather learn to "conduct ourselves always in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ"...which means, "productive toil for me...", and hence, "to be with Christ for that is the far better thing" (2nd Reading).

Scriptures. The reading from Isaiah tells us how to straighten out our own confused spiritual life and go all out to God. We should "seek our Lord while he may be found," and "call him while he is near" (1st Reading). Seeking God means abandoning our old sinful ways for he tells us to forsake the way of the scoundrel and the thoughts of a wicked man. If we need help we should turn to him "who is generous and forgiving." If we sin, we should turn up to him for he is Lord of mercy (1st Reading).

In the parable in the gospel, St. Matthew presents to us a consoling picture of God's generosity which goes beyond strict justice — something beyond human understanding. Although divine attention is given to the chosen People at first, when they refused to cooperate, he turns his attention to the Gentiles, the late-comers.

How often do we experience similar situations. Opportunities present to us often, occasion for advancement, self-improvement or even material prosperity are offered to us, but we lose them due to indifference, ignorance or arrogance. At times, we do not perform our duties to the utmost. We work half-heartedly. We sway with the tune but do not really dance. We put on a pleasant face, but this is often but a mask which hides scorn underneath. We substitute sincerity with pretense, charity with philanthropy and genuine joy with contrived gaiety.

The Lord who is God to all and compassionate towards all who respond to his words, certainly will not bless such untrue ways. For the Lord is just in all his ways and holy in all his works. He promised to bless us everyday if we as servants listen when he speaks.

Resolution. Let us try to understand the way of the Lord and not pattern his thoughts and deed to our own ways: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways," says the Lord (1st Reading). For just as heaven is above the earth, so are the ways of God so high and his thoughts above our thoughts (Gospel).

Oftentimes we tempt God by trying to equate his message, his manner of acting — in fact, his very ways — to our human and imperfect manner of doing. The result that comes out, of course, is not what is expected. And so we complain, we are discouraged and blame God for our misfortune. But our Lord warns us: "I am free to do as I please...am I not?" (Gospel). He does no injustice to us.

If we want our relationship with God to be genuine and constant, we should re-arrange our internal attitude regarding his teachings. We should be true followers, true servants always listening, true disciples who do not shun to be last because "the last shall be first and the first shall be last," as he promised (Gospel).

God has laid down his precepts to be faithfully kept. Let us be firm in keeping his commandments (Communion antiphon).

As the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep, if we are faithful, the Lord will help us with his kindness and finally strengthened with the Eucharist, he will help us, likewise, put into action the saving mystery we celebrate (Prayer after communion).

JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 26, 1993

Readings: Ez 18: 25-28

Ph 2: 1-11

Mt 21: 28-32

Chance to be Forgiven for Everyone

Human Situation. A Tagalog proverb states:

*Magsisi ka man at huli
Walang mangyayari.*

In Bikol region this is translated:

*Magbasol ka man at huli,
Mayo na nin magyayari.*

In Maguindanao this is rendered:

*O sindet ka man sa mauli na,
Dala bon mangalula ning ka.*

All these are translated in English thus: Though you repent, if it is too late, nothing is gained.

This proverb seems to convey a sort of cultural pessimism. Repentance or "*pagsisi*" has its own timing. Outside the proper timing, repentance is of no use at all.

How would this proverb stand before the gospel of repentance? Is there a way of purifying and correcting the folkloric adage?

Gospel Message. The main message of the gospel reading for this Sunday centers on the possibility that sinners, i.e., the prostitutes and the tax collectors, outcasts of the Jewish society, can make their way "into the kingdom of God." Because they can repent. By their repentant spirit, they are made righteous and justified before the eyes of the forgiving God.

It is funny to realize that Jesus addresses this thought to the "chief priests" and "elders" of the Jewish community. He is telling them that what will bring them to the kingdom is not their status in the community but their willingness to do the will of the heavenly Father. Priests and elders who fail to follow the will of the Father will be far from the kingdom. On the other hand, sinners, like prostitutes and tax collectors, who repent, will be considered righteous before the eyes of God.

Jesus is demonstrating a kind of biblical optimism running through the books of the prophets. He who changes his heart will always be welcome. Yahweh, according to the constant preaching of the prophets, always welcomes his returning people. But his wrath hunts and hovers around the unrepentant heart.

The chance to be forgiven would seem to be the good lot of all. Moses was forgiven. David was forgiven. Peter was forgiven. Individuals who sometimes in their life offended God but who knew how to come back to their God could be forgiven too.

