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## **In this Issue**

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*Honorato Castigador, O.P.*

We are back to the family. After all we are still in the International Year of the Family and we here recall the thoughts of Pope John Paul II. As Cardinal Trujillo pointed out, the family is the sanctuary of life and it should be of primary concern for everyone. In the Philippine context, it is worthwhile going back to our roots, tracing the lost values of our Filipino family. Fr. Paguio offers us some insights into the past to help us understand our family roots.

But the family in our modern times is being exploited, by the family members themselves, especially in the political field. Family related programs are capitalized by politicians to gain their own personal ground and to enhance their self-serving political agenda. Since the battle is in the arena of politics, Christians should fight it out there to save the family values. Fr. Viray gives some suggestions on how would Catholics, especially the lay, work in the political field in consonance with the desires of PCP II. This will hopefully bring about the restoration and preservation of our Christian family values especially of justice, honesty, respect, love, etc. which assure harmony and peace in our society.

But aren't most of our present politicians Christians, family men and women? What do they do to uphold and promote our Filipino family values? Do they heed the teachings of the Church on the family, expressed especially by His Holiness Pope John Paul II? And what about us?

## Family creates peace of human family\*

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John Paul II

### MESSAGE FOR THE 1994 WORLD DAY OF PEACE

1. The world longs for peace and has a desperate need of peace. Yet wars, conflicts, increasing violence and situations of social unrest and endemic poverty continue to reap innocent victims and to cause divisions between individuals and peoples. *At times peace appears a truly unattainable goal!* In a climate made cold by indifference and occasionally poisoned by hatred, how can one hope for the dawn of an era of peace, which only feelings of solidarity and of love can usher in?

*We must not lose heart.* We know that, in spite of everything, peace is possible, because it is part of the original divine plan.

God wished humanity to live in harmony and peace, and laid the foundations for this in the very nature of the human being, created "in his image." The divine image develops not only in the individual but also in that *unique communion of persons* formed by a man and a woman so united in love that they become "one flesh" (*Gn* 2:24). It is written: "in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (*Gn* 1:27). This specific community of persons has been entrusted by the Lord with the mission of giving life and of nurturing it by the formation of a family. It thus makes a

\*[The role of the family was the focus of Pope John Paul II's Message for the 1994 World Day of Peace. Referring to the theme of this year's celebration, "the family creates the peace of the human family," the Pope called for "specific structures" for actively supporting families as he urged families themselves to "ask for [Christ's] peace, pray for the peace, work for this peace." Here is the English text of the Holy Father's Message for the 27th World Day of Peace. *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 51/52, 22/29 December 1993.]

decisive contribution to the work of stewardship over creation and provides for the very future of humanity.

The initial harmony was disrupted by sin, but *God's original plan continues*. The family therefore remains the foundation of society,<sup>1</sup> constituting, the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its "natural and fundamental nucleus."<sup>2</sup> The contribution which the family can offer to preserving and promoting peace is so important that I would like, on the occasion of the International Year of the Family, to devote this World Day of Peace Message to a reflection on the *close relationship between the family and peace*. I am confident that this Year will be a useful occasion for all who wish to contribute to the quest for true peace — Churches, Religious Organizations, Associations, Governments, International Agencies — to study together ways of helping the family to carry out fully its irreplaceable task as a builder of peace.

## **The family: a community of life and love**

2. The family, as the fundamental and essential educating community, is *the privileged means* for transmitting the religious and cultural values which help the person to acquire his or her own identity. Founded on love and open to the gift of life, *the family contains in itself the very future of society*, its most special task is to contribute effectively to a future of peace.

This it will achieve, in the first place, through the mutual love of married couples, called to full and complete communion of life by marriage in its natural meaning and even more, if they are Christians, by its having been raised to a sacrament, and then through the efforts of parents to carry out properly their task as educators, committed to training their children to respect the dignity of every person and the values of peace. These values, more than being "taught," must be *witnessed to* in a family setting which lives out that self-giving love which is capable of accepting those who are different,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Article 16, 3.

making their needs and demands its own, and allowing them to share in its own benefits. The domestic virtues, based upon a profound respect for human life and dignity, and practiced in understanding, patience, mutual encouragement and forgiveness, enable the community of the family to live out the first and fundamental experience of peace. Outside this context of affectionate relationships and of fruitful mutual solidarity, the human being “remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, ... if he does not experience it and make it his own.”<sup>3</sup> This love is not a fleeting emotion, but an intense and enduring moral force which seeks the good of others, even at the cost of self-sacrifice. Furthermore, true love always goes together with justice, so necessary for peace. It reaches out to those experiencing hardship: those who have no family, children who lack guidance and affection, the lonely and the outcast.

The family which lives this love, even though imperfectly, and opens itself generously to the rest of society, is *the primary agent of a future of peace*. A civilization of peace is not possible if love is lacking.

### **The family: victim of the lack of peace**

3. In contrast with its original vocation of peace, the family is sadly, and not infrequently, seen to be the scene of tension and oppression, or the defenseless victim of the many forms of violence marking society today.

Tensions are sometimes seen in relations within the family. These are often due to the difficulty of efforts to harmonize family life when work keeps spouses far from each other, or the lack or uncertainty of employment causes them to worry about survival and to be haunted by uncertainty about the future. There are also tensions deriving from patterns of behaviour inspired by hedonism and consumerism, which drive family members to seek personal gratification rather than a happy and fruitful life together. Frequent arguments between parents, the refusal to have children, and the

<sup>3</sup>Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, n 10.

abandonment and ill-treatment of minors are the sad symptoms that family peace is already seriously endangered; certainly it cannot be restored by the sad solution of a separation of the spouses, much less by recourse to divorce, a true "plague" of present day society.<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, in many parts of the world, whole nations are caught in the spiral of bloody conflicts, of which *families are often the first victims*: either they are deprived of the main if not the only breadwinner, or they are forced to abandon home, land and property and flee into the unknown; in any event they are subjected to painful misfortunes which threaten all security. How can we fail to recall, in this regard, the bloody conflict between ethnic groups which is still going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina? And this is only one case, amid so many situations of war throughout the world!

In the face of such distressing situations, society often appears incapable of offering effective help, or even culpably indifferent. The spiritual and psychological needs of those who have experienced the effects of armed conflict are as pressing and serious as their need for food or shelter. Specific structures need to be set up for *actively supporting* families affected by unexpected and devastating misfortunes, so that in spite of them they will not yield to the temptation to discouragement and revenge, but will react in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. How often, unfortunately, there is no sign of this!

4. Nor can one forget that war and violence not only constitute divisive forces which weaken and destroy family structures; they also exercise a pernicious influence on people's minds, suggesting and practically imposing *models of behaviour diametrically opposed to peace*. In this regard, one must deplore a very sad fact: these days unfortunately a growing number of boys and girls and even small children are playing a direct part in armed conflicts. They are forced to join armed *militias* and have to fight for causes they do not always understand. In other cases, they become involved in a real culture of violence in which life counts for very little and killing does not seem wrong. It is in the interests of the whole of society to ensure that these young people give up violence and take the path of peace, but this presupposes patient education given by people who sincerely believe in peace.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 47.

At this point I cannot fail to mention another serious obstacle to the development of peace in our society: *many, too many children are deprived of the warmth of a family*. Sometimes the family is absent: in fact, the parents, taken up by other interests, leave their children to their own devices. In other cases the family simply does not exist: thus there are thousands of children who have no home but the street and who can count on no resources except themselves. Some of these street children die tragically. Others are led into the use and even the sale of drugs and into prostitution, and not infrequently they end up in criminal organizations. Such scandalous and widespread situations cannot be ignored! The very future of society is at stake. A community which rejects children, or marginalizes them, or reduces them to hopeless situations, can never know peace.

In order to count on a peaceful future, every child needs to experience the warmth of caring and constant affection, not betrayal and exploitation. Although the State can do much by providing means and structures of support, the contribution of the family to ensuring that climate of security and trust cannot be replaced, so important is it in helping young children to look to the future with serenity, and in preparing them to take a responsible part in building a society of true progress when they grow up. *Children are the future already present among us*; they need to experience what peace means, so that they will be able to create a future of peace.

### **The family: an agent for peace**

5. An enduring peaceful order needs *institutions which express and consolidate the values of peace*. The institution which most immediately responds to the nature of the human being is *the family*. It alone ensures the continuity and the future of society. The family is therefore called to become an active agent for peace, through the values which it expresses and transmits within itself, and through the participation of each of its members in the life of society.

As the fundamental nucleus of society, *the family has a right to the full support of the State* in order to carry out fully its particular mission. State laws, therefore, must be directed to promoting its well being, helping it to fulfill its proper duties. In the face of increasing

pressure nowadays to consider, as legally equivalent to the union of spouses, forms of union which by their very nature or their intentional lack of permanence are in no way capable of expressing the meaning and ensuring the good of the family, it is the duty of the State to encourage and protect the authentic institution of the family, respecting its natural structure and its innate and inalienable rights.<sup>5</sup> Among these, the fundamental one is *the right of parents* to decide, freely and responsibly, on the basis of their moral and religious convictions and with a properly formed conscience, *when to have a child*, and then to educate that child in accordance with those convictions.

The State also has an important role in creating the conditions in which families can provide for their primary needs in a way befitting human dignity. Poverty, indeed destitution — a perennial threat to social stability, to the development of people and to peace — in our day affects too many families. It sometimes happens that, because of a lack of means, young couples put off having a family or are even prevented from having one, while needy families cannot participate fully in the life of society, or are forced into total emargination.

The duty of the State *does not, however, excuse individual citizens*: the real reply to the gravest questions in every society is in fact ensured by *the harmonious solidarity of everyone*. In effect, no one can be at ease until an adequate solution has been found to the problem of poverty, which strikes families and individuals. Poverty is always a threat to social stability, to economic development and ultimately therefore to peace. Peace will always be at risk so long as individuals and families are forced to fight for their very survival.

## The family at the service of peace

6. I would now like to speak directly to families, in particular to Christian families.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. in this regard the "Charter of the Rights of the Family presented by the Holy See to all Persons, Institutions and Authorities Interested in the Mission of the Family in Today's World" (22 October 1983).

"Families, become what you are!" I wrote in my Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*.<sup>6</sup> Become an "intimate sharing of married life and love,"<sup>7</sup> called to give love and to transmit life!

Families, you have a mission of prime importance: that of contributing to the construction of peace, indispensable for respect for human life and its development.<sup>8</sup> Knowing that peace is never secured once and for all,<sup>9</sup> you must never grow weary of seeking it! Jesus, through his death on the Cross, has left to humanity his peace, assuring us of his enduring presence."<sup>10</sup> Ask for this peace, pray for this peace, work for this peace!

To you *parents* falls the responsibility for forming and educating your children to be people of peace: for this purpose, you in the first place must be workers for peace.

You *children*, facing the future with the eagerness of youth, full of hopes and dreams, value the gift of the family, prepare for the responsibility of building it or promoting it according to the particular callings that God will give you in due course. Develop a desire for good and thoughts of peace.

You *grandparents*, who with the other family members represent unique and precious links between the generations, make a generous contribution of your experience and your witness in order to link the past to the future in a peaceful present.

Families, live out your mission in harmony and to the full!

Finally, how can we forget the many people who for various reasons feel that they have no family? To them I would like to say that there is a family for them too: *the Church is home and family for all*.<sup>11</sup> She opens wide her doors and welcomes in all who are alone or abandoned; in them she sees the especially beloved children of God, whatever their age, and whatever their aspirations, difficulties or hopes.

<sup>6</sup>N. 17.

<sup>7</sup>*Gaudium et spes*, n. 48.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2304.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 78.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. *Jn* 14:27; 20:19-21; *Mt* 28:20.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 85.

May the family so live in peace that from it peace may spread throughout the whole human family!

This is the prayer which, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church, I offer to him “from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (*Ep* 3:15), at the beginning of the International Year of the Family.

From the Vatican, 8 December 1993.

## **Television has immense power to strengthen or weaken family life\***

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*John Paul II*

### **MESSAGE FOR 28th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY**

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

In recent decades, television has spearheaded a communications revolution which has profoundly affected family life. Today television is a primary source of news, information and entertainment for countless families, shaping their attitudes and opinions, their values and patterns of behavior.

Television can enrich family life. It can draw family members closer together and foster their solidarity with other families and with the community at large. It can increase not only their general knowledge but also their religious knowledge, making it possible for them to hear God's word, to strengthen their religious identity, and to nurture their moral and spiritual life.

Television can also harm family life: by propagating degrading values and models of behavior, by broadcasting pornography and graphic depictions of brutal violence; by inculcating moral relativism and religious skepticism; by spreading distorted, manipulative accounts of news events and current issues; by carrying exploitative

\*This year's theme for the annual celebration of the 28th World Communications Day (15 May 1994) is "Television and the family, guidelines for good viewing." Here is the English text of the Pope's Message. *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 5, 2 February 1994.

advertising that appeals to base instincts, and by glorifying false visions of life that obstruct the realization of mutual respect, of justice and of peace.

Even when television programmes themselves are not morally objectionable, television can still have negative effects on the family. It can isolate family members in their private worlds, cutting them off from authentic interpersonal relations; it can also divide the family by alienating parents from children and children from parents.

Because the moral and spiritual renewal of the human family as a whole must be rooted in the authentic renewal of individual families, the theme for the 1994 World Communications Day — “Television and the Family: Guidelines for Good Viewing” — is especially timely, particularly during this International Year of the Family, when the world community is seeking ways to strengthen family life.

### **Parents should regulate amount of viewing**

In this message, I wish especially to highlight the responsibilities of parents, of the men and women of the television industry, of public authorities, and of those with pastoral and educational duties in the Church. In their hands lies the power to make television an ever more effective medium in helping families to fulfill their role as a force for moral and social renewal.

God has entrusted parents with the grave responsibility of helping their children “to seek the truth from their earliest years and to live in conformity with the truth, to seek the good and promote it” (*Message for the 1991 World Day of Peace*, n. 3). It is therefore their duty to lead their children to appreciate “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious” (*Ph* 4:8).

Thus, besides being discriminating television viewers themselves, parents should actively help to form in their children viewing habits conducive to sound development, human, moral and religious. Parents should inform themselves in advance about programme content and make a conscious choice on that basis for the good of the

family — to watch or not to watch. Reviews and evaluations provided by religious agencies and other responsible groups — together with sound media education programmes — can be helpful in this regard. Parents should also discuss television with their children, guiding them to regulate the amount and quality of their viewing, and to perceive and judge the ethical values underlying particular programmes, because the family is “the privileged means for transmitting the religious and cultural values which help the person to acquire his or her own identity” (*Message for the 1994 World Day of Peace*, n. 2).

Forming children’s viewing habits will sometimes mean simply turning off the television set: because there are better things to do, because consideration for other family members requires it, or because indiscriminate television viewing can be harmful. Parents who make regular, prolonged use of television as a kind of electronic baby-sitter surrender their role as the primary educators of their children. Such dependence on television can deprive family members of opportunities to interact with one another through conversation, shared activities and common prayer. Wise parents are also aware that even good programmes should be supplemented by other sources of news, entertainment, education and culture.

To guarantee that the television industry will safeguard the rights of the family, parents should express their legitimate concerns to media managers and producers. Sometimes they will find it useful to join with others in associations which represent their interests in relation to the media, to sponsors and advertisers, and to public authorities.

Television personnel — executives and managers, producers and directors, writers and researchers, journalists, on-camera performers and technical workers — all have serious moral responsibilities to the families that make up such a large part of their audience. In their professional and personal lives, those who work in television should be committed to the family as society’s basic community of life, love and solidarity. Recognizing the influence of the medium in which they work, they should promote sound moral and spiritual values, and avoid “anything that could harm the family in its existence, its stability, its balance and its happiness,” including “eroticism or violence, the defense of divorce or of anti-social attitudes

among young people" (Paul VI, *Message for the 1969 World Communications Day*, n. 2).

### TV industry should observe a code of ethics

Television is often required to deal with serious themes: with human weakness and sin, and their consequences for individuals and society; with the failings of social institutions, including government and religion; with weighty questions about the meaning of life. It should treat these subjects responsibly, without sensationalism and with a sincere concern for the good of society, as well as with scrupulous regard for the truth. "The truth shall make you free" (*Jn* 8:32), Jesus said, and ultimately all truth has its foundation in God, who is also the source of our freedom and creativity.

In fulfilling its public responsibilities, the television industry should develop and observe a code of ethics which includes a commitment to serving the needs of families and to promoting values supportive of family life. Media councils, with members from both the industry and the general public, are also a highly desirable way of making television more responsive to the needs and values of its audiences.

Whether television channels are under public or private management, they represent a public trust for the service of the common good; they are not the mere private preserve of commercial interests or an instrument of power or propaganda for social, economic or political elites; they exist to serve the well-being of society as a whole.

Thus, as the fundamental "cell" of society, the family deserves to be assisted and defended by appropriate measures of the State and other institutions (cf. *Message for the 1994 World Day of Peace*, n. 5). This points to certain responsibilities on the part of public authorities where television is concerned.

Recognizing the importance of a free exchange of ideas and information, the Church supports freedom of speech and of the press (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 59). At the same time, she insists that "the rights of individuals, families and society itself to privacy, public decency and the protection of basic values" demand to be respected

(Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Pornography and Violence in the Media: A Pastoral Response*, No. 21). Public authorities are invited to set and enforce reasonable ethical standards for programming which will foster the human and religious values on which family life is built, and will discourage whatever is harmful. They should also encourage dialogue between the television industry and the public, providing structures and forums to make this possible.

Church-related agencies, for their part, render an excellent service to families by offering them media education and film and programme evaluation. Where resources permit, Church communications agencies can also help families by producing and disseminating family-oriented programming, or by promoting such programming. Episcopal Conferences and Dioceses should consistently make the “family dimension” of television part of their pastoral planning for communications (cf. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Aetatis Novae*, nn. 21-23).

### **Television professionals can benefit from Church’s ministry**

Since television professionals are engaged in presenting a vision of life to a vast audience, which includes children and young people, they can profit from the pastoral ministry of the Church, which can help them to appreciate those ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human and family life. “Typically, pastoral programmes of this sort should include ongoing formation which will help these men and women — many of whom sincerely wish to know and to do what is ethically and morally right — to integrate moral norms ever more fully into their professional work as well as their private lives” (*ibid.*, n. 19).

The family, founded on marriage, is a unique communion of persons which God has made the “natural and fundamental group unit of society” (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, art. 16, 3). Television and the other communications media have immense power to sustain and strengthen such communion within the family, as well as solidarity with other families and a spirit of service to society. Grateful for the contribution to such communion within the

family and among families which television as a communications medium has made and can make, the Church — herself a communion in the truth and love of Jesus Christ, the Word of God — takes the occasion of World Communications Day 1994 to encourage families themselves, media personnel and public authorities to realize to the full their noble calling to strengthen and promote society's first and most vital community, the family.

From the Vatican, 24 January 1994.

## The family is sanctuary of life\*

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Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo

The International Year of the Family (IYF) and its implementation by the various countries reflects the healthy concern of the United Nations for everything pertaining to the family. At present it is less important to examine the reasons why this initiative met with difficulties, and why it relied mainly on the support of the developing countries. As is well known, it was received coolly and skeptically by the rich countries.

The theme chosen is "*The Family: Resources and Responsibilities in a Changing World*." It offers ample room for reflection. The Church welcomes this opportunity to mobilize all her forces in order to prepare adequately for 1994, the year chosen for this celebration, and to carry out a range of activities which will bear abundant fruit in the Church communities too, particularly for families, called to play a leading role in a very special way. Its noble mission as well as its potential and its difficulties are in some way at stake.

It has been possible to gain a clearer understanding of all the implications of the theme in the context of the coordinating group of the United Nations, based in Vienna. Some of its publications, particularly the one entitled *Building the Smallest Democracy in the Heart of Society*, a suggestive but veiled reference to the family, highlights a series of viewpoints of very differing value, which are arousing greater interest in the serious study of these problems. This is indeed an urgent task.

\*This address was given in Spanish during a conference at the University of Alcala de Henares Summer School in Almeria, Spain, on 16 July 1993. *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 35, 1 September 1993.

Since the UN's announcement, the Church has shown great interest in cooperating openly and positively in this initiative, in accordance, of course, with her own identity. Further, she welcomed it as her own, in line with the appeal made by the Holy Father on Sunday, 6 June [1993], in St. Peter's Square. The Pope announced that the Church is preparing to celebrate the International Year of the Family, which will begin on the feast of the Holy Family, 26 December 1993, and end on the same feast in 1994. The Holy Father has given the Pontifical Council for the Family charge (in the Holy See) of this celebration.

In this perspective, I intend to develop certain aspects of the issues that have major bearing on the family and on life in the family, which is the sanctuary of life.

It is necessary to encourage a full, open admission of the family's central and decisive mission in society and in the Church. All efforts to support and strengthen it should be combined with ever greater commitment, certain that future evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church (cf. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 65).

One should note that despite the many difficulties the family is undergoing, the energies it continues to release are remarkable; indeed, they are "formidable" (*ibid.*, n. 43). There are vigorous reactions and anything can be said except that the role of the family has been superseded, or that it is destined to disappear.

## 1. New problems for the family

In a simple discourse one cannot try to do more than touch on certain topics. I think it best that I limit myself to considering what is most relevant at the present time.

First, *the relationship between marriage and the family* is widely debated today and the natural institution of marriage and the very meaning of the family is called into question.

Marriage, and I should like to refer to it as a natural institution, is subjected to concerted attacks aimed at undermining its stability. There is a temptation to deny or downplay the need for permanent

stability and the consequent responsibilities incumbent on the family. Some claim that many societies are psychologically unprepared to demand a life-long union. The marriage rate is declining in many countries. The number of those who do not marry (or who notably postpone marriage) is growing and the number of "free" common-law unions is steadily increasing.

There is a tendency to consider marriage as a private world of emotions and feelings, with no major effects or responsibilities in society. Once these fail or weaken, it is believed that the temporary union is meaningless and since the level of gratification is not so great, a new one may be sought. Many people are not able to see or to discover marriage as the path to fulfillment and happiness, as if God did not desire the overall good of the people precisely in this "partnership of life and love" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 48).

This aspect was emphasized by the Council at the very beginning of the chapter on "the dignity of marriage and the family." We read: "The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life" (*ibid.*, n. 47). Far from being an institution that threatens the freedom of the human person as some advocates of free-love suggest, marriage "has been established by the Creator" "for the good of the partners, of the children and of society" (*ibid.*, n. 48). God, the author of marriage, desires "the continuation of the human race, the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race" (*ibid.*). It is interesting to note the Council's concern to relate the family's well-being to that of society.

It is not just any kind of union. It is a union of a responsible and stable community, before God and before society. This is why the Council recalls that it is "established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws: it is rooted in the contract of its partners, that is, *in their irrevocable personal consent*" (*ibid.*, n. 48). It goes on to confirm this requirement: "The intimate union... and the good of the children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable unity between them" (*ibid.*).

A certain new trend poses a serious threat to the family by not giving it priority and support, namely, the facile recognition of other

forms of union with an equality of rights. This, without a doubt, is an attack on the rights of marriage. Thus all would be reduced to the same level, and the failure to make legal distinctions becomes a political and social policy.

On the other hand, the growing availability of divorce makes it a social plague, a disaster for the partners' ability to live together, with most painful consequences for the children. This new trend is due to the fact that the destabilization of marriage is also seen as a social and political policy, promoted by the mass media and even included by political parties in their platform.

### *Erosion of the family has disastrous effects*

All this leads to a gross distortion of marriage, which comes under attack when, in the name of the changes and transformations indicated above, alternative models are introduced, which are open to the various forms of dissolution. In the face of this the Council recalls: "The economic, social, psychological and civil climate of today has a severely disturbing effect on family life...And yet the strength and vigour of the institution of marriage and family shines forth time and again: for despite the hardship flowing from the profoundly changing conditions of society today, the true nature of marriage and of the family is revealed in one way or another" (ibid., n.47).