Indeed, everybody has the chance to return to God. The prostitutes, the thieves, the tax collectors were all welcomed by Jesus. This still true today as it was true then.

Christian Response. Anytime can be a good time to say sorry for one's sinfulness. Repentance can happen anytime. Nobody could be late in asking for the Father's forgiveness. Even if one did not ask for it twenty years ago, or ten years ago, or a year ago, or last month, or last week, or yesterday, he/she can still ask for it today.

The proverb that limits repentance (*pagsisi* or *magbasol*) to certain timing seems to be useless in the preaching of the unending love of the Father. Put before the gospel message, the folkloric adage appears deficient.

Many, if not all of us, faithful in the Church, have our own experience of the Father's forgiveness. It is a joyful experience. It is a situation when we experience deeply the mercy of God. And we can tell all in the world that the chance to be forgiven is for everyone.

VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 3, 1993

Readings: Is 5:1-7
Ph 4:6-9
Mt 21:33-43

The patriarchs of the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had been owners of sheep and goats, and they had pastured their flocks as semi-nomads at the periphery of the present Israel. Eventually, however, their descendants settled in the promised land. Once they had a land of their own, the Jewish people became farmers and vinegrowers.

The first reading from the prophet Isaiah speaks of the work which the vinegrower does in his vineyard. He digs and clears it of stones, he plants vines of high quality and completes the vineyard by building a watch-tower and by hewing a wine-press in the rock.

Having done all he could, what does the vinegrower expect if not that his vineyard will reward his labours by yielding an abundant harvest of sweet grapes?

God has given the earth to man, commissioning him to take care of it and make it productive. The earth is like a vineyard, and man is set over it as the vinedresser. We often read today that man has been a bad steward of the vineyard God has entrusted to him. We have exploited the riches of the earth indiscriminately, and have often damaged nature beyond repair.

God did not turn over his creation to man to reduce it to a wasteland. What judgment will be reserved for the despoilers of the work of God's hands?

In the Old Testament, the vineyard is often used as a figure for God's people. God has given his people all they need to produce fruit and build up a society that is just and upright. Instead, what does God find? Injustice, and the distress of the victims of injustice.

The Christians, we, are the new people of God. God gives us all that we need in order to build up a world that is humane, just and peaceful. Do we also disillusion God like the people of the Old Testament?

God is patient. In the Gospel, Jesus, too, speaks of a vineyard, a vineyard that has been rented out to tenants. When harvest time comes, the owner sends servants to claim his share, but the tenants

refuse to pay and maltreat, even kill, some of the owner's emissaries. Eventually, he sends his son, thinking that the tenants will not dare to touch the son. But, on the contrary, the tenants throw him out of the vineyard and kill him, thinking that having disposed of the heir, the vineyard will be theirs.

In his parable, Jesus refers to God's people. His Father is the owner of the vineyard, and the Jewish people are the tenants. The Father expects to obtain his share of a harvest of good deeds, but his messengers, the prophets, are turned away. Eventually, the Father sends his son, and Jesus foretells what will be done to him. He will be put to death outside the walls. In his parable, Jesus prophesies his own death outside the walls of Jerusalem.

In the second reading, St. Paul gives an idea of the "fruits" God expects from his people: things that are true, noble, pure, lovely and honorable, things that are good and praiseworthy.

The readings of today's Mass are an interpellation addressed to us as we are on the one hand the stewards of this earth, God's vineyard, and as we are, on the other hand, like the vineyard of Isaiah, ourselves the recipients of God's loving care, and therefore expected to yield the fruits of a God-fearing life.

What answer can we give? Are we taking care of God's earth as dutiful tenants and good stewards, or do we turn this beautiful land God has given us into a desert through indifference, neglect and raw greed?

Secondly, being ourselves the recipients of God's blessings, do we produce the fruit of good works by transforming this world into a realm of justice and peace, or do we allow it to become a moral wasteland in which people suffer at the hands of their inhuman fellowmen?

God has sent his Son. How do we receive him? Do we offer him the worship of a good life as a gift to the Father, or do we silence the Lord so that we may continue to be self-seeking and abusive as if this world were not God's gift to us and as if we ourselves were not the recipients of innumerable blessings?

The readings of today's Mass are an invitation to examine our consciences as individuals and as God's people. Do we live up to God's expectations, and do we honor him in his Son?