We could say that the same harmful, disastrous effects which humanity is experiencing from the erosion of marriage and the family are making people more aware of the need for it and its values. A healthy reaction must begin.

Many lives are ruined and set adrift as a result of something that man is destroying. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* appropriately points out: "Marriage is not a purely human institution, in spite of the numerous changes it may have undergone in the course of the centuries.... These differences should not lead one to forget its common and permanent features... Doubtless a certain awareness of the greatness of the union of matrimony exists in all cultures" (CCC, n.1603).

In the material prepared by the United Nations for the International Year of the Family, one frequently finds statements that

because of changes and the diversity of family models, types, and structures, *it can no longer be defined* (cf. *Building the Smallest Democracy*, III, A, 11). This publication even goes so far as to speak of “unforeseeable” forms (*ibid.*, III, A, 13) that make the family uncertain. According to this idea, it is no longer possible to speak of the “family,” but only of “families.”

The preparations for and the celebration of the International Year of the Family provide an opportunity to study more closely the Holy See’s Charter of the Rights of the Family, published ten years ago (22 October 1983). It was the response to a desire expressed by the 1980 Synod of Bishops and approved by the Holy Father. It was enriched by broad consultation with the Episcopal Conferences and is, without a doubt, a very important basis for dialogue, especially with heads of state, politicians and legislators. As we read in the Introduction: “The Charter offers to all who share responsibility for the common good a model and a point of reference for the drawing up of legislation and family policy, and guidance for action programmes” (p. 4).

### *Marriage is the basis of the family*

Participants in meetings preparing for the IYF showed an obvious reticence to use the term *marriage*. The relationship between marriage and the family is, of course, very clear. As we read in the introduction of the Charter of the Rights of the Family: “The family is based on marriage, the intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman which is constituted in the freely contracted and publicly expressed indissoluble bond of matrimony, and is open to the transmission of life” (Preamble, B). “The family constitutes, much more than a mere juridical, social and economic unit, a community of love and solidarity which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society” (*ibid.*, Preamble, E).

Would this not be an acceptable definition: this special community of love and life between a man and a woman (which therefore excludes the union of persons of the same sex), open to the transmission of life?

The family, the primary vital cell of society (cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n.11), is based on marriage. "When children are born, the married couple becomes a family in the full and specific sense" (*Familiaris consortio*, n. 69).

It is important to recognize the family's integrating effect on its members. Therefore it is imperative to work for the implementation of family policies that are rooted in the rights of the family as a whole, and not to consider its members separate from the family unit. This is the proper characteristic of *family rights* and should be the focus of policies of a social nature which are necessary, but which should not disregard the family as such. If the unity and stability of the family is endangered, social remedies are relative and ineffective. This is true of measures meant to ensure that children are born within marriage, with its protection and basic responsibility, and with adequate legislation requiring parental responsibility and the children's protection.

In this regard, the statements found in the Preamble to the Charter, letters I and J, are most appropriate:

— I. "Society, and in a particular manner the State and international organizations, must protect the family through measures of a political, economic, social and juridical character, which aim at consolidating the unity and stability of the family so that it can exercise its specific function";

— J. "The rights, the fundamental needs, the well-being and the values of the family, even though they are progressively safeguarded in some cases, are often ignored and not rarely undermined by laws, institutions and socioeconomic programmes."

I could develop this argument further, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (cf. Preamble, and nn. 18, 9, and 7).

"Marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family..." (*Familiaris consortio*, n. 14). "All the members of the family have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family 'a school of deeper humanity' (cf. *ibid.*, n. 21)."

In the face of a culture that rejects and openly mocks a couple's commitment to fidelity, *Familiaris consortio* says, it is necessary to repeat the Good News of conjugal love (cf. n. 21). This is a proclamation and a witness that spouses are called to in a very special way in the International Year of the Family.

## 2. Threats to human life

The right to life is fundamental. Never before has human life been so disregarded, especially through the abominable crime of procured abortion. The phenomenon is taking on vast proportions. However, in addition to the large number of abortions, there is the fact of its new and disturbing legal recognition, accompanied by a growing permissiveness. We are no longer in the presence of an isolated situation whose inhumanity affects the lives of a few couples who have recourse to it and unjustly eliminate the lives of human beings who have a right to live. Procured abortion is becoming a cultural, political and social policy introduced into a society which is sinking into the culture of death.

All kinds of arguments have been advanced to give legal support to this permissiveness. It is not possible to summarize here all the arguments that are put forward. They range from the weakest ones invoking the mother's "right" over her own body, and the unborn child is removed as though he or she were an appendix rather than a human being, to the most recent reasons given, in which abortion is simply advantageous for a family in financial or emotional difficulty.

In all cases, an *anti-life mentality* regards the foetus (the "*nascituro*," to use the meaningful Italian expression) as an *aggressor* attacking the mother or the family, someone threatening their peace and rights. Naturally, when as a result of malformation the health of the "*nascituro*" is the issue, the argument resorts to the typical concept of "quality of life" which, if applied with its cruel, selective logic to the sick and the elderly who are losing certain types of "quality of life," would lead to a "policy" wreaking the most widespread destruction.

The foetus, or "*nascituro*," is denied his rights in the name of the "rights" of those who are older, without being able to defend himself,

to protest, to participate in marches or demonstrations. Although absolutely innocent and totally defenceless, he is eliminated as a culpable aggressor.

Symptoms of this become obvious when one speaks of the "anti-baby vaccine." The unborn child is thus treated as a disease, a virus from which people must be protected. In this case, the artifice of language has not been able to disguise such blatant inhumanity.

*Right to life is a constituent element of civil society*

Abortion advocates have been skillful in the use of new figures of speech. The term "abortion" and all that it implies is masked by the expression "termination of pregnancy." With a technical mentality, in which people become "arbiters" and dominators, they speak of the unborn child as a product, as something irrelevant and aseptic, as it were. Legal permissiveness seems to soothe the conscience since positive laws fill the moral void. Ethical goodness or evil would depend on legislation. Further, everything would be seen in a universe of freedom that changes the crime of abortion into the healthy exercise of the same freedom.

Is this not the strategy behind the expression "pro-choice"?

Naturally, from the legal point of view, a distinction is made between the crime (when it is recognized as a crime) and its punishment. The fact remains, however, that a crime which is in principle not punishable is no longer a crime.

It is abundantly clear that when the legislator declares that a crime is no longer punishable, he is invading the realm of the judicial branch in a tripartite division of power; his way of acting is more totalitarian than democratic. Once the right to life is denied, the principle of participation is rejected. In this, there is a tendency which is simultaneously totalitarian, anti-democratic and immoral.

Appropriately, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has recalled this truth, which has been summarized in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The right to life, in fact "is a constitutive element of civil society and its legislation" (CCC, n. 2273).

“ The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation must accord them, the State is denying the equality of all before the law. When the State does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a State based on law are undermined.... As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of his conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights' (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Inst. *Donum vitae*, ch. III) (*ibid.*).”

*There is a conspiracy between doctors, legislators and drug companies*

When it is concealed, the immorality of this crime undermines politics itself. Politics devoid of ethics becomes dangerous in the extreme, violating the well-being and the rights of others.

One must acknowledge, with all its consequences, what is stated in the Charter of the Rights of the Family: “Marriage is the natural institution to which the mission of transmitting life is exclusively entrusted.... Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.... Abortion is a direct violation of the fundamental right to life of the human being” (Preamble, C; Art. 4, a).

The advance of technology increases the number of threats to life, as is the case with the RU 486 pill, now more widely marketed, and the methods of sterilization, whether surgical or chemical, such as Norplant, which, in addition to its long-term contraceptive effects, is, according to qualified experts, an abortifacient, since it prevents the implantation of the embryo. We are facing a terrible “chemical warfare” in the most impressive escalation of the culture and forces of death (cf. *Centesimus annus*, n. 39). We must hear the outcry for an “ethical ecology” demanding respect for human values and respect for life.

Today we are subjected to the pressure and the influence of public policies of population control promoted by well-financed public and private, national and international institutions which include not only contraception in their planning, but abortion as well. It is a

publicly avowed policy of population control, despite agreements to the contrary by the United Nations.

A sort of conspiracy exists between the pharmaceutical companies (with the very substantial income that increases with growing consumption), doctors untrained in natural methods and lacking in moral conscience and legislators who pave the way with permissive laws. This constitutes an immeasurable threat to life.

Another of the threats to human life indicated in the Charter concerns the manipulation of the human genetic heritage when it is not done for the purpose of correcting anomalies (cf. Art. 4, c).

As regards the other issues related to bioethics, such as artificial fertilization, *i.e.*, homologous or heterologous *in vitro* fertilization, it is necessary to take into account not only the manipulation and elimination to which "multiple" embryos are subjected (with procedures therefore totally unjust and in violation of the human person), but also a basic principle rooted in an anthropology that wholly accepts and respects the "truth" of the human person, of the couple, of the family. Children have the right to be conceived and to be born into a family, into a stable home, by a responsible act of true love (cf. *Donum vitae*, B, 4). These procedures separate the unitive and procreative aspects of the conjugal act.

*The anti-life mentality* that reveals its gravest aspects in abortion and euthanasia also presents serious problems in relation to the widespread contraceptive mentality. Despite the undeniably prophetic value of the Encyclical *Humanae vitae* with its clear teaching, it has been reported that the proportion of couples who use the "pill" is high. Use of the contraceptive pill and intrauterine devices (IUD) (with scant attention to their harmful side effects) represents a massive rejection of life that clearly poses problems such as the drastic decline in the birth rate.

Moreover, the use of contraceptives has not caused the number of abortions to decrease. It has opened the door further to an irresponsible sexual revolution, with obvious consequences; it is the result of an understanding of sex as pleasure with no reference to an integral sense of love and closed to the transmission of life. It is well known how courses on sexual education often lack an ethical dimension and become a harmful tool even to the point of perversion. The

“boomerang effect” is the term used to describe this type of partial, unclear instruction.

Today there is clear evidence of the close relationship between contraception, aggravated by “contraceptive colonialism,” and the abortion mentality. First, this is due to the fact that many contraceptives have a double effect: preventing conception and hindering the implantation of the embryo; second, in rejecting life, if the first contraceptive measure fails, those concerned have recourse, in large numbers, to procured abortion. The latter is either a simple minor surgical procedure or an “unbloody” chemical process that takes place unperceived at the beginning of the embryo’s development.

In presenting the IYF it is important to explain all that family planning implies, and what the teaching about responsible parenthood involves.

## Conclusion

If its various aspects are explained and clarified, the IYF can contribute a great deal to a new appreciation and support for the family as an institution based on marriage.

A dialogue in truth, at a critical moment, is essential in order to strengthen the community of life and love that is marriage, and to facilitate the noble mission of parents to transmit life, to welcome new life, to raise it, integrated into the family, the “sanctuary of life” (*Centesimus annus*, n. 39).

We are in the presence of fundamental and sacred values. The new evangelization, which has its centre in the family, will make it possible to perceive that God is reaching out to it, he who is the *Lord of the family and of life!*

# The Filipino Family: Now and Then

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Wilfredo C. Paguio

It has been said that, for the Filipino, the family is the center of the universe, the source of all strength and solace, the child's crowning glory. All events, all persons must have second place to the family, for the family — after God — is God Himself.<sup>1</sup>

## Filipino Marriage

The original Tagalog term for marriage is *taling bohól* which literally means "tied with a knot of a chord." This actually serves as a part of the marriage rite used in the Philippines. Together with the lighting of the candles and the putting of the veil on the couple, they are also tied with a knot of a chord, which externally vividly depicts the indissolubility of marriage.

It must be noted, however, that of the many tribes in the Philippines, only the Aetas practiced indissolubly monogamous marriages. For the strength and the continuation of the family, the Tagalog male could have children by his slave women who were considered friends but only if the wife bore no child and only with her permission. Moreover, it must here be remembered that when a Tagalog youth seeks to get the promise of a loved one made according to the old usage, it is held as the best security of veracity in all the relations of life. Hence, if ever divorce came, it was made as a very last recourse — with the hearts, not only of the couples, but also of all

<sup>1</sup>Cfr. Lynch, Frank, S.J., "The Conflict Between Home Values and School Values," *Contemporary Studies*, vol. II, nos. 2-3 (June-September 1965), p. 93.

members of both families broken.<sup>2</sup> Like the Tagalogs — the Kalingas, the Silipanes, the Guinaangs and the Bontocs practiced dissoluble but monogamous marriages. Among the Kiangans, Guinaangs, Igorots and Silipanes, divorce may be had because of sterility. The Silipanes may be divorced if an issue does not come after seven harvests. Widowed Tagacaolos may not marry unless they kill a certain number of enemies.<sup>3</sup> Thus, even if the Philippines had polygamous tribes like the Subanos, the Moros of Jolo, the Apayaos and the Mangyans,<sup>4</sup> in general we can say that majority of the tribes were monogamous.

And this is why even if we read that among the Tagalogs adultery was just punished by a fine, among the Mangyans, the Silipanes and the Kiangans, the penalty for adultery was death.<sup>5</sup>

## Family Members

The Filipino would do everything to ensure family harmony. Husbands and wives performed rituals in order to enjoy a peaceful married life. The father was the head of the family. The mother was his companion and counsellor, the mistress and governor of the home. Both of them cared much for their children.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, we read that among the Tagalogs, the Mindanaos, the Mayaoyaos and the Tinitians incest was abhorred, chastised and rigorously punished. Actually, the Tinitians punished those guilty with incest by burying them alive.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Cfr. Colin, Francisco, S.J., "Native Races and their Customs," Blair and Robertson, vol. XL, p. 90. Cfr. also Ruíz, Jose Ma., O.P. *Pobladores Aborígenes, razas existentes y variedades, religion, usos y costumbres de los habitantes de Filipinas*, (Manila: Imp. de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, 1887), pp. 64-66.

<sup>3</sup>Cfr. Salazar, Vicente de, O.P., *Relación de los Sucesos y Progresos de la Tropa que de Cagayán se Despachó para esta Misión de Ituy este Año de 1750*, Archivo de los Padres Dominicos, Manuscritos, Ciudad de Quezon, Filipinas, Tomo 113, Folio 83.

<sup>4</sup>Cfr. Ruíz, José Ma., O.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 97 and 195.

<sup>5</sup>Cfr. Schadenberg, Alexander, "The Ethnography of Northern Luzon," *German Travellers on the Cordillera* (1860-1890), (Manila, Publications of the Filipiniana Book Guild, 1975), p. 169.

<sup>6</sup>Cfr. Paguio, Wilfredo, *Filipino Cultural Values for the Apostolate*, (Makati: St. Paul Publications, 1991), pp. 26-32.

<sup>7</sup>Cfr. Colin, Francisco, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 88. Also Ruíz, José Ma., O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 181.

The point may be raised that the Kalingas either killed or abandoned a child if the child was illegitimate, female (if they already had several), or if the child had a bad luck sign and if they already had too many children.<sup>8</sup> It can also be added that the Bogobos and Mayaoyaos did the same to deformed children since they reasoned that they would only suffer in life.<sup>9</sup> These, however, are isolated cases. In general, Filipino parents loved their children. This, because they considered their children their only love and consolation, giving them strength to carry on through the rough ways of life.

Children, on the other hand, also greatly honored and respected their parents, so much so that historians wrote that it appeared impossible for them to displease them in the least. The Aetas, the Kalingas and the Igorots abandoned parents sick of leprosy, smallpox or cholera to die because they thought that they had incurred the envy of the anitos. Hence, they left the anitos to heal them.<sup>10</sup>

But, again, those are isolated cases. In general, the children's honor and love for their parents were actually especially manifested in time of disease. As soon as the father or mother got sick, the children made sacrifices, offering even their jewels and gold so that their parents might recover from sickness.<sup>11</sup>

And the children are called *magkakaputol* (parts of a whole piece of wood, iron, etc.) or *magkakapatid* (parts of a whole piece of thread, rope, etc.). These terms express well the oneness that binds the family together. This, because the children are taught early in life that to hurt one of them must be to hurt all and to give pleasure to one was to bring happiness to the group.<sup>12</sup>

The Filipino life, therefore, is ruled by parental relationships. It is interesting to note that even the Negritos, who live a nomadic life wandering around the forest, are also united by parental ties.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Cfr. Ruíz, José Ma., O.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 81 and 149.

<sup>9</sup>Cfr. Perez, Angel, O.S.A., "Apuntes para un Diccionario Etnográfico del Norte de Luzon," *Relaciones Augustinianas*, Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás, Sección LIBROS, Tomo 27, p. 373.

<sup>10</sup>Cfr. Ruíz, José Ma., O.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 72 and 148.

<sup>11</sup>Cfr. Bazaco, Evergisto, O.P., "Religion and Moral of the Early Filipino," *Letran News*, vol. IV, no. 2 (August 1935), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup>Cfr. Paguio, Wilfredo, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>13</sup>Cfr. Ruíz, José Ma., O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 65.

## Respect for Elders

The Filipino respect for elders is proverbial. For as parents care for their children even if already grown up and married, so also children care for their parents until old age and death.

This, because Filipino ancestors made idols out of their elders after death transforming them into *anitos* or *diwatas*.

Of these idols, some had jurisdiction over the mountains and open country, and permission was asked from them to go thither. Others had the jurisdiction over the sowed fields, and the fields were commended to them so that they may prove fruitful.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, the elders chose as the place for their graves some assigned spot. Like the old man who lived on the seacoast between Dulac and Abuyog, in Leyte. He ordered himself placed there in his coffin, in a house standing alone and distant from the settlement, in order that he may be recognized as the god of navigators who were to commend themselves to him. Another had himself buried in a certain land in the mountain of Antipolo. And through reverence to him no one dared to cultivate those lands for they feared that he who should do so would die.<sup>15</sup>

This is the reason why, among the Visayans, the fourth commandment of the Code of Kalantiao says: "Follow and obey — do not disturb the quiet of sepulchers: while passing by the caves and trees wherein the dead rest, show your respect for them. He who disobeys this command shall be put to death."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, John Carroll, S.J. affirms that this continuing relationship between the living and the spirits of the dead is still present among Filipinos.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Cfr. Colín, Francisco, S.J., *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>15</sup>Cfr. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Cfr. Bazaco, Evergisto, O.P., *Culture of the Early Filipinos*, (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1936), p. 51.

<sup>17</sup>Cfr. Carroll, John, S.J., "Magic and Religion," *Philippine Institutions*, (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1970, p. 42.

## Conclusion

In view of the above, therefore, we can assert that the Filipino is strongly family oriented. The most painful ignominy for him would be to be disowned by his family (*itakwil ng pamilya*). He can sacrifice himself because of his family. And he can let go of even his Christianity for the sake of his family.

Hence, if we are to formulate a pastoral plan for a Filipino parish, the role which the family will play can never be over-emphasized. Conscious of this, missionaries are said to have always had in mind to try to convert the old, after which followed baptisms of families.

Thus, experience teaches us that we can even bring the male population of our parishes to active participation in the Church through our family apostolates. And, if we are able to involve the parents in Church activities, the children will necessarily follow.

*pastoral words*

## **Decree *Mos Iugiter***

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*Congregatio pro Clericis*

Rome, May 31, 1994

N. 94001887

The Most Reverend Jose Sorra, D.D.  
Diocese of Legazpi  
P.O. Box 38  
4500 Legazpi City  
Philippines

Your Excellency,

This Congregation has received your letter dated April 8, 1994, and a copy forwarded through His Excellency the Most Reverend Apostolic Nuncio in which you requested some clarifications about the correct implementation of the Decree *Mos Iugiter* issued by this Dicastery, February 22, 1991.

First of all, it would be good to emphasize, as indicated by the letter and spirit of the Decree, and to insist upon the obligation to allow the faithful to ask for and to obtain the celebration of the Holy Mass according to their particular intentions.

The obligation, therefore, remains intact and binding as stated in the common norms of the new Code of Canon Law which, in Canons 945-958, disciplines this matter in a unified and inviolable fashion.

The seven articles of the Decree *Mos Iugiter*, moreover, ought to be considered as norms "praeter codicem," in so far as it is necessary

to regulate the practice, not foreseen by the canonical norms, for celebrating the so-called "collective Masses" or "plurintentional Masses."

Article 2 of the above-named Decree provides that only the Ordinary of the place shall be able to authorize the celebration of collective or plurintentional Masses, when a genuine and enduring difficulty in satisfying individual requests is verified; but with the condition that the faithful making the offerings be first advised of this eventuality and that they freely accept this means of fulfilling their intentions.

In such circumstances, then, the prescriptions of Article 2 become taxative. The limitation of this criterion to two times a week in the same place (which appears to be the major difficulty about which Your Excellency has requested an explanation) has been personally prescribed by the Holy Father and therefore no other authority has the right to change this disposition.

Article 4 of the Decree emphasizes the necessity to faithfully fulfill the intention of the faithful who ask for the celebration of individual Masses according to their particular intentions from a Sanctuary or equivalent entity. The monetary gifts of these offerings cannot be accumulated; if these Mass intentions cannot be satisfied "in loco," they are to be forwarded "*quam primum*" to those dioceses where there are priests who are lacking in Mass intentions.

Article 5 determines that individual priests ought to be attentive to the criteria indicated in Article 4, namely, that for particular occasions, *e.g.*, the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed or other circumstances, the priest who shall receive many requests for the celebration of individual Masses ought not to refuse them; but neither may these intentions be accumulated. After having received more intentions than he is able to fulfill personally "within one year," the priest is to forward them to other priests who are lacking in Mass intentions, or to the Ordinary who will see to the celebration of these Masses elsewhere. Paragraph 2 of the same article 5 determines that for these same extraordinary occasions, if he shall have received offerings for the celebration of collective Masses, the celebrant ought to advise those making the offerings of the time and place for the celebration of these Masses; he shall be able, in this case, to keep for

himself only the amount of the offerings established by Diocesan regulations and is to forward the difference in the amount of the offerings to the ordinary according to the prescriptions of Article 3.

Any variations whatever in these norms ought to be considered as an abuse.

Further, it ought to remain clear for everyone that the Decree has been approved in a specific manner by the Holy Father and, as such, is pontifical law.

Trusting that Your Excellency's questions have been responded to, I take this opportunity to renew my sentiments of esteem and with every best wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*José T. Card. Sainz*  
*Prof.*

*+ D. Sepe*  
*Sec.*

## **“Go. . . Make Disciples!”**

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*Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*

### **A PASTORAL LETTER ON THE FOURTH CENTENARY OF THE ARCHDIOCESES OF MANILA, CEBU, CACERES AND NUEVA SEGOVIA**

*Beloved People of God:*

This year 1995 will mark a preeminent historical event of the Church in the Philippines. Four hundred years ago, Pope Clement VIII in a papal brief dated 14 August 1595 approved the elevation of the diocese of Manila into an archbishopric with three suffragan dioceses; namely those of Cebu, Nueva Caceres and Nueva Segovia.

From these four ecclesiastical centers would radiate the redemptive message of the Gospel carried throughout the archipelago by a throng of tireless and courageous missionaries.

The four ecclesiastical jurisdictions covered among them the entire archipelago with the diocese of Cebu responsible for the most extensive territory which included the Visayas, Mindanao and the Marianas Islands. Next in coverage came the archdiocese of Manila which included Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Pampanga, the southern Tagalog provinces, the southern half of Tarlac and the islands of Mindoro and Marinduque. The diocese of Nueva Segovia, now centered in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, but originally in Lallo, Cagayan, has responsibility over Pangasinan, the Ilocos Norte and Sur including largely unexplored Mountain Province. The diocese of Nueva Caceres, named in memory of the Spanish city of Caceres, included the provinces of Quezon, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay,

Sorsogon and the islands of Catanduanes, Masbate, Burias, Ticao and some parts of Samar.

## Permanent Presence of the Church

It was a time of severe challenge. The aggressive entry of a foreign culture was a threat to the fragile communities scattered along the river banks and valleys. Conquest and payment of tribute in the name of a faraway king were an assault against the autonomy of the barangays and the power of local *datos*. More significantly, the preaching of the radical message that there is only one true God wrought havoc on ancient beliefs regarding a multitude of *diuatas* and *anitos*.

In the midst of these uncertainties and confrontation, the Church, 74 years after Magellan cast anchor in Cebu and barely 24 years from the time Miguel Lopez de Legaspi entered Manila, made a solemn decision to stabilize its presence in the Philippines. By establishing the archdiocese of Manila and its three related suffragan dioceses of Cebu, Nueva Caceres and Nueva Segovia, the Church was at the same time boldly defining the nature of its mission in the Islands.

It was to be a permanent decision — one which saw the country not as a mere entrepot or stepping stone to the more exotic kingdoms of China and Japan — but as a main focus in itself of an all-out evangelizing enterprise. This action also have notice to *conquistadores* that the Church would stand by the natives and defend their rights and properties against abuses. It revealed a Church which dared to confront with the Christian cross the conquering sword in defense of the conquered's human rights.

## In Defense of Human Rights

Here we recall that courageous defender of Filipinos, the Dominican, Fray Domingo de Salazar. A disciple of the founder of international law, Fr. Francisco de Vitoria, O.P. (1483-1546) and of the

Apostle of the Indians, Fr. Bartolome de las Casas, this first bishop of the diocese of Manila tirelessly demanded justice on behalf of the native population whose persons and properties were violated by slavery and exploitation.

Bishop Salazar's first pastoral letter deserves to be partly quoted since it reveals the tenacity of the early Filipinos to hold on to their faith in spite of the scandalous transgressions of some of its foreign adherents. Dated 21 December 1581, the pastoral letter notes:

*"...this is precisely what enhances God's admirable power and brings into greater relief the tremendous resources of our holy faith, that men beaten in war, reduced by the ferocity of their conqueror to a miserable bondage, stripped of their wives, their children and all their worldly goods, should in spite of all this, accept the faith and desire to profess the law of that God from whose worshipers they have suffered so many and such great evils..."<sup>1</sup>*

Does not this observation, made at the dawn of our Christian history about Filipino behavior in the face of grievous deprivations remind us of the present-day Filipinos' own tenacity to hold on to the treasure of the Faith in spite of modern temptations against it?

The establishment 400 years ago of this pioneer archbishopric of Manila and its three suffragan dioceses became the nucleus for the systematic mobilization of the Church's spiritual resources. Henceforth, the Church set about resolutely to create the conditions necessary for Christianity to take root and to spread throughout the islands. Primary schools were set up in many parishes where the younger generation could be intensely grounded in their Faith. Charitable foundations to care for the sick were started. These were eventually to develop into today's San Lazaro and San Juan de Dios hospitals. The first catechism, *Doctrina Christiana*, was translated into various Philippine languages. Sodalities and confraternities were introduced to orient the laity towards service of the needy. As

<sup>1</sup>Horacio de la Costa, S.J. *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768* (Harvard University Press, 1961) p. 22.

*intrepid missionaries penetrated into remote hinterlands they left behind visitas which paved the way for the emergence of new towns.*

## **The Power of Christian Symbols**

The physical presence of churches, convents, hospitals and schools generated new symbolic experiences for the recently baptized. That the church building dominated the center of the town's layout became for them a daily reminder of what they were taught in catechism classes about the majestic supremacy of the one true God. That the liturgy of the Church was expressed in the seasonal cycle of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection, became for the new converts a formula of liberation from the fatalism and static universe of pagan beliefs. The sound of church bells at various hours was linked to attendance at Holy Mass or to the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Mother. The imagination of the new Christians was no longer cluttered with impersonal spirits and magical rites but was enriched by the epiphany of a new world where angels and saints stood radiant before the altar of the Lamb of God.

The Church of the 16th century was also one of the principal architects of an emerging Filipino civilization. A civilization requires a vision to illumine its journey through history. This vision the Church offered a dispersed people by uniting them under the aegis of One God, One Church, One Eternal Destiny. This vision the Church concretized through the central devotions of the four key ecclesiastical jurisdictions: the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady for Manila and Nueva Segovia; the patronage of St. John the Evangelist for Nueva Caceres and that of the Most Holy Name of Jesus for Cebu.<sup>2</sup>

## **Creating a Christian Civilization**

The civilizing work that emanated from Manila and its three suffragan dioceses introduced an era of creative activities especially

<sup>2</sup>Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P., *History of the Church in the Philippines: 1521-1898* (Manila: National Book Store, 1979) pp. 30-32.

on the part of religious missionaries. In Manila, the Jesuit Fr. Antonio Sedeno and the Dominican Fr. Alonso Jimenez erected solid churches of stone, showing Filipino workers how to quarry adobe and how to mix mortar. In the region covered by the diocese of Nueva Caceres, it was the Franciscan priest Fr. Jeronimo de Aguilar who first introduced western music to the people of Camarines. The first grammar and dictionary of the Ilocano language prevailing in the diocese of Nueva Segovia was prepared by Fray Pedro de la Cruz Avila while the Augustinian priest Fr. Alonso Mentrída succeeded in analyzing the linguistic structure of Cebuano.

Through its attention to both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the native population, the Church enabled the early Filipinos to take the crucial leap of faith which disengaged them from the constraining and at times cruel customs of their original culture, ushering them into a new civilization of charity, justice and life.

True and beyond dispute, there were abuses of power both on the part of the civil authorities and of Church personalities as well, abuses which left unreformed became the object of a bloody revolution. A credible judgment of this violent period of our history has been rendered by Filipinos of that era who themselves were victims of Spanish oppression. In the decisive revolutions of the nineteenth century as well as in the earlier sporadic revolts, Filipino rebels who virtually killed all the Spanish civil authorities in regions they controlled, nevertheless largely spared their spiritual pastors.<sup>3</sup>

The 400th anniversary is therefore an opportunity to thank two important actors of our first evangelization: the missionaries who left behind their European roots to challenge Filipinos to accept the Gospel, and the Filipinos who in response gave up the security of their ancient beliefs when they embraced the new faith. The person of our first Filipino canonized saint, Lorenzo Ruiz, is a proof of the blossoming of this maturing faith. Both deserve our gratitude, for together they handed on to us the priceless heritage of Christianity formed and sustained by the ardor of their fidelity and sacrifices.

The Church celebrates the encounter between early Filipinos and missionaries with a sense of humility, because alongside its

<sup>3</sup>Rosario Mendoza Cortes, *Pangasinan: 1572-1800* (New Day Publishers, 1974) pp. 145-168.

heroic accomplishments are lamentable acts that were culturally disruptive and destructive of human rights. Bearing truth in mind, we thank God for what was good while resolving to avoid today the errors of the past. We then celebrate this anniversary in a spirit of fraternal solidarity with all persons of goodwill who promote whatever is true and just for our people. Thus, those who do not share our faith need have no fear that a New Evangelization will revive the triumphalism and insensitivity.

### The Challenge of the New Evangelization

Today, as we stand on the threshold of the Third Millennium with its unknown perils and unexplored horizons, we experience once more the fear and uncertainties of ancient navigators as their galleons braved uncharted oceans. We are challenged by the Pope to engage in a Second Evangelization to be shaped by new enthusiasm, new methods and new expressions. How fortunate we are that in this pastoral endeavor, we have before us not only the examples and the lessons drawn from the First Evangelization but also the institutions and structures they left behind, among the most influential being the diocesan network originally linked to the archdiocese of Manila. They were important then as structures for incorporating the Filipinos into God's salvific plan. They are equally, if not more important now, in implementing the New Evangelization. Their numbers have grown: from the initial four dioceses of 1595 to the present 77 dioceses with their 2,192 parishes. The new dioceses have taken over Church leadership previously exercised by the four parent dioceses in their respective regions. Yet, the continuing historical influence of these initial dioceses down to our times was evident during the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines where prominent roles were assigned to the episcopal heads of Manila, Cebu, Nueva Caceres and Nueva Segovia.

We have seen how in the year 1595 the Church in the Philippines entered a new state of apostolic activity with the establishment of the four leading dioceses. Today we are heirs to the unfinished agenda of their evangelization. They envisioned as early as in the Manila synod of 1581, that Filipinos would have a government whose first duty is to administer justice and whose actuations would not

contradict Gospel principles.<sup>4</sup> Today this hope remains unfulfilled. Furthermore, the 1581 synod sought to promote among Filipinos a level of culture where personal behavior was to be marked by compassion and respect for the rights of others while the structures of society would facilitate the growth of Christian culture and institutions.<sup>5</sup> Today our senseless violence and lack of *kaayusan* frustrate our attainment of cultural harmony and structural order.

## The Instrumentality of PCP-II

These are the contemporary challenges to which all our dioceses gave their collective response when they forged the Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II). In this Council, the Church in the Philippines was motivated to grasp wholeheartedly all those means which would lead to the full flowering of the life of faith in Christ.<sup>6</sup> Since this meant re-telling his story and following his way, the diocese, both pastors and flock, committed themselves to be a Church of the Poor envisioned to bring forth a Community of Disciples of the Lord.

With the promulgation of the PCP-II decrees and the implementation of its National Pastoral Plan, the Church in the Philippines has the blueprint and the guidelines for a Renewed Integral Evangelization.

The essence of this is the evangelization of Filipino culture by a process of inculturation including a comprehensive purification and transformation of our people's ethos so that Christ's message might prevail and permeate their families, their professions, their institutions and structures.<sup>7</sup> Only then will the Church in the Philippines possess a new prophetic voice and a new cultural alternative in the face of the dehumanizing forces of modern secularism. So monumental a task cannot be achieved by one or two dioceses alone. It calls for

<sup>4</sup>De la Costa, *The Jesuits*, pp. 15-36.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>PCP-II Acts and Decrees, *The Conciliar Document*, No.5.

<sup>7</sup>This echoes Pope John Paul II's thinking on the task of the Latin American Church in the New Evangelization (*Catholic International*) Vol. 3, No. 22, December 1992, p. 1060.

a unified effort of all dioceses and of all the agents of renewal who makeup the Community of Disciples of the Lord.

## New Apostolic Horizons

If "unity of all things under Christ" (*Ep* 1:10) was the over-reaching theme of PCP-II, then what better example can better inspire our people, plagued by entrenched social divisions and the remnants of ideological conflicts that the resolute leadership of all our dioceses working together to achieve the vision of PCP-II?

The history of four dioceses, this time joined by daughter dioceses, is unfolding into a new phase whose dynamism the present Pope has indicated when he said: "There is no doubt about it: the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News, to carry the light of Christ to the nations."<sup>8</sup>

For four hundred years we have enjoyed the gifts bequeathed to us by the first Evangelization. Now, we are being challenged to go beyond our borders and to meet Jesus Christ in the midst of Asia's multitudinous humanity. The fact that more than half of Catholics in Asia are Filipinos, and the presence of Filipino overseas workers all over Asia, are only some of the signs confirming the words of the Holy Father.

The words of the Lord: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations..." (*Mt* 28:19) stir us to action. To become a truly missionary Church by the next millenium is the best mark of gratitude we can offer as we celebrate this 4th Centenary.

May our Mother Mary, whose spirit proclaims the greatness of the Lord can whom all generations of Filipinos throughout these 400 years have proclaimed Blessed, come to the help of the servant Church of the Philippines as it commits itself to fulfill her Son's challenge in the coming millenium.

+Carmelo D.F. Morelos, D.D.

January 29, 1994

<sup>8</sup>PCP-II Acts and Decrees, *The Conciliar Document*, No. 106.

## **“As the Father Sent Me, So Am I Sending You” (Jn 20:21)**

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*Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*

### **A PASTORAL LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE YOUTH OF THE PHILIPPINES IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD YOUTH DAY AND THE PAPAL VISIT IN 1995**

*Dear Young People of the Philippines:*

Pope John Paul made an announcement last August 5, 1993 in Denver, Colorado, which was a great and pleasant surprise to us Filipinos. He said: “*Ang susunod na paglalakbay ng mga kabataan ay gagawin sa Maynila sa 1995. Ang mga kabataan ng Pilipinas ay maghahanda pang-espirituwal para sa pagdiriwang.*” In a follow-up statement, he said. “This time it is for you, the young people of the Philippines, to prepare a welcome for so many friends from all over the world.”

#### **Reason for the Pope's Coming**

The Pope is coming to the Philippines! And he will come especially for you, the young.

He comes because he believes in you. He sees the Church in you. He knows that the Church has so much to tell you, and you have so much to share with the Church.

Indeed, by your vast numbers alone, you are important to the Church. But even more than numbers, you have the idealism, the

energy, the generosity, the daring and restless searching so characteristic of youth. And above all, Christ loves you, looks at you with love just as he looked at the young man in the gospel and loved him.

The Pope, Christ's vicar on earth, looks upon you with that same love of Christ: And he wants to give you all, as you gather for the 10th World Youth Day, the energizing words of Christ: "*As the Father sent me, so am I sending you*" (Jn 20:21).

## **Christ Calls the Young to Evangelize**

Dear Young People, Christ wants you — wants us all — to receive the Good News. You have received it. Christ wants more from you. He wants you to carry the Good News in your minds, in your hearts, in your hands: in a word, in your lives. And he wants you to proclaim it with your lips, so that you become evangelizers yourselves, especially of your fellow youth. You are called not to a life of self-indulgence, or of self-centeredness. You are called to Christ, and to bring him to other young people who have not yet accepted him. Declare your firm commitment to Christ and the Church. Commit yourselves to evangelize your society and the whole world. In places where you live, direct your energy towards integral social transformation, as the Pope encourages you: "*With a view to the approaching third Christian millennium, you young people are entrusted in a special way with the task of becoming communicators of hope and workers peace, in a world that is in ever greater need of credible witnesses and messengers consistent with His message*" (*Message for World Youth Day*\* 1995, 21 Nov. 1993). You are called to join in the new evangelization.

## **World Youth Day, a Journey of Faith**

This call is an invitation to join in the World Youth Day journey of faith which has already travelled several significant steps:

\* N.B. World Day is celebrated every other year both on a date chosen by the Holy Father and on Palm Sunday preceding it.

In Rome (1985), the Pope challenged you to carry the cross along the roads of the world;

In Buenos Aires (1987), he asked for your commitment to build a civilization of love;

In Santiago de Compostela (1989), he invited you to come closer to Christ;

In Czestochowa (1991), he made you recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ;

In Denver (1993), he urged you to find the fullness of life in Christ.

Now his journey is about to reach us in Manila in January 1995. The Pope announces: *"... our pilgrimage continues. This time the stage is the Manila, which, on the vast continent of Asia, will be the crossroads for the Xth World Youth Day."*

## **Preparing the Journey**

You must now prepare to join in this journey of faith. Foremost, prepare yourselves spiritually through prayer and reflection on themes contained in the Holy Father's message to the youth, especially of last 21 November 1993. Make them the topics of your spiritual retreats and formation seminars, your regional gatherings and conferences.

Prepare yourselves by a program of service activities on behalf of the Church and of society which can be offered symbolically in the presentation of gifts during the concluding Eucharist of World Youth Day. Your Personal Sacrifices and Spiritual Offerings in solidarity with the poor and hungry will deepen the meaning of your preparation.

Organize regional, diocesan and parochial youth days as a means of emphasizing the faith and fervor and goodness of so many young people as they prepare to welcome the Holy Father and the young people of the world.

Your resourcefulness and generosity will certainly help you to find other ways of preparing for the coming World Youth Day '95. Through activities such as these, we are certain you will grow in greater awareness of your Christian dignity and potentials, and in the consciousness of the mission entrusted to you by Christ.

Having prepared yourselves to join this journey, World Youth Day '95 will be a day of grace. But its lasting effect in you will depend on the thoroughness and seriousness of your preparation for it.

### **Bishops and Priests are With You in this Journey**

We, your pastors, trust in your capabilities and in your generosity. With your parents we shall always be beside you to assist you to make World Youth Day '95 your day, the day of the Church in the Philippines, the day of the youth of all the world and above all, the day of Christ.

In union with the Holy Father, we, too, ask for Mary's assistance. To Mary, the Mother of the Church, we entrust the preparation and celebration of the next World Youth Day. May she share with us the secret of how to welcome her Son into our lives, doing whatever he tells us.

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

30 January 1994

## **Hopeful Encounter with the Holy Spirit for Implementation of PCP II CD 348-353**

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*Antonio Viray*

1. The Council Fathers, gloriously but humbly, have declared: "The Spirit of the Lord has been with us in this Council... What we saw in ourselves... our weaknesses, our failings in living up to our Christian faith; our strengths, our successes as well, in making that faith our own... they are most humbling" (CD 658-659).

2. The Council president echoed this declaration in his homily at the closing ceremonies, when he compared the Council Fathers to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, unknowingly accompanied by Christ, but with hearts aburning within. He further added: "The charisms of the Holy Spirit await the proclamation and implementation of the Council's message all over our land. Only after the proposals of the Council have taken root in the life of far-flung communities will our land be blessed with new Pentecost" (p. 81).

3. Let the Church in the Philippines be constantly in prayer, like the apostles and the disciples with the Blessed Mother in their midst, awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the implementation of PCP II. Without supernatural divine intervention PCP II will just have the fate of PCP I.

### **Democracy and Electoral Process in the Philippines**

4. The Philippines is a society, dedicated to democracy. The basic democratic institution is the electoral process. Through elections the people, the citizens of the country, exercise their fundamental au-

thority of electing public officials, who in turn are empowered to appoint other public servants to manage government of the nation.

5. The country is in very deep economic, social and political crisis. This situation throughout its deliberations PCP II acknowledges. In fact, it is one of the primary factors that have moved the Philippine Hierarchy to call the Council that has declared: "Great is the corruption underlying our economic and political structures and system. Even today, there are still those who have little inclination to live in the light of Christ's teaching, which for them is foolishness" (Message of the Council, p. XCVIII).

6. The council has definitely ruled out violent ways of social and political transformation. "A strategy of non-violence" is advocated for this purpose: "to remove social ills, active non-violence is our moral countersign to the ideologies of today that espouse armed violence to change the *status quo*" (CD 311).

### **Laity Involvement in Politics**

7. The laity is "in the firing line," so to say, for the renewal and transformation of the country in the economic, social and political spheres, through active non-violent ways. Because this vision essentially implies a civil government, committed in theory and practice to the common welfare of the people, there is the need for the laity to involve in politics.

8. A long series of past experiences has shown individual, though relatively widespread, involvement by lay people in politics to be ineffective: witness the contemporary condition of Philippine politics. Thus, the Council in a daring leap into the future, has stated: "In the Philippines today given the general perception that politics has become an obstacle to integral development, the urgent necessity is for the lay faithful to participate more actively, with singular competence and integrity in political affairs. It is through the laity that the Church is directly involved" (CD 348).

9. The statement that "through the laity... the Church is directly involved" in politics is unique, given the deliberative approval by the Philippine Hierarchy. From now on, the laity can be Church in

politics, without being disowned by the same Hierarchy, provided they follow the guidelines of the Council, especially CD 351-353.

10. The laity's involvement in politics as Church is based on the lay apostolate of divine origin (CD 408). How these two points are connected, the Council itself has done it in CD 428-438, but especially in CD 434: "The laity's field of evangelizing activity is the complex world of education, politics, society, and economics."

11. The urgency of the mandate is seen from the statement: "Our Plenary Council stands on record to urge lay faithful to participate actively and lead in the renewing of politics in accordance with values of the Good News of Jesus" (CD 350). To support the urgency of their call for lay involvement in politics, the council cited Pope John Paul II: "The common opinion that participating in politics is an absolute moral danger, does not in the least justify either skepticism or an absence on the part of Christians in public life" (CD 349).

### **Obstacles for Implementation of PCP II CD 348-353**

12. There is ambivalence about the implementation of laity involvement in politics on the part of lay people, as well as clergy. This is understandable, for the present, because the Council's mandate is an unprecedented great leap. An expanded knowledge of the laity's role in the Church is called for its understanding.

13. This ambivalence could be bolstered by an incident during a seminar on PCP II implementation. A prominent layman asked whether the documents of PCP II could be used as political platform/program of action by the laity. The answer from a prominent cleric could easily be taken for a negation.

14. The presence of many lay people in many political parties and organizations, who are perceived to be the persons of Christian probity, could be used to argue that the Council's mandate is already fulfilled. This argument, however, is *specious* before the long-time presence of scandalous immoral politics that has bred graft and corruption of magnitude beyond imagination.

15. In the light of the present tragic situation, the presence of lay people in political parties and organizations is not enough to fulfill the Council's mandate. There is need for a more homogeneous political aggrupation of the laity.

16. The Council, however, has categorical injunction against the clergy in politics: "Bishops, priests and religious must refrain from partisan politics, avoiding especially the use of the pulpit for partisan purposes, so as to avoid divisions among the flock" (Decree Act 28, #2).

17. This leaves the laity alone in politics. But it is taken for granted that bishops, clergy and laity constitute the Church. Without the hierarchy, how can the laity be Church? Nevertheless, the Council has said, "It is through the laity that the Church is directly involved" in politics (CD 348).

18. The foregoing is a serious question that has to be answered/ explained satisfactorily, so that the Council's mandate for laity involvement in politics may not be ambiguous, replete with potential recriminations, in case of failure.

19. For its clarification, the concepts of the Universal Church and the Particular Church need to be explained. They are philosophical concepts that, applied to the Church, have theological/ transcendental meaning. Whereas in the philosophical level, the *Universal Church is in the Particular Church, and the Particular Church is in the Universal Church*.

20. The foregoing explanation on the Church helps clarify the question. The laity, united with and under the guidance of the bishops, constitute the Church in particular community. Furthermore, the laity, who involve and participate in politics per PCP II CD 348-353, constitute the Church directly involved in politics.

### **Birth and Growth of the Catholic Laity Political Group (CLPG)**

21. There are many ways to implement PCP II CD 348. However, what is sought, at this point of time, are ways that can *truly and effectively* produce results, envisioned by the Council.

22. We hereby propose a way to implement the aforesaid mandate. We earnestly hope that this way, together with modifications in the future would get the approval of the People of God, that is a sign of enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

23. The Church in the twentieth century has produced basic ecclesial communities, especially in the countryside. Dearth of priests to minister the faithful and their ardent longing to live up to their faith, attuned to the realities of their daily lives, are the direct causes of BEC. Likewise, the grave and lamentable economic, social and political situation of the Philippines urgently calls for similar groups of the faithful to renew and transform it, by injecting Christian values, especially in politics. *Why politics? Because in a democratic society, like the Philippines, politics is the basic vehicle to form the government.*

24. The Catholic Laity Political Group (CLPG) can be organized like the basic Ecclesial Community (BEC). It can even be a part of the latter. However, it seems preferable, that CLPG is a parallel organization of BEC.

25. The CLPG has politics for its primary objective and function, whereas BEC has wider field of endeavor. Moreover, some members of the latter may not be interested in politics; others may even belong to political parties.

26. It is desirable to have these laity groups involved in politics, be born out, firstly, of small Christian communities, like the barangays and small towns. After all, the people of the aforesaid communities are the most victimized by the graft and corruption of the government and society in general.

27. They can have for their objectives the renewal of their local government, according to the vision of PCP II CD 250-255. Their activities are to participate in barangay and town assemblies, in economic, social and political committees and in the local government itself. In time of elections, they can have some of their members run for elective offices of the local government.

28. The CLPGs should start/begin their involvement in politics in the barangays and towns. These are grassroot levels of governance that directly affect the everyday life of the people. Moreover, weak-

nesses in the methodology of participation, even failures, can be corrected immediately and even with ease, with minimal damage, moral and otherwise, to the Church nationwide.

29. As the CLPGs grow and mature in their involvement in politics, they can proceed to the provincial and national arena of politics. This gradual involvement in politics up to the national level, will afford them the opportunity and perspective of assessing their members, who will be thrust into elective and appointive positions in the government.

30. The federal system, rather than the unitary, should be adopted for the organization of CLPGs from the barangay to the national level. Although they have the same vision, yet different economic, social and political problematical situations may obtain in various communities. Thus, there is need for autonomy for a particular situation of its community, without waiting for the intervention of its higher organizational structure.