FREDERIK FERMIN, O.P.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 10, 1993

Readings: *Is 5: 6-10*
Phil 4: 1-14, 19-20
Mt 22: 1-14

The Wedding Feast

The wedding feast is a similitude, an image that is frequently used in the Bible to express the invitation of to His kingdom, to share with Him in the riches of His life. Thus, in the first reading, the prophet Isaiah presents the messianic times as a great banquet that the Lord of host offers to His people in mount Sion - On this mountain the Lord of host will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines. But the feast will not consist in food and wine alone, for in that day that the Lord will remove the reproach of His people, wipe away the tears of all faces and destroy death forever.

In the second reading, St. Paul assures the faithful of Philippi that God will supply their needs fully, that is, their material and spiritual needs in a way worthy of the magnificent riches in Christ Jesus. They who have been generous with St. Paul will experience the generosity of God.

The Gospel which contains the general theme of the wedding feast is composed of several parts. The first part of the parable is the invitation which the King extends to his guests. The second, is the treatment the King gives to those who refused to honor his invitation. And the third part is the guest without proper dress for the wedding. The gospel ends with the doctrinal conclusion: the invited are many, the elect are few.

There is a twofold application and interpretation of the parable of the Gospel: first is the call of God to man to be his follower, to be sharer in the Kingdom of God; and the second, is the invitation to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The first application refers to the history of salvation which presents God's calling of the Israelites who are his chosen people. The Israelites were called to be the first participants in the kingdom of God. In a very concise manner the parable reminds the listeners that they were the first to be invited to the wedding feast, yet they turned it down. And they not only did turn down the invitation; they scorned the King by maltreating his messengers and even killed some of them. Because of their action, the King "grew furious and sent his army to destroy those murderers and burn their city." Thus the Jewish nation was destroyed, the people were scattered all over the Roman Empire, and they were not allowed to enter the temple's precincts. They, who were the chosen ones, the first to share the messianic feast, rejected the invitation. In turn, God rejected them. God then called the Gentiles, the non-Israelites. This second invitation is universal and extends to all men. Everyone is invited, disregarding his social condition, occupational status, color or race. The calling is for all men.

The second application is with reference to the Holy Eucharist to which all Christians are invited to partake of. This is specially seen in the version of Luke. The wedding feast is the marriage of the Son of God with human nature. In the wedding feast, the Son of God is given as food to the invited guests. However, in spite of this invitation of love, many refuse to participate and share in the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Why do Christians not appreciate the Eucharist? As a pagan girl used to ask: If you Catholics believe that God is really present in the Holy Eucharist, why are there so few who receive him. and come to visit him in the Church? A good question indeed that each of us has to answer in the innermost recesses of our hearts.

But there is another point to consider. Yes, there might be many Christians who receive the Holy Eucharist, but how do they receive it? Are they properly prepared? Do they bring their wedding dress? The wedding dress for worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist is the state of grace, that is, being free from sin. We may include also

the other condition of right intention as being properly dressed. When a Christian receives the Holy Eucharist in the state of sin, he approaches the Eucharistic banquet without the wedding dress. There are some people who think that whenever they attend mass they must receive holy communion. That is the ideal, and for a true living Christian that should be the case. But there are instances that for one reason or another, a Christian commits a serious, or grievous sin. He may attend the mass but not have the proper wedding dress of sanctifying grace. It is not proper to approach the Holy Eucharist because of human motives or human respect. Man is invited by God to His banquet and only to please God should be the motivation for receiving the Holy Eucharist. It has been observed that often times, people receive holy communion in any kind of attire without the proper respect for God and the community.

In a community act in which the worship of God is the purpose of the gathering, a certain decorum should be observed both in behavior and in attire. When a Christian wishes to receive holy communion, he must be aware that he is invited by God to be His guest, that he must be properly disposed by his right intention, proper spiritual disposition, and dress accordingly. He who disregards to wear the wedding dress will be sent out "into the night to wail and grind his teeth."

MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME October 17, 1993

Readings: *Is 45:1,4-6*
 1 Th 1:1-5
 Mt 22:15-21

The reading of the holy Gospel gives us the impression that the Jews were plotting against Jesus. We are in the last weeks of the Lord's presence in this world. The Jews had decided to remove him from their midst. So they deliberated on how to catch him and hand him over to the Roman authorities.