### *Membership in CLPG*

31. The membership to the CLPGs should be open to every adult Catholic of the community. The policy should be "the more the better." The basic qualification that should not be restrictive as to become exclusive, should be "a Catholic practicing his/her Faith."

32. At the early stage of CLPG, let there be this warning. The Catholics of the Community, especially members of CLPG, should not discriminate their brethren, who do not like to participate in politics; much less those who are members of political parties. To overlook this warning is fraught of potential acrimonious divisions among Catholic communities.

### *Leadership in CLPG*

33. The leaders/officers of CLPG in the barangay must be freely elected by all its members. In higher organizational structures, like town, district, provincial, regional and national levels, delegates from lower organizational structures, provided they proportionately represent all the members, may elect their leaders/officers. The principle

of democratic election for all leaders/officers of CLPG in whatever organizational level should be maintained *at all costs and at all times*.

### **Admonition against Disunity**

34. When there are many CLPGs throughout the country, the danger of discord/division, as has happened to many human groups and organizations, is there. But CLPGs should be *a unique organization of men*. They have a transcendental objective, the vision of renewed and transformed Philippine society. Their primary guidelines are PCP II CD 351-355.

35. Division and disunity can be avoided by sticking to the primeval aim. Moreover, CLPG members are men of good will, enlightened and moved to action by the Holy Spirit. Let them be reminded of St. Paul's admonitions:

"I beg of you, brothers, in the name of Christ Jesus, to agree among yourselves and do away with divisions; please be perfectly united, with one mind and one judgment" (1 Co 1:10).

"What is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants. I planted, Apollos watered the plant, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who makes the plant grow" (1 Co 3:5-7).

### **Evolution of CLPG into a Political Party**

36. CLPGs at the beginning need not be a political party. They can participate in electoral struggle as a political organization, not necessarily a political party, but with all the rights and privileges of a political party, once registered with the Commission on Elections.

37. Furthermore, it is advisable that the CLPG is not a political party at the early stage. The many kinks at its birth pangs can easily be corrected. In addition, CLPG cannot be expected to receive widespread, much less nationwide acceptance. Let then the laity throughout the nation perceive that CLPG is the answer to the

mandate of PCP II. Thus, its evolution into a political party will come from the faithful, under the action of the Holy Spirit.

38. In the event of the growth of CLPG the faithful can in unison plead for its acceptance by the Hierarchy. As People of God, they appeal to the bishops to let it bloom all over the country, like the BEC. Let bishops, priests, religious and laity ponder PCP II CD 342: "That pastors have competence in the moral principles governing politics and that the laity have competence in active and direct partisan politics is a good role of thumb to follow."

## Conclusion

39. This dissertation ends not in academic, but in prayer language. This is in recognition of the unsurmountable odds that face CLPG to achieve the renewal of Philippine politics according to Christian values. There is a decade-old joke about God crying due to the hopelessness of the economic, social and political condition of the Philippines. The joke shows that the ordinary course of Divine Providence is not enough.

40. The Philippine crisis is past beyond human effort alone. Divine supernatural intervention is called for its resolution. The Church in the Philippines, singularly, devoted to the Blessed Mother -- so that even the highest mountain ranges, the Sierra Madre, are named after her — should ask her intercession before God.

41. The Blessed Mother has unwavering faith in divine intervention. When the Angel Gabriel told her about her conception of the Son of God without human intervention, she freely gave her "FIAT," that made the Holy Spirit come to her for the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Likewise, let the laity answer the PCP II mandate to involve in *politics by the Catholic Laity Political Group (CLPG), born hopefully under the action of the Holy Spirit.*

## Cases and Inquiries

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*Excelso Garcia, O.P.*

### BOOK OF MARRIAGES

*I am most grateful to you for the case on registration of baptisms, published some time ago. The data to be added to such registration, as the case may require, are really important. No doubt that if the parish priests, on whom this responsibility rests, would fulfill properly their duties according to law, many invalid marriages could be prevented, as the one published in the local papers sometime ago. How could a man marry several times without being stopped by the priest who solemnized his second marriage? It is really inconceivable. If each valid marriage would be properly registered according to the Church's norms, such thing could not happen. It should be a lesson for us.*

*May I request you now to elaborate on how the celebration of a valid marriage should be registered, and what are the additional data that should also be recorded in the book of marriages and baptisms, as the law required.*

*A Parish Priest*

Canon 1121 states:

“§ 1. — Once the marriage has been celebrated, the parish priest of the place where it was performed or the one who takes his place, even though neither of them were present, has to register as soon as possible in the book of marriages the names of the spouses, assisting minister, witnesses, place and date of the marriage celebration, according to the manner prescribed by the Bishops' Conference or by the diocesan Bishop.”

“§ 2. — Whenever marriage is celebrated according to canon 1116, the priest or deacon, if any was present at the celebration, otherwise the witnesses jointly with the contracting parties are bound to inform the parish priest or the local Ordinary on the celebrated matrimony.”

“§ 3. — In regards to the marriage performed with dispensation from the canonical form, the local Ordinary who granted the dispensation, will take care that the dispensation and the celebration be recorded in the book of marriages both of the curia and of the proper parish of the Catholic party, the parish priest of whom carried out the investigation on the freedom of the parties; the Catholic party is bound to inform, as soon as possible, on the marriage celebrated the same Ordinary and the parish priest, mentioning also the place where it was celebrated and the public form observed in carrying it out.”

#### *Parish priest bound to register*

It is clearly stated that the parish priest of the parish where the celebration of marriage took place or his substitute, even though they were absent, are the ones to register the marriage celebrated in the book of marriages.

Marriages of his own parishioners or of persons from outside, performed within the limits of his parish, either in the parish church itself or in other church, oratory, chapel, hospital, etc., should be recorded by him. The circumstance on the person who solemnized the marriage does not change his obligation, whether performed by the Diocesan Bishop himself, or by a priest who enjoys special or general delegation or by a priest or deacon in danger of death, or performed with a dispensation from the canonical form. As long as the marriage is celebrated within his parochial limits, the parish priest must record its celebration in the book of marriages of his parish.

Marriages, however, secretly celebrated in accordance with canon 1130 may not be registered in the parochial book of marriages. It is to be recorded only in the peculiar book to be kept in the secret archives of the Curia (can. 1133).

## *Contents of the Book of Marriages*

Canon 1121, § 1 enumerates the data that should be mentioned in the book of marriages. They are the following:

1) *The name and family name of both spouses.* It should be borne in mind that in the Church's law the celebration of marriage by proxy is allowed (can. 1104). This circumstance should also be recorded with the name of the proxy. Likewise, the possibility of celebrating a marriage through an interpreter is also contemplated by law (can. 1106), in which case his name should also be mentioned.

2) *The name of the assisting minister.* The Codex of 1917 did not expressly include this data, probably because it is understood. Anyhow the new Codex requires it. Besides the name, it would be better if stated in what capacity he has solemnized the marriage, namely as local Ordinary, as parish priest, or as delegated priest or deacon.

3) *The name of witnesses,* appointed as such and present to the celebration. The witnesses are different from the sponsors. The latter are not to be mentioned, while the former should be.

4) *The place* where the celebration was carried out, namely, the parish church, church, oratory, hospital, home. In the latter case the address should be given.

5) *The day, month and year* of the celebration of matrimony.

6) *The dispensation* from public diriment impediment, if any, or from the canonical form should be recorded according to canon 1081.

## *Subsequent Additions*

After the marriage celebration some eventualities related to the marriage can happen that are to be recorded in the book of marriages as well as in the book of baptisms. They are the following:

1) *Declaration of nullity.* When marriage was invalidly celebrated, due to a diriment impediment, lack of consent of one or both contracting parties, or to defect in the canonical form, the case can be brought to the competent tribunal and the marriage be declared null and void. Moreover, if the declaration of nullity was based on the absolute and perpetual impotence of one, according to the law, the

person affected by the impotence will be prohibited to marry again. Both circumstances, the declaration of nullity and the prohibition to re-marry are to be recorded in both books of baptisms and marriages. Canon 1685 prescribes: "Once the sentence becomes final, the Judicial Vicar must notify the same to the Ordinary of the place where the marriage was celebrated. The local Ordinary will take care that the decree on nullity and possible prohibitions imposed will be recorded, as soon as possible, in the books of baptisms and marriages." The annotation in both books must be short, like this: "The marriage was declared null and void by the tribunal of ....., on ....., with prohibition to NN. to re-marry."

2) *Convalidation of marriage*. An invalid marriage can be convalidated (cans. 1153 and ff., 1161 and ff.). In some instances *simple convalidation* implies a new celebration of marriage as when marriage was invalid because of a public diriment impediment (can. 1159, § 1), or the defect of consent was publicly known (can. 1159 § 3), or there was a defect in the canonical form (can. 1160). In these cases, the old inscription of the invalid marriage should be cancelled and register anew the convalidation of marriage in the first available space in the book of marriages. An indication, however, should be done at the place of the cancelled inscription indicating where the new one is to be found. The convalidation of marriage is to be recorded in the books of baptisms of both spouses.

If the marriage was convalidated *in radice*, this fact is to be recorded in both books of marriages and baptisms in the usual way. The Diocesan Bishop who received the rescript will notify the parish priest of the place where the marriage was celebrated, so that the proper annotation be done in both books.

The convalidation *in radice* of a marriage brings with it the legitimization of the offspring which takes effect not at the moment of the convalidation but when the convalidated marriage was invalidly celebrated, unless provided otherwise in the apostolic rescript. The cooperation of the parish priests is most needed in order to record the convalidation *in radice* in the books of marriages and baptisms of the parents, and the legitimization of the offspring in the book of their baptism, especially when their children were not baptized in the parish where such marriage was celebrated. The parish priest who solemnized the marriage should inquire from the parents where the legitimized children were baptized and communicate with the parish

priest of the place of their baptism so that the pertinent annotation be done in the book of baptisms.

3) *Dissolution of Marriage*. A ratified not consummated marriage can be dissolved, with just cause, by the Roman Pontiff. Sometimes the spouses are forbidden to re-marry without previous consultation to the Holy See. The pontifical rescript is sent to the local Ordinary, who should inform both the parish priest of the place where the marriage was celebrated and the parish priest of the place where both contracting parties were baptized, so that this fact be recorded in both books. Canon 1706 states: "The apostolic rescript of dispensation is sent to the Bishop, who in turn will notify the parties about the rescript as well as the parish priest of the place where the marriage was celebrated and of the place where baptism was performed, so that the dispensation be recorded, as soon as possible, in the books of marriages and baptisms." The purpose of doing the two foregoing annotations is to prove the freedom of both parties from the vincular bond and their capacity to contract marriage again if there is no prohibitory clause in the pontifical rescript.

## CIVIL MARRIAGE IS NOT A PUTATIVE MARRIAGE

*In my parish there are Catholic couples who have not been married in the Church, but only civilly. The Legion of Mary is doing a wonderful apostolate, convincing them to legalize their union according to the Church's law. Some, however, are lukewarm and indifferent Catholics and prefer to continue living as they are. How are their children to be registered in the book of Baptisms: as legitimate or illegitimate? They want their children to be baptized in the Catholic Church and send them to the Church for catechetical instruction too. Can, in this case, their civil marriage be considered as a putative marriage?*

*A Parish Priest*

Marriage can be considered from different angles, thus authors dealing with marriage give us different divisions of marriage.

The first basic difference of marriage in general, which flows from the essence of marriage itself and its objective existence, is its division into *valid* and *invalid* marriage.

A *valid* marriage comprises all elements required by divine and human laws, producing the essential elements that constitute the subjective rights and duties of married state. *Invalid* marriage, also called *null* and *void* marriage, is that union of a man and a woman wherein these essential elements are lacking, hence a true marriage is inexistent, although some kind of appearance of marriage may be seen.

This division of marriage into *valid* and *invalid* marriage is based on both its value and binding force. Hence a *valid* marriage is defined as that marriage which really creates the marital bond between the contracting parties. This happens only when both parties are legally capable of marrying each other and have declared their marital consent according to the form prescribed by law. Three essential requisites must be present necessarily in a valid marriage, namely: a) legal capability of both contracting parties, i.e. their freedom from any diriment impediment; b) external declaration of their mutual consent; and c) the observance of the form determined by law to manifest the consensual declaration.

*Invalid* marriage is defined in a negative way: it is the union of a man and a woman deprived of any force to create marital bond between them, due either to the existence of a diriment impediment, to a substantial defect of marital consent in the contracting parties, or to lack of legal form in the manifestation of their mutual consent.

An invalid marriage can show some similarity to or appearance of marriage when the consent of the parties is declared according to the form prescribed by law, although such consent is in itself juridically ineffective due to an essential defect. It is very important to discern whether an invalid marriage presents this appearance or not. When it does, the principle established in canon 1060 should be applied: "In case of doubt, the validity of marriage must be upheld until the contrary is proven." If the marriage appearance is wanting, such principle cannot be applied and judicial procedure to establish the freedom of the parties to contract a new marriage is not necessary. On the other hand, when an invalid union has this appearance, its validation *in radice* is more easily obtained than when it is lacking.

Considering the subjective attitude or disposition of the parties, the invalidity of a marriage can occur in two different ways, namely:

a) Either or both parties can go through the marriage ceremony *in good faith*, ignoring that their marriage will be invalid. In such case, the invalid marriage is called "*putative marriage*." For an invalid marriage to be really qualified as putative marriage, three conditions are required, namely: that marriage is certainly null and void; that in its celebration, at least one of the parties wanted and believed it to be a valid marriage, and that such a marriage is celebrated *in facie Ecclesiae*, i.e. according to the Church's law. The desire and belief of marrying validly should exist at least in one of the contracting parties. This good faith is to be presumed unless the contrary is proven.

Note that it is necessary that the marriage celebration takes place *in facie Ecclesiae*, i.e. according to the Church's law. Due to this necessary requisite (celebration *in facie Ecclesiae*), civil marriage contracted by Catholics, bound to observe the canonical form, even if contracted in good faith, cannot be considered as putative marriage, according to the declaration of the Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Codex (AAS, 1919, p. 170). It is likewise well known that the Commission for the Preparation of the New Codex rejected the attempt to include within its canons the possibility of considering civil marriage as an invalid marriage in order to regard it as a putative marriage. Hence the previous official Church's attitude remains unchanged: civil marriage is ignored in the Church's law should Catholics, bound to observe the canonical form in contracting marriage, resort to the civil ceremony. It should be noted, however, that although civil marriage lacks the appearance of marriage and is not regarded as a putative marriage, the Roman Pontiff can grant its validation *in radice* through the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, or if the case so requires, through the Sacred Penitentiary in order to legitimate the offspring.

b) Another kind of invalid marriage is the so-called *attempted* marriage. Either or both parties, notwithstanding their full knowledge of their legal incapability of getting married, go through with the marriage ceremony, ecclesiastical or civil, thus attempting *in bad faith* to contract marriage. This happens when there exists a diriment impediment such as, for instance, an existing previous marriage (c. 1085).

In some cases the fact of attempting to contract an invalid marriage, even civilly, is sanctioned in the Church's law by a special penalty. Canon 1394 mentions two particular cases of attempted marriages. §1. "Without prejudice to the provisions of canon 194, § 1, n. 3 a cleric who attempts marriage, even if only civilly, incurs a *latae sententiae* suspension. If, after a warning, he has not reformed and continues to give scandal, he can be progressively punished by deprivations, or even by dismissal from the clerical state." §2. "Without prejudice to the provisions of canon 694, a religious in perpetual vows who is not cleric but who attempts marriage, even if only civilly, incurs a *latae sententiae* interdict."

Considering what we have said, our reply to the question of the consultant parish priest is as follows. The offspring of those Catholics married civilly only, when they are baptized are to be registered as *illegitimate*. Canon 1137 reads: "Children who are conceived or born of a valid or of a putative marriage are legitimate." In our case, the parents' marriage is neither *valid nor putative*, as we have explained above. Logically, their children are to be registered as *illegitimate*. If the parents decide in the future to legalize their union according to the Church's law, their children are legitimated by their canonical marriage according to canon 1139 which reads as follows: "Illegitimate children are legitimated by the subsequent marriage of their parents, whether valid or putative, or by a rescript of the Holy See." In this case, an annotation should be added in the registration of their baptism, declaring that they have been *legitimated* by the subsequent marriage of their parents.

## **The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation**

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*Congregation for Divine Worship  
and the Discipline of the Sacraments*

### **IVth INSTRUCTION FOR THE RIGHT APPLICATION OF THE CONCILAR CONSTITUTION ON THE LITURGY**

#### **Introduction**

1. Legitimate differences in the Roman rite were allowed in the past and were foreseen by the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, especially in the Missions.<sup>1</sup> “Even in the liturgy the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not affect the faith or the good of the whole community.”<sup>2</sup> It has known and still knows many different forms and liturgical families, and considers that this diversity, far from harming her unity, underlines its value.<sup>3</sup>

2. In his Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II described the attempt to make the liturgy take root in different cultures as an important task for liturgical renewal.<sup>4</sup> This work was foreseen in earlier Instructions and in

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 38; also n. 40, 3.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, n. 2; Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 3 and 4; *Catechisme de l’Eglise catholique*, nn. 1200-1206, especially nn. 1204-1206.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 16: AAS 81 (1989), 912.

liturgical books, and it must be followed up in the light of experience, welcoming, where necessary, cultural values “which are compatible with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy, always respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite as expressed in the liturgical books.”<sup>5</sup>

a) *The Nature of this Instruction*

3. By order of the Supreme Pontiff, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has prepared this Instruction: the *Norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the temperament and conditions of different peoples*, which were given in articles 37-40 of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, are here defined; certain principles, expressed in general terms in those articles, are explained more precisely, the directives are set out in a more appropriate way and the order to be followed is clearly set out, so that in future this will be considered the only correct procedure. Since the theological principles relating to questions of faith and inculturation have still to be examined in depth, this Congregation wishes to help Bishops and Episcopal Conferences to consider or put into effect, according to the law, such adaptations as are already foreseen in the liturgical books; to re-examine critically arrangements that have already been made; and if, in certain cultures, pastoral need requires that form of adaptation of the liturgy which the Constitution calls “more profound” and at the same time considers “more difficult,” to make arrangements for putting it into effect in accordance with the law.

b) *Preliminary observations*

4. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* spoke of the different forms of liturgical adaptation.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently the Magisterium of the Church has used the term “inculturation” to define more precisely “the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 37-40.

the life of the Church.” Inculturation signifies “an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures.”<sup>8</sup>

The change of vocabulary is understandable, even in the liturgical sphere. The expression “adaptation,” taken from missionary terminology, could lead one to think of modifications of a somewhat transitory and external nature.<sup>9</sup> The term “inculturation” is a better expression to designate a double movement: “by inculturation, the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures, and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community.”<sup>10</sup> On the one hand the penetration of the Gospel into a given socio-cultural milieu “gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people (...), strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores them in Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the Church assimilates these values, when they are compatible with the Gospel “to deepen understanding of Christ’s message and give it more effective expression in the liturgy and in the many different aspects of the life of the community of believers.”<sup>12</sup> This double movement in the work of inculturation thus expresses one of the component elements of the mystery of the Incarnation.<sup>13</sup>

5. Inculturation thus understood has its place in worship as in other areas of the life of the Church.<sup>14</sup> It constitutes one of the aspects

<sup>7</sup>John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli*, 2 June 1985, n. 21: AAS 77 (1985), 802-803; Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 17 January 1987, n. 5: AAS 79 (1987), 1204-1205.

<sup>8</sup>John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 52: AAS 83 (1991), 300.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *ibid.* and Synod of Bishops, Final report *Exeunte coetu secundo*, 7 December 1985, D 4.

<sup>10</sup>John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 52: AAS 83 (1991), 300.

<sup>11</sup>Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 58.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, n. 53: AAS 71 (1979), 1319.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches*, can. 584 SS2: “Evangelizatio gentium ita fiat, ut servata integritate fidei et morum Evangelium se in ciatura singulorum populorum exprimere possit, in catechesi scilicet, in ritibus propriis liturgicis, in arte sacra, in iure particulari ac demum in tota vita ecclesiali.”

of the inculturation of the Gospel, which calls for true integration,<sup>15</sup> in the life of faith of each people, of the permanent values of a culture, rather than their transient expressions. It must, then, be in full solidarity with a much greater action, a unified pastoral strategy which takes account of the human situation.<sup>16</sup> As in all forms of the work of evangelization, this patient and complex undertaking calls for methodical research and ongoing discernment.<sup>17</sup> The inculturation of the Christian life and of liturgical celebrations, must be the fruit of *a progressive maturity in the faith of the people*.<sup>18</sup>

6. The present Instruction has different situations in view. There are in the first place those countries which do not have a Christian tradition or where the Gospel has been proclaimed in modern times by missionaries who brought the Roman rite with them. It is now more evident that "coming into contact with different cultures, the Church must welcome all that can be reconciled with the Gospel in the tradition of a people, to bring to it the riches of Christ,

<sup>15</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, n. 53: AAS 71 (1979), 1320: "... concerning evangelization in general, we can say that it is a call to bring the strength of the Gospel to the heart of culture and cultures. (...) It is in this way that it can propose to cultures the knowledge of the mystery hidden and help them to make of their own living tradition original expressions of life, celebration and Christian thought."

<sup>16</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 52: AAS 83 (1991), 300: "Inculturation is a slow process covering the whole of missionary life and involves all who are active in the mission *ad gentes*, and Christian communities in the measure that they are developing." Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 17 January 1987: AAS 79 (1987), 1205: "I strongly reaffirm the need to mobilize the whole Church into a creative effort towards a renewed evangelization of both people and cultures. It is only by a joint effort that the Church will be able to bring the hope of Christ into the heart of cultures and present day ways of thinking."

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Foi et culture à la lumière de la Bible*, 1981; and International Theological Commission, Document on Faith and Inculturation *Commissio theologica*, 3-8 October 1988.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Discourse to the Bishops of Zaire, 12 April 1983, n. 5: AAS 75 (1983), 620: "How is it that a faith which has truly matured, is deep and firm, does not succeed in expressing itself in a language, in a catechesis, in theological reflection, in prayer, in the liturgy, in art, in the institutions which are truly related to the African soul of your compatriots? There is the key to the important and complex question of the liturgy, to mention just one area. Satisfactory progress in this domain can only be the fruit of a progressive growth in faith, linked with spiritual discernment, theological clarity, a sense of the universal Church."

and to be enriched in turn by the many different forms of wisdom of the nations of the earth."<sup>19</sup>

7. The situation is different in the countries with a long standing western Christian tradition, where the culture has already been penetrated for a long time by the faith and the liturgy expressed in the Roman rite. That has helped the welcome given to liturgical reform in these countries, and the measures of adaptation envisaged in the liturgical books were considered, on the whole, sufficient to allow for legitimate local diversity (cf. below nn. 53-61). In some countries, however, where several cultures coexist, especially as a result of immigration, it is necessary to take account of the particular problems which this poses (cf. below n. 49).

8. It is necessary to be equally attentive to the progressive growth both in countries with a Christian tradition and in others of a culture marked by indifference or disinterest in religion.<sup>20</sup> In the face of this situation, it is not so much a matter of inculturation, which assumes that there are pre-existent religious values and evangelizes them; but rather a matter of insisting on liturgical formation<sup>21</sup> and finding the most suitable means to reach spirits and hearts.

## **I. The process of inculturation throughout the history of salvation**

9. Light is shed upon the problems being posed about the inculturation of the Roman rite in the history of salvation. The process of inculturation was a process which developed in many ways.

The people of Israel throughout its history preserved the certain knowledge that it was the chosen people of God, the witness of his

<sup>19</sup>John Paul II, Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 17 January 1987, n. 5: AAS 79 (1987), 1204: "in coming into contact with the cultures, the Church must welcome all that in the traditions of peoples is compatible with the Gospel, to give all the riches of Christ to them, and to enrich itself of the varied wisdom of the nations of the earth."