The machinations were more serious than they appeared. The Pharisees sent as emissaries to Jesus some of their own disciples. These disciples must have been young students, experts in the Law, the *Torah*, but who had not yet received the official title of *Rabbi*. They could appear as more simple and candid people than the Pharisees themselves. In fact these young men were the spies of whom St. Luke speaks in the parallel passage of his gospel (*Lk* 20:20). Together with them they sent some Herodians. These were the supporters of the Herodian dynasty, and were in good relations with the ruling power, the Romans.

Strange partnership between the Pharisees and the Herodians: the Pharisees were declared enemies of the Romans, while the Herodians were supporters of Rome and rulers of the people. But their hatred of Jesus brought them together in a common effort to bring him to his doom.

Both the Pharisees and the Herodians come to Jesus affecting real piety, with a sincere effort to search for the truth. They simulated a deep love for the Jewish law and they highly praised the Lord. They said: "Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone because a man's rank means nothing to you..."

Great praise of the Lord, indeed. The sad point is that they did not believe it. It was a pure fiction. It was a deception. The Lord Jesus read their intention very well. He was not afraid of men's opinion indeed, because there and then he called them hypocrites. He discovered all their malice and rebuke them for trying to set a trap for him.

The question they put to him was this: "Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Very dangerous question. It was of an extreme gravity and could imply tragic consequences for the Lord. If he answered no, that is, that it was not permissible to pay taxes to Caesar, he could be accused, especially the Herodians, to the Roman authorities. He could be presented as a dissident, a dissenter, an enemy of the political powers. And Rome tended to be implacable for those who did not observe its imperial laws. The power of the Roman law weighed heavily on those who deviated from the prescribed

political way. Probably this was what the Herodians and the Pharisees expected him to say so that they could hand him over for trial.

If Christ answered yes, he could be accused of being an enemy of the Jewish people and of the Jewish religion. God, Yahweh, was the only ruler of Israel. To justify the tax for Rome was a denial of the supreme authority of Yahweh. The tax was supposed to be paid only to the representatives of God. To answer yes was a denial of the theocracy advocated by the Pharisees and the people of Israel. It was a time of strong nationalistic tendencies. The zealots exercised a powerful influence. Jesus could be pictured as an enemy of the nation and nationalistic expectations. It was a dilemma from which the Pharisees and the Herodians hoped Christ could not escape. He seemed to be doomed.

The Lord Jesus asked them to show him the money they paid the tax with. And they brought him a *denarius*, on which was found the head of the emperor, with an inscription which probably read like this: *Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, Augustus and Supreme Pontiff*. "Whose head and whose inscription is this?" Jesus asked. And they answered: "Caesar's." So the Lord said: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

The Lord's answer was totally unexpected and left his enemies disconcerted and speechless. An answer of great simplicity and filled with profound doctrine. Ever since it was said by the Lord it has been repeated by political scientists and philosophers and theologians of history.

If the *denarius* was the Roman coin with the head of the emperor and a Latin inscription, then in fact the Jews were under the Roman rule and had accepted their authority. If they were under Roman rule they had to pay the taxes the government imposed on the citizens. These citizens had to fulfill the duties required by the government. By the fact that they were under the Roman rule implied the duty to collaborate with the state for the common welfare. And the payment of the tax was precisely for the common good. Hence it was a duty for them.

The primitive Christian Church always interpreted this saying of the Lord as a clear obligation from the part of the Christians, and of all the citizens, to obey the duly constituted authorities. St. Peter, St. Paul, the Apostolic Fathers and Christian Apologists, all tended to emphasize the duty to obey the authorities. Precisely the Christians presented themselves as good citizens, loyal, faithful, even if they were persecuted, they prayed for the authorities. They considered themselves the pillars of the empire and of civilization. That sentence of the Lord is a clear recognition of the sovereignty of the Caesar, of Rome. Thus it was an obligation to pay the tax.

But if they had to pay to Caesar what belonged to Caesar, they had to give to God what belonged to God. the Lord now passes on to the duties to God. This precept of giving to God what belongs to God, encloses the previous one, and gives meaning to the duty to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. We have to give God what belongs to him not only at a moral personal level, but also at a collective national level. The duties to the political authorities are temporal. The duties to God are eternal and transcendental.

If the early Christian writers spoke of submission to constituted authorities they always took for granted this greater submission to God. We have to obey the authorities for the sake of God (*1 Pt 2:13; Rm 13:7*). No government can demand submission from its citizens against or above God. The two authorities are distinct but not absolutely independent, from each other. They are not contradictory. One can be a good citizen of the state and a good and obedient servant of God.

The social and political implications of this teaching of the Lord were large and lasting. Still today his teaching is valid. Valid and necessary. The Church does not accept tyrannical regimes, not theocratic governments. We are citizens of the state and citizens of God. Belonging to this city on earth and laboring now here on earth to find the way to the everlasting city. Giving to God his due within the submission to the civil powers. Free to denounce any government that goes against God and against man. Free to proclaim God as the only absolute in life and history.

Rome, in Jesus view, was fulfilling God's plan: But this was as a punishment for the people of Israel for their continuous disobedience. This is the reference also to the first reading, when Cyrus, the Persian King, is called the anointed of the Lord, to free the people of God from the oppression of the Babylonians, for the sake of Jacob. These bloody people had deported the Jews to Babylonia and submitted them to a heavy and oppressive yoke. Now Cyrus is called God's friend, for the sake of Israel.

LUCIO GUTIERREZ, O.P.

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
MISSION SUNDAY
October 24, 1993

Readings: Ex 22:20-26
1 Th 1:5-10
Mt 22:34-40

As the Father sent me so I send you....Go preach the gospel, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Once again the Church reminds us of the obligation that each Christian has to become an apostle, and evangelizer. However the words of Christ are compelling: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." It is not a simple wish, or a simple command. It is an imperative which arises from the mission of God the Father to his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who in turn transmits us that mission because we became sons of God sharers, in his life and in his mission.

What is the core of the mission of Christ? It is to proclaim the good news that the "salvation promised us is at hand," even that it has already taken place in the person of Jesus Christ. That Jesus is the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Savior of mankind. Jesus commanded his apostles to be witnesses of resurrection: "you will be my witness in Jerusalem, Judea, and in the whole world."

What does it mean to be a witness? To be a witness is to accept the truth, to live it, and to proclaim it. No man can be a witness of

something he does not know. The first condition for a witness is to possess the truth, to be convinced of the truth he or she is witnessing. To witness to the truth demands certainty of that truth, and certitude means the conviction that what one affirms is true without any doubt or suspicion that it can be false.

Truth which is intellectually accepted but not lived, is in reality not accepted. For truth to be fully accepted must permeate the whole being of the one who possesses it. One must accept it with all its consequences, and be ready to suffer the worst inconveniences that truth may bring him, even death. Why? Because truth is the greatest treasure of man who was created to know the truth, to love the good and to admire the beautiful. Thus the truth of the gospel must be lived before one can be a witness to it.

An accepted and lived truth must be proclaimed. If truth is the greatest good man can possess, then truth must be shared. It is a demand of goodness. Goodness communicates itself. It cannot remain in a selfish possession of its own self. Good is to be shared, to be communicated. Thus, once man accepts the revelation of Christ and lives his faith, he must become an apostle. He cannot keep the truth for himself. It has to be propagated, communicated, shared with others. A man who is not willing to witness for his faith, either does not value it, or does not live it to its last consequences.

Witnessing then takes two aspects: first, the proclamation of the truth by life itself and, second, the proclamation of the truth by word. When a man lives in consonance with his faith, he is a witness of the resurrection of Christ. But witnessing implies also and requires that the truth be proclaimed by word. There is hunger for God in the world. Peoples without realizing it are looking for God. But how are they going to encounter God if there are not witnesses, if there are no proclaimers. As Christians we must witness to the resurrection of Christ with our life but we must also proclaim it with our words.

A Christian must be a missionary. But to be a missionary does not only mean to leave your country and go to foreign lands as those who engaged in the first evangelization; you can be missionary in your own country, in your own province, in your own parish, in your own family by engaging in the second evangelization. What kind of missionary a Christian should be, depends on his vocation in life.

A Christian must share in both evangelizations. If he is not called to go to foreign lands, he is called to share and participate in the first evangelization with his life, his prayers, and his material support. His life as a Christian must be neighbor-oriented and his primary concern must be for those who are most in need. A person who does not know Jesus Christ, even if he has all other things, is the most destitute person, after all, "of what use is it for a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul?" Thus the love of God should impel us to help others to attain the salvation Jesus promises us.

We must pray not only for them but also for the missionaries that they may joyfully proclaim the gospel of the Lord. St. Therese of Lissieux did not leave France, not even her Carmelite Convent. And yet, because of her prayers and her sacrifices for the missionary efforts, she merited to become the second patron of Catholic Mission.