<sup>20</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 17 January 1987, n. 5: AAS 79 (1987), 1205; also Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 17: AAS 81 (1989), 913-914.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 19 and 35, 3.

action and love in the midst of the nations. It took from neighbouring peoples certain forms of worship, but its faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob subjected these borrowings to profound modifications principally changes of significance, but also often changes in the form, as it incorporated these elements into its religious practice, in order to celebrate the memory of God's wonderful deeds in its history.

The encounter between the Jewish world and Greek wisdom gave rise to a new form of inculturation: the translation of the Bible into Greek introduced the word of God into a world that had been closed to it and caused, under divine inspiration, an enrichment of the Scriptures.

10. The law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms (cf. *Lk* 24:27 and 44) was a preparation for the coming of the Son of God upon earth. The Old Testament, comprising the life and culture of the people of Israel, is also the history of salvation.

On coming to the earth the Son of God, "born of a woman, born under the law" (*Ga* 4:4), associated himself with social and cultural conditions of the people of the Alliance with whom he lived and prayed.<sup>22</sup> In becoming a man he became a member of a people, a country and an epoch "and in a certain way, he thereby united himself to the whole human race."<sup>23</sup> For "we are all one in Christ, and the common nature of our humanity takes life in him. It is for this that he was called the 'New Adam'."<sup>24</sup>

11. Christ, who wanted to share our human condition (cf. *Heb* 2:14), died for all in order to gather into unity the scattered children of God (cf. *Jn* 11:52). By his death he wanted to break down the wall of separation between mankind, to make Israel and the nations one people. By the power of his resurrection he drew all people to himself and created out of them a single New Man. (cf. *Ep* 2:14-16; *Jn* 12:32). In him a new world has been born (cf. *2 Co* 5:16-17) and everyone can become a new creature. In him, darkness has given place to light, promise became reality and all the religious aspirations of humanity found their fulfilment. By the offering that he made of his body, once

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 10.

<sup>23</sup>Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 22.

<sup>24</sup>St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Ioannem*, I, 14: PG 73, 162C.

for all (cf. *Heb* 10:10), Christ Jesus brought about the fullness of worship in spirit and in truth in the renewal which he wished for his disciples (cf. *Jn* 4:23-24).

12. "In Christ (...) the fullness of divine worship has come to us."<sup>25</sup> In him we have the High Priest, taken from among men (cf. *Heb* 5:15; 10:19-21), put to death in the flesh but brought to life in the spirit (cf. *1 Pt* 3:18). As Christ and Lord, he has made out of the new people "a kingdom of priests for God his Father" (cf. *Ap* 1:6; 5:9-10).<sup>26</sup> But before inaugurating by the shedding of his blood the Paschal Mystery,<sup>27</sup> which constitutes the essential element of Christian worship,<sup>28</sup> Christ wanted to institute the Eucharist, the memorial of his death and resurrection, until he comes again. Here is to be found the fundamental principle of Christian liturgy and the kernel of its ritual expression.

13. At the moment of his going to his Father, the risen Christ assures his disciples of his presence and sends them to proclaim the Gospel to the whole of creation, to make disciples of all nations and baptize them (cf. *Mt* 28:15; *Mk* 16:15; *Ac* 1:8). On the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit created a new community within the human race, uniting all, in spite of the differences of language, which were a sign of division (cf. *Ac* 2:1-11). Henceforth the wonders of God will be made known to people of every language and culture (cf. *Ac* 10:44-48). Those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and united in fraternal communion (cf. *Ac* 2:42) are called from "every tribe, language, people and nation" (cf. *Rv* 5:9).

14. Faith in Christ offers to all nations the possibility of being beneficiaries of the promise and of sharing in the heritage of the people of the covenant (cf. *Ep* 3:6), without renouncing their culture. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, following the example of Saint Peter (cf. *Ac* 10), Saint Paul opened the doors of the Church not keeping the Gospel within the restrictions of the Mosaic law, but keeping what he himself had received of the tradition which came

<sup>25</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 5.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 10.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, Feria VI in Passione Domini, 5: oratio prima: "...persuum cruorem instituit paschale mysterium."

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Mysterii paschalis*, 14 February 1969: AAS 61 (1969), 222-226.

from the Lord (cf. *1 Co* 11:23). Thus from the beginning, the Church did not demand of converts who were uncircumcised “anything beyond what was necessary” according to the decision of the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem (cf. *Ac* 15:28).

15. In gathering together to break the bread on the first day of the week, which became the day of the Lord (cf. *Ac* 20:7; *Rv* 1:10), the first Christian communities followed the command of Jesus who, in the context of the memorial of the Jewish pasch, instituted the memorial of his Passion. In continuity with the unique history of salvation, they spontaneously took the forms and texts of Jewish worship, and adapted them to express the radical newness of Christian worship.<sup>29</sup> Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised between what could be kept and what was to be discarded of the Jewish heritage of worship.

16. The spread of the Gospel in the world gave rise to other types of ritual in the Churches coming from the Gentiles, under the influence of different cultural traditions. Under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised to distinguish those elements coming from “pagan” cultures which were incompatible with Christianity from those which could be accepted in harmony with Apostolic tradition, and in fidelity to the Gospel of salvation.

17. The creation and the development of the forms of Christian celebration developed gradually according to local conditions, in the great cultural areas where the Good News was proclaimed. Thus were born distinct liturgical families of the Churches of the West and of the East. Their rich patrimony preserves faithfully the Christian tradition in its fullness.<sup>30</sup> The Church of the West has sometimes drawn elements of its liturgy from the patrimony of the liturgical families of the East.<sup>31</sup> The Church of Rome adopted in its liturgy the living language of the people, first Greek and then Latin and, like other Latin Churches accepted into its worship important events of social life and gave them a Christian significance. During the course of the centuries, the Roman rite has known how to integrate texts,

<sup>29</sup>Cf. *Catechisme de l'Eglise catholique*, n. 1096.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 1200-1203.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, nn. 14-15.

chants, gestures and rites from various sources<sup>32</sup> and to adapt itself in local cultures in mission territories,<sup>33</sup> even if at certain periods a desire for liturgical uniformity obscured this fact.

18. In our own time, the Second Vatican Council recalled that the Church “fosters and assumes the ability, resources and customs of each people. In assuming them, the Church purifies, strengthens and ennobles them (...). Through the work of the Church whatever good is in the human mind and heart, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, it is not only saved from destruction but it is also cleansed, raised up, and made perfect unto the glory of God, the confounding of the devil, and the happiness of mankind.”<sup>34</sup>

So the liturgy of the Church must not be foreign to any country, people, or individual, and at the same time it should transcend the particularity of race and nation. It must be capable of expressing itself in every human culture, all the while maintaining its identity, through fidelity to the tradition which comes to it from the Lord.<sup>35</sup>

19. The liturgy, like the Gospel, must respect cultures, but at the same time invite them to purify and sanctify themselves.

In adhering to Christ by faith, the Jews remained faithful to the Old Testament, which led to Jesus, the Messiah of Israel; they knew that he had fulfilled the Mosaic alliance, as the mediator of the new and eternal covenant, sealed in his blood on the cross. They knew

<sup>32</sup>Texts: cf. the sources of the prayers, the prefaces and the eucharistic prayers of the Roman Missal, -Chants: for example the antiphons for 1 January, Baptism of the Lord, 8 September, the Improperia of Good Friday, the hymns of the liturgy of the Hours, - Gestures: for example the sprinkling of Holy water, use of incense, genuflection, hands joined, - Rites: for example Palm Sunday procession, the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, the regations.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. in the past St. Gregory the Great, *Letter to Mellitus*: Reg. XI, 59: CCL 140A, 961-962; John VIII, Bull *Industriae tuae*, 26 June 880: PL 126, 904; S. Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Instruction to the Apostolic Vicars of China and Indochina (1654): *Collectanea S. C de Propaganda Fide*, I, 1, Roma, 1907, n. 135; Instruction *Plane compertum*, 8 December 1939: AAS 32 (1940), 24-26.

<sup>34</sup>Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 17, also n. 13.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, nn. 52-53: AAS 71 (1979), 1319-1321; Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, nn. 53-54: AAS 83 (1991), 300-302; *Catechisme de l'Eglise catholique*, nn. 1204-1206.

that, by his one perfect sacrifice, he is the authentic High Priest and the definitive temple (cf. *Heb* 6-10), and the prescriptions of circumcision (cf. *Ga* 5:1-6), the Sabbath (cf. *Mt* 12:8 and similar),<sup>36</sup> and the sacrifices of the temple (cf. *Heb* 10) became of only relative significance.

In a more radical way, Christians coming from paganism had to renounce idols, myths, superstitions (cf. *Ac* 19:18-19; *1 Co* 10:14-22; *Col* 2:20-22; *1 Jn* 5:21) when they adhered to Christ.

But whatever their ethnic or cultural origin, Christians have to recognize the promise, the prophecy and the history of their salvation in the history of Israel. They must accept as the Word of God the books of the Old Testament as well as those of the New.<sup>37</sup> They welcome the sacramental signs, which can only be understood fully in the context of Holy Scripture, and the life of the Church.<sup>38</sup>

20. The challenge which faced the first Christians, whether they came from the chosen people or from a pagan background was to reconcile the renunciations demanded by faith in Christ with fidelity to the culture and traditions of the people to which they belonged.

And so it will be for Christians of all times, as the words of St. Paul affirm: "we proclaim Christ crucified, scandal for the Jews, foolishness for the pagans" (*1 Co* 1:23).

The discernment exercised during the course of the Church's history remains necessary, so that through the liturgy the work of salvation accomplished by Christ may continue faithfully in the Church by the power of the Spirit, in different countries and times and in different human cultures.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. also St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians*, 9: Funk 1, 199: "We have seen how for mer adherents of the ancient customs have since attained to a new hope; so that they have given up keeping the sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord's Day instead....."

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, nn. 14-16; *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, ed. typica altera, Praenotanda, n. 5: "It is the same mystery of Christ that the Church announces, when she proclaims the Old and New Testament in the celebration of the liturgy. The New Testament is, indeed, hidden in the Old and, in the New the Old is revealed. Because Christ is the centre and fullness of all Scripture, as also of the whole liturgical celebration"; *Catechisme de l'Eglise catholique*, nn. 120-123, 128 130, 1093-1095.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. *Catechisme de l'Eglise catholique*, nn. 1093-1096.

## II. The requirements and preliminary conditions for liturgical inculturation

### a) *Requirements emerging from the nature of the liturgy*

21. Before any research on inculturation begins, it is necessary to keep in mind the nature of the liturgy. It "is, in fact the privileged place where Christians meet God and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ" (cf. *Jn* 17:3).<sup>39</sup> It is at once the action of Christ the priest and the action of the Church which is his body, because in order to accomplish his work of glorifying God and sanctifying mankind, achieved through visible signs, he always associates with himself the Church, which, through him and in the Holy Spirit, gives the Father the worship which is pleasing to him.<sup>40</sup>

22. The nature of the liturgy is intimately linked up with the nature of the Church; indeed, it is above all in the liturgy that the nature of the Church is manifested.<sup>41</sup> Now the Church has specific characteristics which distinguish it from every other assembly and community.

It is not gathered together by a human decision, but is called by God in the Holy Spirit and responds in faith to his gratuitous call (*ekklesia* derives from *klesis* "call"). This singular characteristic of the Church is revealed by its coming together as a priestly people, especially on the Lord's day, by the word which God addresses to his people and by the ministry of the priest who through the sacrament of Orders acts in the person of Christ the Head.<sup>42</sup>

Because it is *catholic*, the Church overcomes the barriers which divide humanity: by Baptism all become children of God and form in Christ Jesus one people where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (*Ga* 3:28). Thus the

<sup>39</sup>John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 7 AAS 81 (1989), 903-904.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* nn. 5-7.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 2; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, December 1988, n. 9: AAS 81 (1989), 905-906.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2.

Church is called to gather all peoples, to speak all languages, to penetrate all cultures.

Finally, the Church is a pilgrim on the earth far from the Lord (cf. *2 Co* 5:6): it bears the marks of the present time in the sacraments and in its institutions, but is waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus Christ (cf. *Tt* 2:13).<sup>43</sup> This is expressed in the prayers of petition: it shows that we are citizens of heaven (cf. *Ph* 3:20), at the same time attentive to the needs of mankind and of society (cf. *1 Tm* 2:1-4).

23. The Church is nourished on the word of God written in the Old and New Testaments. When the Church proclaims the word in the liturgy, it welcomes it as a way in which Christ is present: "it is he who speaks when the Sacred Scriptures are read in Church."<sup>44</sup> For this reason the word of God is so important in the celebration of the liturgy<sup>45</sup> that the Holy Scripture must not be replaced by any other text, no matter how venerable it may be.<sup>46</sup> Likewise the Bible is the indispensable source of the liturgy's language, of its signs, and of its prayer especially in the psalms.<sup>47</sup>

24. Since the Church is the fruit of Christ's sacrifice, the liturgy is always the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the glorification of God the Father and the sanctification of mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>48</sup> Christian worship thus finds its most fundamental expression when every Sunday, throughout the whole world, Christians gather around the altar under the leadership of the priest, celebrate the Eucharist, listen to the word of God and recall the death and resurrection of Christ, while awaiting his coming in glory.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 48; Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 2 and 8.

<sup>44</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 24.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, n. 12: "It is not allowed to suppress or reduce either the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass or the chants that are drawn from Sacred Scripture. It is absolutely forbidden to replace these readings by other non-biblical readings. It is through the word of God in the Scriptures that 'God continues to speak to His people' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 33), and it is through familiarity with the Holy Scripture that the people of God, made docile by the Holy Spirit in the light of faith, can by their life and way of living witness to Christ before the whole world."

<sup>47</sup>Cf. *Catechisme de l'Eglise catholique*, nn. 2585-2589.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 6, 47, 56, 102, 106; Cf. *Missale Romanum, Inst. generalis*, nn. 1, 7, 8.

Around this focal point, the Paschal Mystery is made present in different ways, in the celebration of each of the sacraments.

25. The whole life of the liturgy gravitates in the first place around the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the other sacraments given by Christ to his Church.<sup>50</sup> The Church has the duty to transmit them carefully and faithfully to every generation. In virtue of its pastoral authority the Church can make dispositions to provide for the good of the faithful, according to circumstances, times and places.<sup>51</sup> But it has no power over the things which are directly related to the will of Christ and which constitute the unchangeable part of the liturgy.<sup>52</sup> To break the link that the sacraments have with Christ who instituted them, and with the very beginnings of the Church,<sup>53</sup> would no longer be to inculturate them, but to empty them of their substance.

26. The Church of Christ is made present and signified, in a given place and in a given time, by the local or particular Churches which through the liturgy reveal the Church in its true nature.<sup>54</sup> That is why every particular Church must be united with the universal Church not only in belief and sacramentals, but also in those practices received through the Church as part of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition.<sup>55</sup> This includes, for example, daily prayer,<sup>56</sup> sanctification of Sunday and the rhythm of the week, the celebration of Easter and the unfolding of the mystery of Christ throughout the liturgical

<sup>50</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 6.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Council of Trent, Session 21, cap. 2: *DSchonn.* 1728; Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 48 ff.; 62 ff.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 21.

<sup>53</sup>Cf. S. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Inter insigniores*, 15 October 1976: AAS 69 (1977), 107-108.

<sup>54</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 28; also n. 26.

<sup>55</sup>Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* III, 2, 1-3; 3, 1-2: *SCh* 211, 24-3 1; St. Augustine, *Letter to Januarius* 54, I: *PL* 33, 200: "But regarding those other observances which we keep and all the world keeps, and which do not derive from Scripture but from tradition, we are given to understand that they have been ordained or recommended to be kept by the Apostles themselves, or by the plenary Councils, whose authority is well founded in the Church"; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, nn. 53-54: AAS 83 (1991), 300-302; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on certain aspects of the Church understood as communion, *Communione notio*, 28 May 1992, nn. 7-10: AAS 85 (1993), 842-844.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 83.

year,<sup>57</sup> the practice of penance and fasting,<sup>58</sup> the sacraments of Christian Initiation, the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and the relationship between the liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy, the forgiveness of sins, the ordained ministry, marriage, and the anointing of the sick.

27. In the liturgy the faith of the Church is expressed in a symbolic and communitarian form: this explains the need for a legislative framework for the organization of worship, the preparation of texts, and the celebration of rites.<sup>59</sup> The reason for the preceptive character of this legislation throughout the centuries and still today is to ensure the orthodoxy of worship: that is to say, not only to avoid errors, but also to pass on the faith in its integrity so that the "rule of prayer" (*lex orandi*) of the Church may correspond to "rule of faith" (*lex credendi*).<sup>60</sup>

However deep inculturation may go the liturgy cannot do without legislation and vigilance on the part of those who have received this responsibility in the Church: the Apostolic See and, according to the prescriptions of the law, the Episcopal Conference for its territory and the Bishop for his Diocese.<sup>61</sup>

#### b) Preliminary conditions for the inculturation of the liturgy

28. The missionary tradition of the Church has always sought to evangelize people in their own language. Often indeed, it was the first apostles of a country who wrote down languages which up till then had only been oral. And this is right, as it is by the mother language, which conveys the mentality and the culture of a people,

<sup>57</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, nn. 102, 106 and appendix.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Paenitemini*, 17 February 1966: AAS 58 (1966), 177-198.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 22, 26, 28, 40, 3 and 128; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 2 and *passim*.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, *Institutio generalis*, Proemium, n. 2; Paul VI, Discourse to the Consilium for the application of the Constitution on the Liturgy, 13 October 1966; AAS 58 (1966), 1146; 14 October 1968: AAS 60 (1968), 734.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 22; 36 §§2-3; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 825 §1.

that one can reach the soul, mould it in the Christian spirit, and allow to share more deeply in the prayer of the Church.<sup>62</sup>

After the first evangelization, the proclamation of the word of God in the language of a country remains very useful for the people in their liturgical celebrations. The translation of the Bible, or at least of the biblical texts used in the liturgy, is the first necessary step in the process of the inculturation of the liturgy.<sup>63</sup>

So that the word of God may be received in a right and fruitful way "it is necessary to foster a taste for Holy Scripture, as is witnessed by the ancient traditions of the rites of both East and West."<sup>64</sup> Thus inculturation of the liturgy presupposes the reception of the Sacred Scripture into a given culture.<sup>65</sup>

29. The different situations in which the Church finds itself is an important factor in judging the degree of liturgical inculturation that is necessary. The situation of countries that were evangelized centuries ago and where the Christian faith continues to influence the culture, is different from countries which were evangelized more recently or where the Gospel has not penetrated deeply into cultural values.<sup>66</sup> Different again is the situation of a Church where Christians are a minority of the population. A more complex situation is found when the population has different languages and cultures. A precise evaluation of the situation is necessary in order to achieve satisfactory solutions.

30. To prepare an inculturation of the liturgy, Episcopal Conferences should call upon people who are competent both in the liturgical tradition of the Roman rite and in the appreciation of local cultural values. Preliminary studies of an historical, anthropological, exegetical and theological character are necessary. But these need to be examined in the light of the pastoral experience of the local clergy,

<sup>62</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 53: AAS 83 (1991), 300-302.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 35 and 36 §§2-3; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 825 §1.

<sup>64</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 24.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. *ibid.*; John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, n. 55: AAS 71 (1979), 1322-1323.

<sup>66</sup>In the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* attention is drawn to nn. 38 and 40: "above all in the missions."

especially those born in the country.<sup>67</sup> The advice of “wise people” of the country, whose human wisdom is enriched by the light of the Gospel, would also be valuable. Liturgical inculturation should try to satisfy the needs of traditional culture,<sup>68</sup> and at the same time take account of the needs of those affected by an urban and industrial culture.

### c) *The Responsibility of the Episcopal Conference*

31. Since it is a question of local culture it is understandable that the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* assigned special responsibility in this matter to the “various kinds of competent territorial bodies of Bishops legitimately established.”<sup>69</sup> In regard to this, Episcopal Conferences must consider “carefully and prudently what elements taken from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples may properly be admitted into divine worship.”<sup>70</sup> They can sometimes introduce “into the liturgy such elements as are not bound up with superstition and error (...) provided they are in keeping with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy.”<sup>71</sup>

32. Conferences may determine, according to the procedure given below (cf. nn. 62 and 65-69) whether the introduction into the liturgy of elements borrowed from the social and religious rites of a people, and which form a living part of their culture, will enrich their understanding of liturgical actions, without producing negative effects on their faith and piety. They will always be careful to avoid the danger of introducing elements that might appear to the faithful as the return to a period before evangelization (cf. below n. 47).

In any case, if changes in rites or texts are judged to be necessary, they must be harmonized with the rest of the liturgical life and, before being put into practice, still more before being made mandatory, they should first be presented to the clergy, and then to

<sup>67</sup>Vatican Council II, Degree *Ad gentes*, nn. 16 and 17.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 19.

<sup>69</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22SS2; cf. *ibid.*, nn. 39 and 40, 1 and 2; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 447-448 ff.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 40.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 37.

the faithful, in such a way as to avoid the danger of troubling them without good reason (cf. below nn. 46 and 69).

### **III. Principles and practical norms for the inculturation of the Roman Rite**

33. As particular Churches, especially the young Churches, deepen their understanding of the liturgical heritage they have received from the Roman Church which gave them birth, they will be able in turn to find in their own cultural heritage appropriate forms, which can be integrated into the Roman rite where this is judged useful and necessary.

The liturgical formation of the faithful and the clergy, which is called for by the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,<sup>72</sup> ought to help them to understand the meaning of the texts and the rites given in the present liturgical books. Often this will mean that elements which come from the tradition of the Roman rite do not have to be changed or suppressed.

#### *a) General principles*

34. In the planning and execution of the inculturation of the Roman rite, the following points should be kept in mind: 1. The goal of inculturation; 2. the substantial unity of the Roman rite; 3. the competent authority.

35. The goal which should guide the inculturation of the Roman rite is that laid down by the Second Vatican Council as the basis of the general restoration of the liturgy "both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 14-19.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 21.

Rites also need "to be adapted to the capacity of the faithful and that there should not be a need for numerous explanations for them to be understood."<sup>74</sup> However, the nature of the liturgy always has to be borne in mind, as does the biblical and traditional character of its structure and the particular way in which it is expressed (cf. above nn. 21-27).

36. The process of inculturation should maintain *the substantial unity* of the Roman rite.<sup>75</sup> This unity is currently expressed in the typical editions of liturgical books, published by authority of the Supreme Pontiff, and in the liturgical books approved by the Episcopal Conferences for their areas and confirmed by the Apostolic See.<sup>76</sup> The work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new families of rites; inculturation responds to the needs of a particular culture and leads to adaptations which still remain part of the Roman rite.<sup>77</sup>

37. Adaptations of the Roman rite, even in the field of inculturation, depend completely on the *authority* of the Church. This authority belongs to the Apostolic See, which exercises it through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments;<sup>78</sup> it also belongs, within the limits fixed by law, to Episcopal Conferences,<sup>79</sup> and to the diocesan Bishop.<sup>80</sup> "No other person, not

<sup>74</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 34.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 37-40.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 16: AAS 81 (1989), 912.

<sup>77</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 26 January 1991, n. 3: AAS 83 (1991), 940: "this is not to suggest to the particular Churches that they have a new task to undertake following the application of liturgical re-form, that is to say, adaptation or inculturation. Nor is it intended to mean inculturation as the creation of alternative rites. (...) It is a question of collaborating so that the Roman rite maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations."

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22 SS1; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 SS1 and 2; John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, nn. 62; 64 SS3: AAS 80 (1988), 876-877; Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 19: AAS 81 (1989), 914-915.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22 SS2 and *Code of Canon Law*, can. 447 ss and 838 SS1 and 3; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 20: AAS 81 (1989), 916.

<sup>80</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22 SS1 and *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 SS1 and 4; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 21: AAS 81 (1989), 916-917.

even if he is a priest, may on his own initiative add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy.”<sup>81</sup> Inculturation is not left to the personal initiative of celebrants or to the collective initiative of an assembly.<sup>82</sup>

Likewise concessions granted to one region cannot be extended to other regions without the necessary authorization, even if an Episcopal Conference considers that there are sufficient reasons for adopting such measures in its own area.