A Christian who is concerned with the effort of the Church, can share in the mission not only with his prayers but also with his financial support. It does not matter how much he can afford. What matters is the effort, the sacrifice, the conscience that he must cooperate with the Church in bringing "the other sheep to the flock of Christ." Oftentimes when money matters are discussed, or when the priest or bishop asks the faithful for their support, we feel uneasy, or even criticize them. But most of the times, this criticism is a cover up of our unwillingness to support the Church, to share with others the little things we have.

Today's gospel tells us that the first commandment is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind." That is, to give yourself to God totally and completely without any reservation, without any buts or conditions. Everything should be sacrificed for the sake of the love of God. God should be preferred to any thing else, even your life. But if you say you love God and you do not love your neighbor the truth is not in you. For the love of God should be manifested in the love of neighbor, which is the second commandment. Thus you cannot say you love God if you disengaged from the missionary effort of the Church. You cannot say you love God if you are not willing to cooperate in the missionary effort of the Church in your parish, with your financial support, with your prayers.

MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 31, 1993

Readings: *Mt 1:14 - 2:2, 8-10*
 1 Th 2:7-9, 1
 Mt 23:1-12

One of the things I've learned from my mother is to refrain from giving harsh criticisms. She would incessantly remind us about this and reprimand us promptly whenever we appear quite rude in our dealings with others. Since childhood, we were always taught to show kindness to everyone, to respect our elders, and to be quick to offer help to anybody who might be needing our assistance. Perhaps, these are not isolated family rules found only in my home. I believe, all of us, has received this sort of instruction from our parents even when we were still too young to understand them. In the heart of our homes we have learned the first lessons of life. No wonder, our parents succeeded in instilling in our nascent minds these rules because we see them do what exactly they were trying to teach us. They set examples of that very love which they want us to have.

This my dear friends is the message of today's readings — *teaching by example*. In the first reading the prophet Malachi expresses severe criticism against the people of his time. *"You have turned aside from the way, and have caused many to falter by your instruction...I therefore, have made you contemptible and base before all the people..."* In the second reading, St. Paul wrote that he wanted to share not only God's tidings to them but also his very life. *"You must recall, brothers, our efforts and our toil: how we worked day and night all the time we preached God's good tidings to you in order not to impose on you in any way..."*

In the gospel reading, our Lord vehemently criticizes the outward shows of the leading men of his time — the scribes and the pharisees. The Lord condemns them because their words do not cohere with their actions. *"...their words are bold but their deeds are few."* They loved to be called teachers but their teachings created a lot of confusions. Instead of easing the life of the simple people, they make it more difficult for them to live. They wanted to be called fathers, but *"they laid heavy burdens on others hard to carry."* And

what is more frustrating is that they do not lift a finger to carry the burdens themselves. Facing this kind of realities, our Lord tries to drive home a point — all forms of teaching must lead men to freedom, contentment and happiness, and not the other way around.

Our society is marked with a number of difficulties. A lot of our young people are discontented with their life. Many of them are lost, in the midst of their quest for meaning. It would be a great blessing indeed if they could find sincere people who would help them find their way through life. Young people need real and authentic witnesses of the gospel values. They need people who are true to their words.

Christ, the Lord, has laid down the basic principles of living. He showed us the way that leads. He gave us the whole truth about life. He desires that all of us should heed his word. He has entrusted us to his Father. Jesus asks us to trust our Father for he will never leave us. We've got a Father who helps us in our weakness, and gives us strength to carry out what he wanted from us. He is our Father who is so concerned with us.

All of us Christians are given the charge of re-evangelizing our society with the gospel truth; with our words and actions, and most importantly, with our lifestyle. Without a life of authentic witnessing, we will never be able to make change happen in our families and in our society. Our teaching must be the expression of our own commitment to Christ. All the efforts and energy we exert to transform other lives will be for naught, if we lack the foundation from our very way of life. *"If you want to pull a drowning man out of the water you have to have some support yourself"* Thomas Merton said.

My dear friends, the Holy Eucharist is the apex of all Christian worship and life. This sublime sacrament invites us all to offer ourselves to him who desires nothing but our total love. Our love for this sacrament, and for Jesus himself, should also make us real witnesses and authentic workers of love! Let us ask the Lord to grant us the grace and strength we need, so that we can live the kind of life Christ wanted from us.

May God bless us all.

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