#### b) *Adaptations which can be made*

38. In an analysis of a liturgical action with a view to its inculturation, it is necessary to consider the traditional value of the elements of the action, and in particular their biblical or patristic origin (cf. above nn. 21-26), because it is not sufficient to distinguish between what can be changed and what is unchangeable.

39. *Language*, which is the principal means of communication between people. In liturgical celebrations its purpose is to announce to the faithful the good news of salvation<sup>83</sup> and to express the Church's prayer to the Lord. For this reason it must always express, along with the truths of the faith, the grandeur and holiness of the mysteries which are being celebrated.

Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to determine which elements in the language of the people can properly be introduced into liturgical celebrations, and in particular whether it is suitable or not to use expressions from non-Christian religions. It

<sup>81</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22 §§3.

<sup>82</sup>The situation is different when in the liturgical

books published after the Constitution, the introductions and the rubrics envisaged adaptations and the possibility of leaving a choice to the pastoral sensitivity of the one presiding, for example when it says “if it is opportune”, “in these or similar terms”, “also”, “according to circumstances”, “either... or”, “if convenient”, “normally”, “the most suitable form can be chosen”. In making a choice, the celebrant should seek the good of the assembly, taking into account the spiritual preparation and mentality of the participants, rather than his own preferences or the easiest solution. In celebrations for particular groups, other possibilities are available. Nonetheless, prudence and discretion are always called for in order to avoid the breaking up of the local Church into little “churches” or “chapels” closed in upon themselves.

<sup>83</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 762-772, especially 769.

is just as important to take account of the different literary genres used in the liturgy: biblical texts, presidential prayers, psalmody, acclamations, refrains, responsories, hymns and litanies.

40. Music and singing, which express the soul of people, have pride of place in the liturgy. And so singing must be promoted, in the first place singing the liturgical text, so that the voices of the faithful may be heard in the liturgical actions themselves.<sup>84</sup> "In some parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are people who have their own musical traditions and these play a great part in their religious and social life. Due importance is to be attached to their music and a suitable place given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius."<sup>85</sup>

It is important to note that a text which is sung is more deeply engraved in the memory than when it is read, which means that it is necessary to be demanding about the biblical and liturgical inspiration and the literary quality of texts which are meant to be sung.

Musical forms, melodies and musical instruments could be used in divine worship as long as they "are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, and provided they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship, and truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful."<sup>86</sup>

41. The liturgy is an action, and so *gesture and posture* are especially important. Those which belong to the essential rites of the sacraments, and which are required for their validity, must be preserved just as they have been approved or determined by the supreme authority of the Church.<sup>87</sup> The gestures and postures of the celebrating priest must express his special function: he presides over the assembly in the person of Christ.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 118; also n. 54: While allowing that "a suitable place be allotted to the language of the country" in the chants "steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertains to them" especially the *Pater noster*; cf. *Missale Romanum*, *Institutio generalis*, n. 19.

<sup>85</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 119.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 120.

<sup>87</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 841.

<sup>88</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 33; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 899 §2.

The gestures and postures of the assembly, are signs of its unity and express its active participation and foster the spiritual attitude of the participants.<sup>89</sup> Each culture will choose those gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible.

42. Among some peoples, singing is instinctively accompanied by hand-clapping, rhythmic swaying and dance movements on the part of the participants. Such forms of external expression can have a place in the liturgical actions of these peoples, on condition that they are always the expression of true communal prayer of adoration, praise, offering and supplication, and not simply a performance.

43. The liturgical celebration is enriched by the presence of *art*, which helps the faithful to celebrate, meet God and pray. Art in the Church, which is made up of all peoples and nations should enjoy the freedom of expression, as long as it enhances the beauty of the buildings and liturgical rites investing them with the respect and honour which is their due.<sup>90</sup> The arts should also be truly significant in the life and tradition of the people.

The same applies to the shape, location and decoration of the altar,<sup>91</sup> the place for the proclamation of the word of God,<sup>92</sup> and for Baptism,<sup>93</sup> all the liturgical furnishings, vessels, vestments and colours.<sup>94</sup> Preference should be given to materials, forms and colours which are in use in the country.

44. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has firmly maintained the constant practice of the Church of encouraging the veneration by the faithful of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Saints,<sup>95</sup> because the honour "given to the image is given to its

<sup>89</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 30.

<sup>90</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 123-124; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1216.

<sup>91</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, *Institutio generalis*, nn. 259-270; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1235-1239, especially 1236.

<sup>92</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, *Institutio generalis*, n. 272.

<sup>93</sup>Cf. *De Benedictionibus*, *Ordo benedictionis Baptisterii seu Fontis baptismalis*, nn. 832-837.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, *Institutio generalis*, nn. 287-310.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 125; Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 67; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1188.

subject.”<sup>96</sup> In different cultures, believers can be helped in their prayer and in their spiritual life by seeing works of art which attempt, according to the genius of the people, to express the divine mysteries.

45. Alongside liturgical celebrations and related to them, in some particular Churches there are various manifestations of popular devotion. These were sometimes introduced by missionaries at the time of the initial evangelization, and they often develop according to local custom.

The introduction of devotional practices into liturgical celebrations under the pretext of inculturation, cannot be allowed “because by its nature, (the liturgy) is superior to them.”<sup>97</sup>

It belongs to the local Ordinary<sup>98</sup> to organize such devotions, to encourage them as supports for the life and faith of Christians, and to purify them when necessary, because they need to be constantly permeated by the Gospel.<sup>99</sup> He will take care to ensure that they do not replace liturgical celebrations or become mixed up with them.<sup>100</sup>

#### c) *Necessary prudence*

46. “Innovations should only be made when the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.”<sup>101</sup> This norm, was given in the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in relation to the restoration of the liturgy, and it also applies, in due measure, to the inculturation of the Roman rite. In this field, changes need to be gradual and adequate explanation given in order to avoid the danger of rejection or simply an artificial grafting onto previous forms.

<sup>96</sup>Council of Nicea II: *DSchonn.* 601; cf. S. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* XVIII, 45: *SCh* 17, 194.

<sup>97</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 13.

<sup>98</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 839 SS2.

<sup>99</sup>John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 18: *AAS* 81 (1989), 914.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 23.

47. The liturgy is the expression of faith and Christian life, and so it is necessary to ensure that liturgical inculturation is not marked, even in appearance, by religious syncretism. This would be the case if the places of worship, the liturgical objects and vestments, gestures and postures let it appear as if rites had the same significance in Christian celebrations as they did before evangelization. The syncretism will be still worse if biblical readings and chants (cf. above n. 26) or the prayers were replaced by texts from other religions, even if these contain an undeniable religious and moral value.<sup>102</sup>

48. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* envisaged the admission of rites or gestures according to local custom into rituals of Christian initiation, marriage and funerals.<sup>103</sup> This is a stage of inculturation, but there is also the danger that the truth of the Christian rite and the expression of the Christian faith could be easily diminished in the eyes of the faithful. Fidelity to traditional usages must be accompanied by purification and, if necessary, a break with the past. The same applies, for example, to the possibility of christianizing pagan festivals or holy places, or to the priest using the signs of authority reserved to the Heads of civil society, or for the veneration of ancestors. In every case it is necessary to avoid any ambiguity. Obviously the Christian liturgy cannot accept magic rites; superstition, spiritism, vengeance or rites with a sexual connotation.

49. In a number of countries, there are several cultures which coexist, and sometimes influence each other in such a way as to lead gradually to the formation of a new culture, while at times they seek to affirm their proper identity, or even oppose each other, in order to stress their own existence. It can happen that customs may have little more than folkloric interest. The Episcopal Conference will examine each case individually with care: they should respect the riches of each culture and those who defend them, but they should not ignore or neglect a minority culture with which they are not familiar. They

<sup>102</sup>These texts can be used profitably in the homily, because it is one of the tasks of the homily "to show the points of convergence between revealed divine wisdom and noble human thought, seeking the truth by various paths": John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dominicae cenae*, 24 February 1980, n. 10; AAS 72 (1980), 137.

<sup>103</sup>Nn. 65, 77, 81. Cf. *Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum*, Praenotaotanda, nn. 30-31, 79-81, 88-89; *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotaotanda, nn. 41-44; *Ordo exequiarum*, Praenotaotanda, nn. 21-22.

should weigh up the risk of a Christian community becoming inward looking, and also the use of inculturation for political ends. In those countries with a customary culture, account must also be taken of the extent to which modernization has affected the people.

50. Sometimes there are many languages in use in the one country, even though each one may be spoken only by a small group of persons or a single tribe. In such cases a balance must be found, which respects the individual rights of these groups or tribes, but without carrying to extremes the localization of the liturgical celebrations. It is also sometimes possible that a country may be moving towards the use of a principal language.

51. To promote liturgical inculturation in a cultural area bigger than one country, the Episcopal Conferences concerned must work together and decide the measures which have to be taken so that "as far as possible, there are not notable ritual differences in regions bordering on one another."<sup>104</sup>

#### IV. Areas of adaptation in the Roman Rite

52. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had in mind an inculturation of the Roman rite when it gave *Norms* for the adaptation of the liturgy to the mentality and needs of different peoples, when it provided for a degree of adaptation in the liturgical books (cf. below 53-61), and also when it envisaged the possibility of a more profound adaptation in some circumstances, especially in mission countries (cf. below 63-64).

##### a) *Adaptations in the Liturgical books*

53. The first significant measure of inculturation is the translation of liturgical books into the language of the people.<sup>105</sup> The completion of translations and their revision, where necessary, should be effected according to the directives given by the Holy See

<sup>104</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 23.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 36 SS2, 3 and 4; 54; 63.

on this subject.<sup>106</sup> Different literary genres are to be respected, and the content of the texts of the latin typical edition is to be preserved, at the same time the translations must be understandable to participants (cf. above n. 39), suitable for proclamation and singing with appropriate responses and acclamations by the assembly.

All peoples, even the most primitive, have a religious language which is suitable for expressing prayer, but liturgical language has its own special characteristics: it is deeply impregnated by the Bible; certain words in current Latin use (*memoria, sacramentum*) took on a new meaning in the Christian faith. Certain Christian expressions can be transmitted from one language to another, as has happened in the past, for example in the case of: *ecclesial, evangelium, baptisma, eucharistia*.

Moreover translators must be attentive to the relationship between the text and the liturgical action, aware of the needs of oral communication and sensitive to the literary qualities of the living language of the people. The qualities needed for liturgical translations are also required in the case of new compositions, when they are envisaged.

54. For the celebration of the Eucharist, the Roman Missal, "while allowing (... ) for legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council," must remain "a sign and instrument of unity"<sup>107</sup> of the Roman rite in different languages. The General Instruction of the Missal foresees that "in accordance with the Constitution on the Liturgy, each Conference of Bishops has the power to lay down norms for its own territory that are suited to the traditions and character of peoples, regions and different communities."<sup>108</sup> The same also applies to the gestures and postures of the faithful,<sup>109</sup> the ways in which the altar and the Book of the Gospels are venerated,<sup>110</sup> the texts of the opening

<sup>106</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 20: AAS 81 (1989), 916.

<sup>107</sup>Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, 3 April 1969: AAS 61 (1969), 221.

<sup>108</sup>*Missale Romanum*, Institutio generalis, n. 6; cf. also *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, nn. 111-118.

<sup>109</sup>Cf. *Missale Romanum*, Institutio generalis, n. 22.

<sup>110</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 232.

chants,<sup>111</sup> the song at the preparation of the gifts<sup>112</sup> and the communion song,<sup>113</sup> the rite of peace,<sup>114</sup> conditions regulating communion with the chalice,<sup>115</sup> the materials for the construction of the altar and liturgical furniture,<sup>116</sup> the material and form of sacred vessels,<sup>117</sup> liturgical vestments.<sup>118</sup> Episcopal Conferences can also determine the manner of distributing communion.<sup>119</sup>

55. For the other sacraments and for sacramentals, the Latin typical edition of each ritual indicates the adaptations which pertain to the Episcopal Conferences,<sup>120</sup> or to the individual Bishop in particular circumstances.<sup>121</sup> These adaptations concern texts, gestures, and sometimes the ordering of the rite. When the typical edition gives alternative formulae, Conferences of Bishops can add other formulae of the same kind.

56. For the rites of Christian Initiation, Episcopal Conferences are "to examine with care and prudence what can properly be admitted from the traditions and character of each people"<sup>122</sup> and "in mission countries to judge whether initiation ceremonies practiced among the people, can be adapted into the rite of Christian Initiation,

<sup>111</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 26.

<sup>112</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 50.

<sup>113</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 56 i.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 56 b.

<sup>115</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 242.

<sup>116</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 263 and 288.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 290.

<sup>118</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 304, 305, 308.

<sup>119</sup>Cf. *De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, Praenotanda, n. 21.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. *Ordo initiationis christianianae adultorum*, Praenotanda generalia, nn. 30-33; Praenotanda, nn. 12, 20, 47, 64-65; *Ordo*, n. 312; Appendix, n. 12; *Ordo Baptismi parvulorum*, Praenotanda, m. 8, 23-25; *Ordo Confirmationis*, Praenotanda, nn. 11-12, 16-17; *De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, Praenotanda, n. 12; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, Praenotanda, nn. 35b, 38; *Ordo Unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curae*, Praenotanda, nn. 38-39; *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, nn. 39-44; *De Ordinatione Episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum* editio typica altera, Praenotanda, n. 11; *De Benedictionibus*, Praenotanda generalia, n. 39.

<sup>121</sup>Cf. *Ordo initiationis christianianae adultorum*, Praenotanda, n. 66; *Ordo Baptismi parvulorum*, Praenotanda, n. 26; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, Praenotanda, n. 39; *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, n. 36.

<sup>122</sup>*Ordo initiationis christianianae adultorum*, *Ordo Baptismi parvulorum*, Praenotanda generalia, n. 30, 2.

and to decide whether they should be used.”<sup>123</sup> It is necessary to remember, however, that the term “initiation” does not have the same meaning or designate the same reality when it is used of social rites of initiation among certain peoples, or when it is contrary to the process of Christian Initiation, which leads through the rites of the catechumenate to incorporation into Christ in the Church by means of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

57. In many places it is the marriage rite that calls for the greatest degree of adaptation so as not to be foreign to social customs. To adapt it to the customs of different regions and peoples, each Episcopal Conference has the “faculty to prepare its own proper marriage rite, which must always conform to the law which requires that the ordained minister or the assisting layperson,<sup>124</sup> according to the case, must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties and give them the nuptial blessing.”<sup>125</sup> This proper rite must, obviously, bring out clearly the Christian meaning of marriage, emphasize the grace of the sacrament and underline the duties of the spouses.<sup>126</sup>

58. Among all peoples, funerals are always surrounded with special rites, often of great expressive value. To answer the needs of different countries, the Roman ritual offers several forms of funerals.<sup>127</sup> Episcopal Conferences must choose those which correspond best to local customs.<sup>128</sup> They will wish to preserve all that is good in family traditions and local customs, and ensure that funeral rites manifest the Christian faith in the resurrection and bear witness to the true values of the Gospel.<sup>129</sup> It is in this perspective that funeral rituals can incorporate the customs of different cultures and respond as best they can to the needs and traditions of each region.<sup>130</sup>

59. The Blessing of persons, places or things touches the everyday life of the faithful and answers their immediate needs. They

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., n. 31; cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 65.

<sup>124</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1108 and 1112.

<sup>125</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 77; *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, n. 42.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 77.

<sup>127</sup>Cf. *Ordo exequiarum*, Praenotanda, n. 4.

<sup>128</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 9 and 21, 1-3.

<sup>129</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 2.

<sup>130</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 81.

offer many possibilities for adaptation, for maintaining local customs, and admitting popular usages.<sup>131</sup> Episcopal Conferences will be able to employ the foreseen dispositions and be attentive to the needs of the country.

60. As regards the Liturgical Year, each particular Church and religious family adds its own celebrations to those of the universal Church, after approval by the Apostolic See.<sup>132</sup> Episcopal Conferences can also, with the prior approval of the Apostolic See, suppress the obligation of certain feasts or transfer them to a Sunday.<sup>133</sup> They also decide the time and manner of celebrating Rogationtide and Ember Days.<sup>134</sup>

61. The Liturgy of the Hours has as its goal the praise of God and the sanctification by prayer of the day and all human activity. Episcopal Conferences can make adaptations in the second reading of the Office of Readings, hymns and intercessions and in the final Marian antiphons.<sup>135</sup>

#### PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW WHEN MAKING THE ADAPTATIONS PROVIDED FOR IN LITURGICAL BOOKS

62. When an Episcopal Conference prepares its own edition of liturgical books, it decides about the translations and also the adaptations which are envisaged by the law.<sup>136</sup> The acts of the Conference, together with the final vote, are signed by the President and Secretary of the Conference and sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, along with two copies of the approved text.

<sup>131</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 79; *De Benedictionibus*, Praenotanda generalia, n. 39; *Ordo Professionis religiosae*, Praenotanda, nn. 12-15.

<sup>132</sup>Cf. *Normae universales de Anno liturgico et de Calendario*, nn. 49, 55; S. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Instruction Calendaria particularia*, 24 June 1970: AAS 62 (1970), 651-663.

<sup>133</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1246 §2.

<sup>134</sup>Cf. *Normae universales de Anno liturgico et de Calendario*, n. 46.

<sup>135</sup>*Liturgia Horarum*, *Institutio generalis*, nn. 92, 162, 178; 184.

<sup>136</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 455 §2 and can. 838 §3; also for a new edition, John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 20: AAS 81 (1989), 916.

Moreover along with the complete dossier should be sent:

- a) a succinct and precise explanation of the reasons for the adaptations that have been introduced;
- b) indications as to which sections have been taken from other already approved liturgical books and which are newly composed.

After the "recognition" by the Apostolic See has been received, according to the law,<sup>137</sup> the Episcopal Conference promulgates the Decree and determines the date when the new text comes into force.

*b) Adaptations envisaged by n. 40 of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy*

63. Apart from the adaptations provided for in the liturgical books, it may be that "in some places and circumstances, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed and this entails greater difficulties."<sup>138</sup> This is more than the sort of adaptations envisaged by the *General Instructions* and the *Praenotanda* of the liturgical books.

It presupposes that an Episcopal Conference has exhausted all the possibilities of adaptation offered by the liturgical books; that it has made an evaluation of the adaptations already introduced and maybe revised them before proceeding to more far-reaching adaptations.

The desirability or need for an adaptation of this sort can emerge in one of the areas mentioned above (cf. 53-61) without the others being affected. Moreover, adaptations of this kind do not envisage a transformation of the Roman rite, but are made within the context of the Roman rite.

64. In some places when there are still problem about the participation of the faithful, a Bishop or several Bishops can set out their difficulties to their colleagues in the Episcopal Conference, and

<sup>137</sup>Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 §3.

<sup>138</sup>Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 40.

examine with them the desirability of introducing more profound adaptations, if the good of souls truly require it.<sup>139</sup>

It is the function of Episcopal Conferences to propose to the Apostolic See the modifications it wishes to adopt following the procedure set out below.<sup>140</sup> The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is ready to receive the proposals of Episcopal Conferences and examine them keeping in mind the good of the local Churches concerned and the common good of the universal Church, and to assist the process of inculturation where it is desirable or necessary. It will do this in accordance with the principles laid down in this Instruction (cf. above nn. 33-51), and in a spirit of confident collaboration and shared responsibility.

#### PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THE APPLICATION OF N. 40 OF THE CONCILIAR CONSTITUTION ON THE LITURGY

65. The Episcopal Conference will examine what has to be modified in liturgical celebrations because of the traditions and mentality of peoples. It will ask the national or regional liturgical commission to study the matter and examine the different aspects of the elements of local culture and their eventual inclusion in the liturgical celebrations. The Commission is to ensure that it receives the appropriate expert advice. It may be sometimes opportune to ask the advice of members of non-Christian religions about the religious or civil value of this or that element (cf. above nn. 30-32).

If the situation requires it, this preliminary examination will be made in collaboration, with the Episcopal Conferences of neighbouring countries or those with the same culture (cf. above nn. 33-51).

66. The Episcopal Conference will present the proposal to the Congregation, before any experimentation takes place. The presentation should include a description of the innovations proposed, the reasons for their adoption, the criteria used, the times and places chosen for a preliminary experiment and an indication which groups will make it, and finally the acts of the discussion and the vote of the Conference.

<sup>139</sup>Cf. S. Congregation for Bishops, Directory for Bishops in their pastoral ministry *Ecclesiae imago*, 22 February 1973, n. 84.

<sup>140</sup>Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 40, 1.

After an examination of the proposal carried out together by the Episcopal Conference and the Congregation, the latter will grant the Episcopal Conference a facility to make an experiment for a definite period of time, where this is appropriate.<sup>141</sup>

67. The Episcopal Conference will supervise the process of experimentation,<sup>142</sup> normally with the help of the national or regional liturgical commission. The Conference will also take care to ensure that the experimentation does not exceed the limits of time and place that were fixed. It will also ensure that pastors and the faithful know about the limited and provisional nature of the experiment, and it will not give it publicity of a sort which could have an effect on the liturgical practice of the country. At the end of the period of experimentation, the Episcopal Conference will decide whether it matches up to the goal that was proposed or whether it needs revision and it will communicate its conclusions to the Congregation along with full information about the experiment.

68. After examining the dossier, the Congregation can issue a decree, giving its consent, possibly with some qualifications, so that the changes can be introduced into the territory covered by the Episcopal Conference.

69. The faithful, both lay people and clergy, should be well informed about the changes and prepared for their introduction into the liturgical celebrations. The changes are to be put into effect as circumstances require, with a transition period if this is appropriate (cf. above n. 61).

## Conclusion

70. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments presents these rides to the Episcopal Conferences to govern the work of liturgical inculturation envisaged by the Second Vatican Council as a response to the pastoral needs of peoples of different cultures. Liturgical inculturation should be carefully inte-

<sup>141</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, n. 40, 2.

<sup>142</sup>Cf. *ibid.*

grated into a pastoral plan for the inculturation of the Gospel into the many different human situations that are to be found. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments hopes that each particular Church, especially the Young Churches, will discover that the diversity of certain elements of liturgical celebrations can be a source of enrichment, while respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite, the unity of the whole Church and the integrity of the faith transmitted to the saints for all time (cf. Jude 3).

*The present Instruction was prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, by order of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who approved it and ordered that it be published.*

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25 January 1994.

*Cardinal Antonio María Javierre Ortas*  
PREFECT

+ *Geralds M. Angelo*  
ARCHBISHOP SECRETARY

## **Festal Homilies for July and August**

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*Regino Cortes, O.P.*

### **FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**July 3, 1994**

FIRST READING: *Ezk 2:2-5*

This is the inaugural vision of the prophet Ezekiel calling him to the prophetic mission just like the prophet Isaiah in 6:1-13 and Jeremiah 1:4-10. The date of Ezekiel's call is given in chapter 1:1-2 but two dates are presented here. Verse 1 has, "in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month," the fourth month in the Jewish calendar being the month of *Tamuz* falling either in June or July. Verse 2 says: "on the fifth of the month — it was the fifth year of exile for King Jehoiachin — ..." The fifth month is called *Ab* falling either in July or August. According to absolute chronology the fifth year of exile of King Jehoiachin would fall in 593 B.C. since the first deportation to Babylon, according to Nebuchadnezzar's annals, happened in 598 B.C. Ezekiel was one of those who were exiled. But what is the starting point of the thirtieth year? This is still a matter for debate.

The Jerusalem Bible (JB [see footnote to verse 1]) proposes to amend the text to "thirteen years" and makes this verse the introduction to the vision of the "Chariot of Yahweh" (1:4-28 and 3:12-15 which in our present text is interrupted by the inaugural vision in 2:1-10 and 3:1-11 called the "Vision of the Scroll") which can then be dated in the year 585 B.C. The New American Bible (NAB) interprets this to be the age of the prophet. A recent clarification relates this "thirtieth year" to the discovery of the "Book of the Covenant" narrated in 2 Kings 22:8 ff. which started the religious reform of King Josiah (2 K 23), called

the “deuteronomic reform” since it was supposedly triggered by the Book of the Law corresponding to our present book of Deuteronomy chapters 12 to 26, hence called the “Deuteronomic Code.” This happened during the 8th year of King Josiah in 623/22 B.C. Hence the “thirtieth year” from 623 B.C. would correspond to 593 B.C. which is in harmony with the second date. However, much speculations are still at work here.

The “spirit” that entered into Ezekiel is no other than the spirit of God affecting his own person so as to receive a supernatural communication. The phrase “Son of Man” is a favorite phrase of Ezekiel found in his book about 87 times. It does not have a messianic meaning like the phrase in Daniel 7:13 but only signifies man’s mortality in contrast with God’s omnipotence. Ezekiel, in spite of his weakness, is sent by God to the rebellious Israelites. Through the prophets God always reminded his people, “whether they heed or resist,” of the covenant and its obligations.

#### SECOND READING: 2 Co 12:7-10

The first part of verse 7: “as to the extraordinary revelations,” is found in some manuscripts connected with the preceding verse. The Jerusalem Bible even suggests that the conclusion of v. 6 could extend to the phrase “that I might not become conceited” (liturgical text), or “to stop me from getting too proud” (JB), since this is repeated also at the end of verse 7. In any case these emendations do not change the general tenor of what Paul is trying to say.

The “thorn in the flesh” is interpreted in various ways although grammatically the “angel of Satan” is definitely in apposition to the former phrase and not the cause. It can be taken as a phrase in parenthesis or an explanation in this manner: “I was given a thorn in the flesh (an angel of Satan) to beat me and keep me from getting proud.” This “thorn” could be a sickness, physical or functional (psychical). In Galatians 4:13 St. Paul mentions that he got sick there. But whether this is the “thorn” which he was experiencing is not sure in the context. Perhaps it could also refer to the contradictions he had been undergoing from among the Judaizers who were undermining his apostolic works in Corinth. These were the opponents against whom he directed his defense or apologia in this second canonical letter to the Corinthians (See 2 Co 11:13-14).

In spite of St. Paul's human capabilities (he could speak as a philosopher if he wanted to as he did in Athens: *Ac* 17:22-31), he considered them as weaknesses in the presence of the the grace or power of God. He realized after his failure to convert the philosophers of Athens that "the Good News is not to be preached in terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed" (*1 Co* 1:17). He changed his attitude in preaching to the Corinthians speaking rather with what he calls the "language of the cross." "The language of the cross may be illogical to those who are not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's power to save" (*1 Co* 1:18).

#### GOSPEL READING: *Mk* 6:1-6

The return of Jesus to his home town of Nazareth after he started his public ministry is only given by St. Mark in this section also followed by St. Matthew (13:53-58), in contrast to St. Luke who placed it at the very beginning of his ministry (*Lk* 4:16-30). Jesus took advantage of the celebration of the Sabbath in the synagogue as the occasion to preach to his townmates who were amazed at the words of wisdom coming from him.

Verse 3, "Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary..." has some variant readings. Some manuscripts has "is this not the son of the carpenter?" as found in St. Matthew (13:55). Origen follows the second variant (*Contra Celsum* 1, 28) and even says that nowhere in the Gospel was Jesus called "the carpenter." But the first variant is favored by the major codices like the Vatican, Sinaitic and Alexandrian codices. The use of the article in Mark ("the carpenter") and the designation that he was the "son of Mary" presents a very plausible case that St. Joseph was no longer alive. But who were these brothers and sisters mentioned by St. Mark?

We find the mention of the "brothers" of Jesus many times in the New Testament: *Mk* 3:31; *Mt* 12:46; 13:55 also mentioning his "sisters" as in St. Mark; *Jn* 2:12; *Ac* 1:14; *1 Co* 9:5. Were they blood brothers and sisters of Jesus? Those who deny the perpetual virginity of Mary take these "brothers of Jesus" as children of Mary by St. Joseph but nowhere in the New Testament do we find any text that Mary had other children except Jesus. St. Mark mentions in 15:40 that James the younger and Joset (variant of Joses or Joseph as in *Mt*

27:56) were the sons of another Mary. In St. John 19:26 this Mary is identified as the wife of Clopas. There is then greater probability that the "brothers" of Jesus mentioned here by St. Mark were his cousins.

## HOMILY

"He came into his own and his own did not receive him." This passage in St. John (1:10) can very well sum up the attitudes of the countrymen of Jesus who rejected him in spite of having heard his words of wisdom and witnessed his miracles. They even said: "What kind of wisdom is he endowed with? How is it such miraculous deeds are accomplished by his hands?" Is there here a tinge of jealousy or envy on the part of his townmates who, knowing how this man grew up in their midst, unassuming in his work in the carpentry shop, see him now speaking with great authority even greater than the prophets, expelling demons and curing all sorts of diseases? Even his kinsmen did not believe him at first (*Mk* 3:21) although later on some of them did, called the "brothers of the Lord" occupying prominent positions in the Jerusalem church.

Faith should penetrate mere external appearances. It makes us see God and his works, our Lord Jesus and also his works, in the most ordinary events of life, in the people whom we see, in the works that we do, and most especially in the celebration of the sacraments, particularly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

With the incarnation of the Word the presence of the supernatural in the world has become an ordinary thing. The Church itself, the mystical Body of Christ, perpetuates this presence. That is why St. John does not use the word "miracle" but calls all the miracles of Christ as "signs," that the supernatural has enveloped the world. With the eyes of our faith we should see these supernatural realities around us. When we participate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist we are in fact participating in a heavenly celebration with the presence of angels and saints. When we help our fellowmen in need, we are in fact doing something for the Lord. As he himself said: I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (*Mt* 26:40).

## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 10, 1994

FIRST READING: *Am* 7:12-15

The narrative section in Amos 7:10-16 interrupts a series of 5 prophetic visions predicting the downfall of Samaria. Amaziah, priest of Bethel, confronted the prophet Amos who had been prophesying against the corruption and injustices of the rich people of the northern kingdom during the time of Jeroboam II (783-743 B.C.). The accusation of Amaziah and the answer of Amos suggests to us some features of the prophetic office during this period.

The answer of Amos in 7:14 has been considered a *crux interpretum* or a difficult verse among biblical interpreters. Although it is translated in the past tense by many translations like the JB or our liturgical text ("I was no prophet") the right translation should be in the present tense "I am not a prophet" just like in the Vulgate (*non sum propheta*). Was Amos here denying his prophetic character? The solution, I believe, may be found in the second part of the answer when he denied (also in the present tense) being a member of the brotherhood of prophets. In response to the indictment of Amaziah who thought he was a prophet-for-profit Amos responds that he was not at all of that kind but was truly called by Yahweh from being a "shepherd" in Tekoa and a "dresser of sycamores" to prophesy to the people of Israel. In verse 15 the Hebrew text has *boker* which means a "cowherd" or "herdsman" which some interpreters have changed to *noqed* just like in 1:1. The usual word for "shepherd" in Hebrew is *ro'eh* as found in 1:2 but *noqed* following a Ugaritic parallel seems to be a special shepherd, one who takes care of the flocks of the king. Mesha, the king of Moab, was a *noqed* (2 K 3:4). In 1 Chronicles 27:28 there is a royal functionary who was "overseer of the olives and sycamores." Could this be one of Amos' duties in Tekoa or at least working under this office before he was called to become a prophet?

SECOND READING: *Ep* 1:3-14

The first chapter of Ephesians contains a section of blessings (vv. 3-14 which is our liturgical text) and a section of thanksgiving (vv. 15-23). The ideas mentioned in the blessings are echoes of a

baptismal celebration, like "adopted sons," "divine favor," "forgiveness of sins," the Holy Spirit as "pledge of our inheritance," etc., that some interpreters link this section and even the letter itself to this sacrament. The blessings are manifold and the Jerusalem Bible has identified about six of them (cf. JB's footnote to this chapter).

Some textual difficulties, however, are to be noted. The beginning of verse 4 has the particle *kathos* which is not translated by the liturgical text nor by the JB and the New American Bible. The King James Version (KJV) has: "according as he hath chosen us in him..." This particle may have a causal function and may be translated as "because." Hence we can render verse 4: "Because God chose us in him before the world began, ..." which starts the reasons why God is to be blessed or praised.

In some manuscripts the ending of verse 4, *en agape* ("in love") is joined to the next phrase, "he predestined us..." A variant translation may be: "*In love* he predestined us through Christ Jesus to be his adopted sons..." This would make the phrase *en agape* a divine attribute rather than human.

Another variant of the same nature is found in verses 8-9. The ending of verse 8, *en pase sophia kai phronesei* ("in all wisdom and prudence or insight") is also joined by some manuscripts to verse 9. This is followed by our liturgical text: "God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the mystery..." The JB, the KJV, the Vulgate, *et al.* link it with verse 8. The JB translates: "Such is the richness of the grace which he has showered on us *in all wisdom and insight* (v. 9). He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, ..." Joining the aforesaid phrase to verse 9 means that it is through God's wisdom and insight that man understands fully the mystery of God's plan.

This plan or decree (*oikonomia*) "to be carried out in the fullness of time" is "to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship." Because of man's sin the whole of creation was also separated from God (*Ro* 8:19-21) But with the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ (cf. *Ep* 4:10) all of creation, from the material to the human spheres (Jews and Gentiles) and even the angelic spheres, are reunited in Christ. Here in Ephesians as in Colossians Christ is given a cosmic dimension.

St. Marks's version of the sending of the apostles which he immediately placed after Christ's rejection from Nazareth has some slight divergencies from the versions of St. Matthew (10:9-14) and St. Luke (9:1-6). Usually St. Luke follows St. Mark but in this pericope he seems to agree more in details with St. Matthew. In the list of things not to be taken by the apostles, St. Matthew and St. Luke are more rigid than St. Mark. The latter allows a staff and the wearing of sandals. St. Matthew prohibits them. St. Luke also mentions that the apostles should not carry a staff, used as a prop in walking and to ward off animals, but does not say anything about sandals. However in the mission of the 72 disciples (*Lk* 10:1-12) which is only found in St. Luke, it is specified that they should not have sandals. Some commentators think that this could perhaps refer to the carrying of spare sandals and not to the prohibition of wearing them because the difficult stony terrain of the Holy Land would require their use. Furthermore the gesture of shaking dust from one's feet "in testimony against them" (those places who do not receive them or hear them), would be more symbolic if this was done with sandals.

Reducing the traveling gears to bare necessities is dictated by the urgency of their mission which would just be a prelude to the other apostolic missions they would undertake after the ascension of the Lord. The important thing is to preach the message: "the need of repentance" as it was already inaugurated by Jesus himself (cf. *Mk* 1:15). As the preaching of the Lord was accompanied by prodigies especially the expulsion of demons and the cure of diseases, likewise, the apostles' mission was characterized by the authority they exercised over unclean spirits.

The "anointing with oil" is not yet the sacrament of the anointing of the sick but a medical practice common among the Jews although it presages this sacrament which St. James mentions in his letter, 5:14.

## HOMILY

It is the will of Christ that his salvific mission be participated by others so he chose 12 apostles in the beginning and later on 72 disciples (*Lk* 10:1 ff.) and sent them to preach. Before his ascension

to heaven he commanded them to go and “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (*Mt 28:19*). The apostles followed this mandate faithfully beginning from Jerusalem, to Samaria, Antioch in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, the Roman Empire, until India. They founded churches and appointed their successors. St. Peter’s successors in Rome, the Popes, have continued one after the other in an unbroken line, in spite of isolated difficulties, since the first century until our time. In fact the papacy is more vigorous than ever as we enter the twenty-first century.

The mission work of the Church has not ceased since there are still many who have not heard the gospel of salvation, and even if many have heard it the second mandate of the Lord, to baptize, must also be fulfilled. Even among countries who are considered Christians, since the majority are supposed to be baptized, the need for re-evangelization is becoming a serious affair because many are cooling off from their Christian commitment. The attraction of secularism, denying anything that has to do with the divine, is gaining ground especially in affluent countries. Because of material prosperity many think themselves to be self-sufficient even in things of the spirit.

The chosen ministers of the Lord should however concentrate on their goal of witnessing and spreading the good news of salvation, using only the necessary and most useful means for evangelization. If vehicles are useful then, by all means, vehicles be acquired, the ones best suited for the work but not a luxurious one. If high-tech equipment, like sound-systems, video-cassettes, computers, slide-projectors, and the like, can gain souls, then, I think, the Lord will not ban their use. The principle should be that the most useful means are to be acquired and used for a most sublime end.

## SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 17, 1994

FIRST READING: *Jr 23:1-6*

Using a familiar literary form called “oracles of woe” from the first word of this text (*hoy* in Hebrew), a form which is the opposite

of the "beatitudes," or "oracles of happiness," which begins with the word "happy" (*asher* or *'ashrey* in Hebrew), the prophet Jeremiah denounced the kings of Judah who are here called "the shepherds," especially the last four successors of Josiah — Jehoahaz, Eliakim/Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin (Jechoniah), Mattaniah/Zedekiah. These four kings were all judged by the author of the Book of Kings as evil who "did what is displeasing to Yahweh." God, through Jeremiah, said to these supposed shepherds: "You have scattered my sheep and driven them away, you have not cared for them, ..." (v. 2). It was during the time of Jechoniah (598 B.C.) that the first deportation happened, the king himself being one of those who was exiled to Babylon. Then during the time of Zedekiah (587 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon returned and destroyed Jerusalem with its temple (2 K 24:18 - 25:30; Jr 52:1-30).

Yet the prophet predicts the return of the exiles, that someday Yahweh "will gather the remnant of his flock from all the lands" (v. 3). This happened in the year 538 B.C. when the Persian Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon the year before, issued an edict for the return of the Jews to their homeland. Verses 5-6 is a messianic text continuing the fulfillment of the prophecy of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7. The name of the "righteous shoot to David" will be "the Lord our justice" (*Yahweh Sidkenu*) in contrast to the name of Zedekiah (*Sidki-Yahu* — "Yahweh is my justice").

#### SECOND READING: *Ep* 2:13-18

Some literary analysts have concluded that verses 14-16 in this passage from Ephesians are part of a Christian hymn inserted here by the author of this letter. The commentator of the Letter to the Ephesians in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary actually thinks that this letter is Deutero-Pauline (NJBC, p. 884). There are still dissenting voices to the contrary.

The text speaks of the reconciliation between the Gentiles ("you who once were far off") and the Jews. This is effected through the blood of Christ, who is also called "our peace."

The punctuations in Greek have caused divergent readings of verses 14-15. *En te sarki autou* translated by the liturgical text "in his own flesh" may be joined to the preceding verse as done by the Good

News Bible: "With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies (15). He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules,..." The Jerusalem Bible even extends the former sentence to "the decrees of the Law" thus: "For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law." Actually the term *echthran*, translated here as "hostility," or "enmity" is an apposition to "barrier." This refers to the wall which used to separate the Jews from the Gentiles in the temple of Jerusalem. "In his own flesh," then, following the Vulgate translation should be appended to the "breaking of the barrier/enmity" and not to the "abolition of the Law." The translation of the New American Bible (NAB) seems to be closer to the original: "For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, ..." NAB has interpreted *en te sarki autou* ("in his flesh") as an instrumental cause.

The "new man" is taken in the collective sense of the new humanity, the "new creation" (2 Co 5:17), "created in the goodness and holiness of the truth" (Ep 4:24). There will be no more divisions of races, cultures, ideologies in this "new man," the "old man" having been destroyed by the death of Christ on the cross (Ro 5:12 ff.).

#### GOSPEL READING: *Mk* 6:30-34

Today's Gospel reading is the sequel to the sending of the apostles in verses 7-13 which, in St. Mark, was interrupted by the narratives about Herod Antipas and John the Baptist (vv. 14-30). In fact the parallel account in St. Matthew of the beheading of St. John the Baptist (*Mt* 14:3-12) presents this passage, which also became an introduction to the multiplication of the bread, as an occasion for Jesus to withdraw from the territory of Herod Antipas. Matthew says: "when Jesus received the news (about the Baptist's death) he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves" (*Mt* 14:13). Actually there could have been a gap of time between the martyrdom of the Baptist and the multiplication of the bread. According to St. John the Evangelist (6:4) it took place before the Pasch which accounts for the crowd who followed Jesus and the apostles.

St. Luke (9:1-44) also follows St. Mark's sequence: sending of the 12 — Herod Antipas/John the Baptist (without the narration of the beheading) — return of the 12 — retreat to a desert place (Mark and Matthew) or Bethsaida (Luke) — multiplication of the bread. This is one section where St. Luke could have edited St. Matthew's chronology correcting the impression that the multiplication of the bread (which according to him and St. Mark happened after the return of the apostles) immediately took place after the death of St. John the Baptist. St. Luke seems to be more credible in his knowledge of the events about Herod Antipas since one of his associates in Antioch was Manaen who grew up with this tetrach (Ac 13:1).

Although the passage serves as an introduction to the miracle of the multiplication of the bread it is also a conclusion to the mission of the apostles. "The apostles returned to Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and what they had taught" (Mk 6:30). The suggestion to go to an "out-of-the-way place and rest a little" is also linked with the apostolic mission narrative which St. Matthew understandably omits since he separates the section of the sending of the apostles from the multiplication of the bread.

## HOMILY

After having gone around the villages to preach repentance and the coming of the Kingdom as Jesus had mandated, the apostles had now returned, tired but happy seeing that demonic powers had succumbed to their authority, diseases were cured and many people repented. The Lord told them to rest for a while.

Many zealous souls have "burned their candles" so to speak in a short span of time because they could not balance their hectic activities with rest. I know of a lay person who was an eloquent speaker and who became over-active in the charismatic movement but who could not seem to say "no" to her many invitations from different prayer groups from all over the Philippines until she got a disease in the lungs. Now she spends most of her time in the hospital.

Bishops, parish priests, missionaries, retreat masters, seminary professors, lay evangelists and all other ministers in the vineyard of the Lord also need regular rest. In some parishes now Monday has become a "no-office day" to give the priests and their staff their

needed rest after the Sunday's busy schedule. Like the battery of a car, our spiritual batteries must also be re-charged so we can work more for the Lord. But let us beware in dissipating our energies in activities which are not for the good of souls.

## SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 24, 1994

FIRST READING: 2 K 4:42-44

From chapters 4:1 to 6:7 of Second Kings we find a series of miracles performed by Elisha who was the successor of Elijah to the prophetic ministry. One of them is the feeding of a hundred people with twenty barley loaves. These stories were traditions of the group who call themselves the "brotherhood of prophets" in the northern kingdom during the 9th century B.C. whose leaders precisely were Elijah and Elisha.

There is obviously a similarity between this miracle and the multiplication of bread by Jesus but the differences are very notable. It is therefore misleading to evaluate the New Testament miracle as having been entirely inspired from the Old Testament parallel.

SECOND READING: *Ep* 4:1-6

Chapter 4 starts the exhortatory or parenetic section of the Letter to the Ephesians. Those who accept this letter to be authentically Paulinian draws attention to the phrase "prisoner for the Lord" in arguing that this was written when St. Paul was in prison in Rome, his first imprisonment which was actually a house captivity but in chains awaiting his accusers from Jerusalem which never came. This was about the year 60-62 A.D.

The virtues mentioned in this passage: "humility, meekness, patience, bearing lovingly with one another," are also found in Colossians 3:12 in the context of living together as parts of the mystical body. The close relationship then between Colossians and Ephesians is very much hinted. Colossians is thought of to be anterior to Ephesians in a similar vein that Galatians is anterior to Romans.

The principles of unity for Christians are summarized in these verses with the Trinitarian dimension very much to the fore. The Spirit is the origin of this unity. "There is one Lord... one God and Father of all..." (4:6). There is one hope, one faith, one baptism, while Colossians adds "over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love" (Col 4:14). We have here the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.

#### GOSPEL READING: *Jn* 6:1-15

Starting this Sunday for five Sundays (17th to 21st in Ordinary Time of B cycle) the gospels will be taken from St. John in place of St. Mark starting from his account of the multiplication of the bread and the ensuing sermon on the Holy Eucharist.

The episode of the multiplication of the bread is one of the few incidents in the life of the Lord, aside from the story of the passion and resurrection, which is given by all four evangelists. There are minimal variants which can be explained by studying their history of traditions or redactions. In addition Matthew and Mark narrate a second miracle of multiplication of loaves (*Mt* 15:32-39; *Mk* 8:1-10) which is absent in St. Luke and in St. John.

The two genitives, "of Galilee of Tiberias" in Greek is problematic. Some think that one of them may have been a gloss. The liturgical text translates "[to the shore] of Tiberias," but this will create another difficulty with regards to the setting of the miracle. Some manuscripts like Codex Bezae of Cambridge (D) of the 6th century and Koridethi (Theta) of the 9th century (called the Western Texts) have: "the Sea of Galilee in the vicinity of Tiberias." If St. John is to be followed then the miracle of the multiplication happened on the western shore of the lake, near Tiberias, and not on the eastern shore, near the mouth of the Jordan river which St. Luke specifies as Bethsaida (*Lk* 9:10). The description of the place as "lonely and deserted" does not really favor the eastern part of the lake since there could have been such a place in the environs of Tiberias. But if St. Matthew's reason (*Mt* 14:13) is taken into account that Jesus precisely wanted to leave the territory of Herod Antipas after the martyrdom of John then the vicinity around Tiberias would not be accurate since this was still part of Herod's territory while the eastern shore belonged to his brother Philip. Tradition has located the site of

the multiplication in *Tabgha* (an arabic contraction of the Greek *Heptapegon*, meaning "seven springs") about 12 kms. from Tiberias.

## HOMILY

One time there was a news item in the papers that about one million eggs were thrown away by a Kibbutz in Israel whose main work was poultry raising in order not to bring down the prices of eggs in the market. In Brazil thousands of sacks of sugar were thrown into the sea for the same reason, to raise market prices of sugar. Even here in the Philippines, when cement prices were going down because of overproduction, tons of them were thrown into the sea. Yet the world is scared of overpopulation.

The exponential increase of world population is becoming a very hot issue. Governments around the globe are concerned about it, world-wide agencies are concerned about it, the Church is concerned about it. But the means advocated by some governments to curb population growth are downright immoral and contrary to God's laws. With this, the Church, the divinely constituted guardian of morality, can never and will never agree. In the Philippines some years back one could never hear over the radio or TV ads favoring ligation or vasectomy. Now it is commonplace. As some countries have accepted abortion as legal, time will come when infanticide would become legal, euthanasia would become legal, the killing of old people and even the handicaps would become legal. If mothers are given the choice over the life and death of their babies then who can prevent people to make a choice between the life and death of their old parents. Murder will always remain a crime and there can never be any choice in crime.

"Set your hearts on God's kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well" (*Mt 6:33*). God knows our problems even before we ask for their solutions. But if we go on using immoral solutions to solve our problems, there will come a time when the solutions themselves will add more to the problems. Seek first God's kingdom and God will even perform a miracle, as our Lord did to all those people who followed him, to give us, even in this world, the true joy of life.

## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 31, 1994

FIRST READING: *Ex* 16:2-4, 12-15

The episode in the liturgical reading was supposed to have happened after the crossing of the sea by the Israelites under Moses' leadership. In the context of Exodus the community has just left the oasis of Elim and is now on the way to Sinai traversing the wilderness of Sin. Here two miracles were recorded: the miracles of the quails and the manna.

Some commentators maintain that these two miracles came from two different traditions which were unified in this section. Those who think that there were actually, at least, two principal groups who left Egypt, in different times and circumstances, one group passing through the north near the Mediterranean and the other through the south towards the Sinai desert, these two miracles are ascribed to each of them. The miracle of the quails could not have happened in the south since this is a phenomenon more realistic near the Mediterranean where quails going to Africa for the winter usually pass. While the miracle of the manna could not have happened in the north since this is an element peculiar in the wilderness of Sinai. In fact this substance is still found in this area which the Bedouins call *man*. This was investigated by two biblical researchers, Fr. Bodenheimer and O. Theodor and was published in *Ergebnisse der Sinai-expedition 1927 der hebraischen Universität Jerusalem*, 1929. These are white, translucent globules, either from the hardened sap of tamarisks which abound in this area or the secretion of a certain kind of insects feeding on tamarisks. If there was a miracle for the nutritional sustenance of God's people in their desert wanderings this miracle may be considered a miracle *quoad modum*.

The manna of the desert wanderings has been regarded as the type of the Holy Eucharist, the real bread from heaven which Christ would give as he instituted the sacrament of his body and blood during the last supper.

SECOND READING: *Ep* 4:17, 20-24

It is in this passage of Paul's epistle, as in some others, that we read our responsibility towards our salvation and not only static

recipients of it. Verse 17 clearly implies that even those who became a "new man" through baptism can still live as pagans do. He exhorts us then "to lay aside our former way of life and the old self ..." (v. 22).

The Greek word *kainos* which is here translated as "new" may also have the meaning of "excellent." It has a much greater meaning than *neos*. This is also the adjective used by Jesus in the phrase "a new commandment" (*entole kaine* — *Jn* 13:34) which implies not only a novel commandment but an "excellent" or "perfect" commandment.

Some commentators take the genitive "of the truth," in the phrase which is translated as in JB: "... in the goodness and holiness of the truth" as a Hebrew genitive, or in the construct state to take the place of an adjective which is scarce in semitic languages. Hence, to express a "just man," it says "a man of justice; "a man of blood," is a "bloody man" or a murderer or a warrior; the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Holiness," etc. It may therefore be translated as "... in true justice and piety (*hosioteti*)."

#### GOSPEL READING: *Jn* 6:24-35

The previous episode in St. John about the multiplication of the bread serves as an introduction to a long sermon of the Lord about "the Bread of Life" which, according to the gospel, happened at the synagogue in Capernaum. Problems of geography must not here obscure the message of the "Eucharistic discourse." It is clear that there are divergences between St. John and the Synoptics concerning this sequence of the multiplication miracle. The Synoptics do not mention at all this discourse on the Bread of Life. St. John on the other hand does not have the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

There is a question in this first part of the discourse whether Jesus was already speaking about the Eucharist or only about faith. In parallel to the narrative of the Samaritan woman it seems that the phrase "Bread of life" in verse 35, just as the "water of life," or the "living water" in *Jn* 4:10, refers to Christ as the object of faith. In fact the entreaty of the people is exactly similar to that of the Samaritan woman: "Sir, give me some of that water (*Jn* 4:15)" / "Sir, give us this bread always" (*Jn* 6:34).

The manna is called by the Jews as the "bread from heaven," but Jesus corrects their misconception that it was Moses who gave them

that heavenly food. It was not Moses but God. Now God is giving them the *true* heavenly bread, "the bread of God" or "divine bread." The manna was never characterized in Scripture as a "divine bread" but only in later rabbinic writings. This divine bread is also the bread which gives life, the "living bread." And Jesus then clearly said: I am the bread of life, as he also said that he was the water of life. This "Bread of life" will later on be given as his own body with the institution of the Holy Eucharist during the Last Supper.

A slight variant in verse 27 may however be significant. Most of the manuscripts including the Alexandrian and Vatican codices have it in the future: *dosei* (will give) as represented in our liturgical text, "...food which the Son of Man *will give* you." But the Sinaitic codex (contemporary of the Vatican codex dating from the 4th century A.D.) and the codex Bezae (in Cambridge, dating from the 5th century) have it in the present: *didosin*. Hence the Jerusalem Bible has: "...the kind of food the Son of Man *is offering* you."

## HOMILY

For many years in the United States, when television was still in its infancy, in black and white even until it became colored, one of its most popular programs which often topped the ratings was the program of the late Bishop Fulton Sheen, "Life is Worth Living." The famous Bishop had been very successful in touching the lives of many peoples, rich and poor, young and old, famous and not-famous. Indeed life is worth living and also worth loving.

But for man, created in the image of God as proclaimed in Genesis 1:27 and being reminded of it in the first reading from Ephesians 4:24, life is not only this bodily life nurtured by food that perishes. It is life of the spirit nourished by "food that remains unto life eternal." Christ himself is this "bread of life," and also the "water of life." Believing in Jesus, by partaking of the bread of life and drinking of the life-giving water that he offers "a spring will turn inside him, welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14). And he shall never be hungry again, he shall suffer thirst no more.

Because life is so precious since it is God-given we must resist all the forces that tend to destroy it even, and ironically so, in the name of life itself. Some exponents of population control want to preserve

life and raise the quality of life of many but at the expense of stifling the life of some "innocent few." Some are hard bent on clinging to earthly life while refusing a gram of faith on the life that will never end. It is by having faith in Christ the Lord, the bread who comes down from heaven, that real life is given to the world.

## **NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**August 7, 1994**

FIRST READING: *1 K* 19:4-8

This episode of the prophet Elijah's flight to Horeb is a continuation of the contest at Carmel against the prophets of Baal which Elijah won. The pagan prophets were put to death and the drought ended. But this aroused the anger of Queen Jezebel the mortal enemy of Elijah who sought the life of the prophet. "Elijah was afraid and fled for his life" (*1 K* 19:3). The Hebrew text on the other hand seems to attenuate this fear of Elijah by saying: "he saw and fled for his life." He went to Horeb (the mountain of God in the Sinai peninsula according to the northern tradition) or Mount Sinai (according to the southern tradition). We have here a confirmation of the tradition of Moses' encounter with God in Horeb which during the time of Elijah was already a place of pilgrimage.

The "broom tree" (*rotem* in Hebrew) is one of the tallest shrubs in the Sinai desert which gives temporary relief for weary travelers. The figure "forty days and forty nights" seemed to have been influenced by Moses' stay of forty days and forty nights in the mountain. In fact it does not take this long to travel starting from Carmel to Sinai. As the bird flies it is approximately about 500 kms. from Haifa, at the foot of Mt. Carmel, to Mt. Sinai or Horeb, the traditional mountain of revelation.

SECOND READING: *Ep* 4:30-5:2

Continuing his exhortation to the Christians who became "new men" through baptism and sealed with the Holy Spirit, St. Paul tells them to practice those virtues which would foment unity. The role of

the Holy Spirit, who is here called in a pleonastic form the "Holy Spirit of God," with regards to the Mystical Body of Christ is clarified. Sins against a fellow Christian: deceit, anger, theft, foul talk (vv. 25-29) are also offenses against the Holy Spirit. Instead the Christians should be kind, compassionate, forgiving.

Since Christians are children of God they must be "imitators of God," to become perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. St. John and St. Paul are one in placing love as the highest of all the virtues which would really make a Christian God-like for God himself is love. Quoting Exodus 29:18 where the ram offered as a sacrifice of holocaust for the consecration of Aaron and his sons becomes a "burnt offering whose fragrance will appease Yahweh," St. Paul rightly concludes that Christ, who is the Lamb of God in the New Testament, has offered a more perfect sacrifice. In this manner he has shown his great love for us.

#### GOSPEL READING: *Jn* 6:41-51

The test of faith for the Jews about the person of Christ is reaching its climax. They have witnessed the miracle of the multiplication of the bread. Enthusiastic in the beginning they wanted to make him king. Now he is presenting himself to them as more than a king, more than Moses whom they thought gave them manna from heaven. He is not only a "heavenly bread" like the manna, he is the "bread of God." And much more, he is the "Bread of Life," capable of giving them eternal life.

But like their forefathers in the desert the Jews began to murmur (*Ex* 16:2; 17:3; *Nb* 11:1), their level of faith was low, just regarding Jesus in his human condition, the "son of Joseph." They have not been drawn as yet by the Father whose grace is a requirement for faith. The last phrase of verse 44: "I will raise him up on the last day" is an echo of verse 39. A whole eschatological picture of salvation emerges, the present and the future, the "now" and the "not yet," the necessity of the Father's grace to believe in the Son, the one whom he sent, and the Son's power to resurrect on the last day (*en te eschate hemera*).

Quoting Isaiah 54:13 Jesus explains how God "draws" man. It is hearing the Father and learning from him. Through the prophets and

the sacred writers the Father has spoken about divine realities, about his Son, about divine life. Although only the Son knows the Father intimately, "only the one who is from God has seen the Father."

Verse 51 is a transitional verse from the theme of the "Bread of Life" as object of faith and the Eucharist since this bread which Jesus will give is his "flesh," his ownself for the life of the world.

## *HOMILY*

"No one can come to the Son unless the Father draws him." True, to go to the Son can never be our own doing. It is a grace from the Father. Still we can do something to prepare for this grace and, as promised by the Father, he will bestow this grace to us. This is to listen to the Father and learn from him. Listening and learning are human activities, under our control. But our Lord has made these the conditions so that we may be drawn by the Father. This is not forcing God at all to grant us the grace. It still remains a free gift.

Likewise life is a gift from God. But even human life is bestowed by God from the union of a man and a woman. Freely or forced, in holy matrimony or outside of it, God does not negate his own laws or renege on the promises he made. That union is a human activity, but life which is the result of that union is a gift. In the same vein, when Jesus told his apostles after instituting the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist to do the rite in memorial of him his promise will always remain firm and unshakeable so that everytime the priest pronounces the formula of consecration he becomes truly present.

Our Lord has given us a very simple program for a grace-filled life, the life of faith, the life of always being drawn closer to him: "listen to the Father and learn from the Father." The Father has proclaimed that Christ was the one sent, he is the true Bread of Life. We listen in faith. The Lord told us to eat this bread to live forever. Let us learn this truth and practice it.

## TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 14, 1994

FIRST READING: *Pr* 9:1-6

This chapter of the Book of Proverbs ends a long introduction to two big collections of proverbs supposedly originating from Solomon (*Pr* 10:1 - 22:16 and 25:1 - 29:27). The introduction itself seems to have been written after the exile. In this chapter Wisdom and Folly are here personified as two women inviting the simple-hearted to their respective banquets. The passage in 9:1-6, which is the liturgical text, is the invitation of Lady Wisdom, while 9:12-17 is the invitation of Lady Folly.

The personification of wisdom is frequent in the Old Testament. It is represented as a woman because the word "wisdom" (Heb. *hochma*) is feminine. In this introduction alone of Proverbs we find this personification, aside from our liturgical text, in 1:20-33 and 8:1-21. In Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 24:1-21 she proclaims her own praises saying in verse 3: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,..." Later in verse 23 (Septuagint, v. 33) Lady Wisdom is identified with the Mosaic Law: "All this is no other than the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the Law that Moses enjoined on us."

Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly are competing for the attention of men to enter their respective houses and partake of their food. This has been the theme of the sages about the two ways: the way of life and the way of death. Lady Wisdom says: "Forsake foolishness that you may live" (v. 6).

SECOND READING: *Ep* 5:15-20

The literal meaning of *blepete akribos pos peripateite* is "see diligently how you walk," which is translated by our liturgical text correctly as: "keep careful watch over your conduct." Even in Hebrew the verb *halach* ("he walked") is used to designate conduct and the code of conduct is called a *halacha*. Following the tradition of the sages there are two ways where one can walk: the way of goodness or of life, which is the way of the wise (the *sophoi*); and the way of wickedness or of death, which is the way of the fool (the *asophoi*). This is the theme of Psalm 1.

Actually in Greek the second sentence is still part of the first sentence since *exagoradzomenoi* ("redeeming") is in the plural participle. This completes the clause of "how" we should walk: "redeeming the time," or, as translated here: "making the most of the present opportunity (*kairos*).

Very often the word *kairos* in Greek is translated as "time" in English translations which is also the word for *chronos*. Sometimes the version is "opportunity," or "opportuned time." It is then qualified time (in contrast to *chronos* which is quantified time) either by the will of God or by the will of man. Many of the events in Scripture are qualified time even the birth of the Messiah: "when the time came he was born of a woman," and his death as it is told in John 13:1: "It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father." We are in the "time" of the Holy Spirit waiting for Christ's second coming. This is the time for salvation. PCP-II takes note of this even in its inaugural sentence.

GOSPEL READING: *Jn* 6:51-58

The "Discourse on the Eucharist" from St. John continues. It is the opinion of some commentators that it is only in verse 51 that Jesus starts speaking about the Eucharist. The phrase "Bread of Life" in the preceding verses was still not the Eucharist but the object of faith on the one whom the Father sent from heaven. It is now clear that this "living bread coming down from heaven" is given as the Lord's "flesh for the life of the world."

It is, nevertheless, asked which pair of terms did our Lord employ in the institution of the Eucharist: "flesh and blood" or "body and blood"? In the synoptic gospels "body (*soma*) and blood (*hema*)" is found as well as in 1 Corinthians 11:24, the oldest known text of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. But in St. John the binomial is "flesh (*sarx*) and blood," (in this sermon and in *1 Jn* 4:2). We find the same pair used by St. Ignatius of Antioch who was martyred in the year 110 A.D. (*Smyrna*, 12,2) and by St. Justin (martyred in 165 A.D.; in his book *Apologia* I, 66). Among the Jews the pair is usually "flesh and blood" as in Matthew 16:17; found also in Ezekiel 39:17 and Deuteronomy 12:27. It is most probable that Jesus also used this pair in the institution of the Eucharist in the original Aramaic. The use of

"body," it seems can be traced back in the translation of the Septuagint which, most often, renders the Hebrew *basar* (flesh) into Greek as *soma* (body) and not *sarx* ("flesh" in Greek).

These words of Jesus were a shock to the Jews. Only sometime before they murmured when they were told that he came down from heaven since, according to them, they knew his family (vv. 41-43), now they were having a crisis of faith hearing that he would give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink. They could not even take the blood of animals. But Jesus continued even emphasizing in the next verses the reality of his promise without any hint that he was talking in a metaphorical manner.

### HOMILY

The promise of Jesus that he would give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink was fulfilled when he instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during the Last Supper. But it was not what the Jews thought it would be. It would be his real body and his real blood but in the form of bread and wine. The way the Holy Eucharist was formed as a sacrament, a memorial, a sacrifice, a banquet, a thanksgiving, a worship, a perpetual divine presence, can only have been conceived by a divine being. The perfect meaning of a sacrament is totally fulfilled in the Eucharist. It is the total sign of an invisible grace. The accidentals of the bread and wine are still there, the shape, the taste, the color, the location. But the invisible reality of Christ is there, truly present, body, soul and divinity.

The "memorial" covers all the events of salvation history climaxing in Christ's passion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Christ as savior brings to mind all the events from the beauty and joy of creation which mankind lost; the sin of our first parents from which Christ has liberated us; the call of Abraham as the father of the chosen community of salvation; the life of this chosen community in which the Redeemer would be born; their stay in Egypt where the Pasch was celebrated commemorating their liberation from Egypt; wanderings in the desert, entrance to the Promised Land, and so on until the incarnation of the Word. All human experiences, personal and communitarian, are given space in this memorial since they have been experienced by the people of God. But the focus is salvation from all evil.

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament are perfected in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross. "By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying" (*Heb* 10:14). In the sacrifice of the Mass the victim is most perfect, Christ himself, and not any more imperfect animals like sheep and goats; the priest is Christ himself since the human celebrant only acts in the name of Christ. That is why it is a sacrifice most pleasing to the Father.

It can truly be said that no other institution can equal the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the celebration of the Mass in which it is accomplished.

## **TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**August 21, 1994**

FIRST READING: *Jos* 24:1-2, 15-17, 18

This passage in the Book of Joshua is supposed to be the ratification of the covenant which the chosen people made with God at Sinai during the time of Moses now that they had settled in the Promised Land. The place of this ratification was Shechem. But historically some of the tribes which were gathered here seemed not to have gone down to Egypt and were not partakers of the Exodus-event. These were the tribes from the north like Asher, Zebulun, Naphthali and the tribe of Gad in the Trans-Jordan. This gathering could have been the birth of the religious confederation of the chosen people recognizing Yahweh as their God. Reliable biblical historians think that the role of Joshua in organizing this confederation is historically authentic. The most probable date could be during the last part of the 13th century or the beginning of the 12th after the Israelites took Hazor. Excavations at Hazor confirm this conquest.

There is a recital of the events of salvation history starting from the Patriarchs until the conquest of the Promised Land in this passage which is omitted in the liturgical text. It is here where we learned that the miracle emphasized to have been performed by God at the Sea of Reeds (not the Red Sea proper as in later texts) was the

destruction of the Egyptian army and not the crossing of the Israelites (v. 7). Another small datum which however could shed light on the controversy surrounding the conquest of Jericho was the fact that there was a battle between the forces of Joshua and the people of Jericho. Surprisingly there is no mention in this passage of the collapse of the walls of Jericho. Archaeology in fact has shown that when the tribes coming from Egypt led by Joshua crossed the Jordan the walls of Jericho were already in ruins.

SECOND READING: *Ep* 5:21-32

Christian marriage is an ideal relationship because it is patterned after the relationship of Christ and the Church which, following the image of the Old Testament between Yahweh and his people, is also conceived as a marriage. And as Christ is the head of the Church so also the wife must consider her husband as the head. On the other hand a husband must love his wife just as Christ loves the Church giving his life for her, "making her holy."

The image in verses 25-26 is taken from the Jewish marriage custom of escorting the bride to the groom after she had bathed and dressed. In this passage it is applied to baptism when the Lord himself bathe the faithful, members of the Church, in the regenerating waters using the sacramental formula, "the power of the word."

The letter has given a more developed meaning of Genesis 2:24 which in that passage alludes to the union between husband and wife but is now referred to the union between Christ and the Church.

GOSPEL READING: *Jn* 6:60-69

We end during this Sunday the five gospels taken from St. John interrupting the sequence of the Gospel of St. Mark who is the evangelist of the Cycle B of the Ordinary Sundays of the Year. The five Johannine pericopes are taken from chapter 6 beginning with the miracle of the multiplication of the bread during the seventeenth Sunday of the year and highlighted by the discourse on the Holy Eucharist.

Now it was not only the crowd, many of whom followed him because of his miracles, but even a number of the disciples were

scandalized at his proclamation. Yet the Lord did not make a correction that he was just speaking in a symbolic or metaphorical manner. On the other hand he was not alluding to a gross physical reality, nonetheless it is a reality, but on a spiritual level. And the disciples would realize this at the moment of his resurrection and ascension. It is clear from their incredulity that they were not drawn by the Father (*Jn 6:44*). They have heard but they did not learn. This last is also a prerequisite to come to Jesus: "to hear the teaching of the Father, and learn from it, is to come to me" (*Jn 6:45*).

But still there was this core group headed by Peter who heard and learnt. When they were asked, and the question was poignant: "do you want to leave me too?" The answer of Peter reverberates to all future generations of believers on the Holy Eucharist: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

## *HOMILY*

There was this story of a teenage boy who had a joyful family. He was the eldest with two younger sisters one of whom was also a teenager. The pillar of the family was the father, the bread-winner and also the religious animator of the children and even of the wife whose religiosity was not as deep as the husband. The boy was a member of the acolytes' group of the parish, a leader and even counsellor of the other members especially of a younger member who confides to him personal problems including religious problems. He never fails to encourage the younger acolyte to go on in spite of difficulties and to trust in the Lord always.

Then tragedy struck which greatly tested the faith of our boy. His father died in an accident. The religious foundation of their mother suddenly collapsed blaming God for the tragedy. His two sisters stopped schooling. Their mother stopped going to church and turned to alcohol. The boy now took the role of the father and even had to chide his mother for her drunkenness. Still his faith stood firm. Another cross was added when his mother took a new "husband" and had him stay in their own house, a live-in situation causing scandal in the neighborhood. The children were bearing it all and continued praying for the best. A third tragedy struck when the youngest girl was run-over by a car. His faith now began to wobble.

It snapped when one day he was told by his young acolyte friend, who happened to be courting his younger sister, that the step-father raped the girl and was already on the family way. His whole world collapsed, his faith was shattered, he blamed God for the whole tragedy. He waited for his step-father to return from his usual drinking spree and stabbed him to death. He only realized later on in prison that it was wrong for him to have blamed God. He turned back to him. His mother also realized all her mistakes and returned to the practice of her faith. His younger acolyte friend later on married his younger sister to give a name to the child born out of wedlock and raise a family of their own. The boy of our story is now out of prison, a new man, happily married with children and a God-fearing home.

There are so many crises and tragedies which happen in life but we should never blame and separate ourselves from the Lord since he is the only one to whom we can turn and ask for help. The disciples who were shallow in their faith did not pass the test when they were told about "eating the flesh of the Lord and drinking his blood." Only a handful did. The answer of Peter to Christ will always be the strongest bind and the firmest base of the pillar of our faith: "Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life."

## **TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**August 28, 1994**

FIRST READING: *Dt* 4:1-2, 6-8

The "statutes" (Heb. *hoqim*) are legal prescriptions while the "decrees" (Heb. *mishpatim*) are judicial decisions of particular cases which become also rules of law. These may refer to the Deuteronomic Code which is given in Deuteronomy 12-26. Historically this code was the one discovered in the Temple during the time of King Josiah in the year 622 B.C. The narrative is given in 2 Kings 22. The discovery initiated a religious reform of this pious king given in chapter 23 of the same book.

The close relationship between "Wisdom" (*hochma*) and "Law" (*Torah*) is already apparent in this passage. This paved the way later on for the identification of wisdom and law which is personified in

Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 24. On the other hand the "Law" seems to be personified as the "Word" in *Dt* 30:14. The footnote on this verse in the Jerusalem Bible comments: "The theology of the Word of God has its roots in the personification; it ripens in the wisdom books, cf. *Pr* 8:22+ and *Ws* 7:22+, and comes to maturity in the prologue of the fourth gospel, cf. *Jn* 1:1+. St. Paul applies this text to the 'word of faith,' *Rm* 10:6-8."

SECOND READING: *Jm* 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

The liturgical text has still a contextual link with verse 13 of this chapter in James. God cannot be the cause of evil, not even of temptation. What comes from God is all goodness: *dosis agathe* ("good gift") and *dorema* (favor). *Dosis* can mean the "act of giving" or the "gift" itself.

Depending on the punctuation in *estin* verse 17 may be translated in three ways: (1) All good gift and all perfect favor comes from above; it comes down from the Father of lights. (Practically the JB version and also the Vulgate); (2) All good gift and all perfect favor which is from above comes down from the Father of lights. (This is the translation of the Syriac *Peshita* and the Old Latin which however omits "from above"). This is followed by many modern versions including our liturgical text; (3) Every gift is good and every present is perfect. It is from above. It comes down from the Father of lights. (Version of the New Jerome Biblical Commentary with the comment: "Since a well-known poetic proverb is perhaps being quoted, it seems better to take these words as a complete sentence... Its meaning would be the familiar sentiment: What counts in a gift is not its value but the giver's intention)."

The *photon* in verse 17, which literarily means "lights" is here interpreted as the "stars," "heavenly luminaries." This is also the sense of light in Jeremiah 4:23. James was influenced here by an astronomical image including the image of an eclipse. Instead however of *tropes aposkiasma* ("shadow of change") attested in the majority of manuscripts, the Vatican Codex has *trope aposkiasmatis* ("a change of shadow").

"God wills to bring us to birth." The gratuity of supernatural birth in baptism is emphasized the process of which is initiated by the

preaching of the gospel as also mentioned in many of Paul's epistles. "Now you too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation" (*Ep* 1:13). But, as peculiar in St James' letters, listening is not enough. We must "act on this word."

#### GOSPEL READING: *Mk* 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The gospel pericopes from St. Mark are again resumed after five Sundays having been taken from chapter 6 of St. John. This is the episode about the controversy concerning traditional observances of purification among the Jews. In the Markan context which is also followed by St. Matthew this happened after the narratives of the multiplication of the bread; Jesus' walking on the water (a sequence also followed by St. John); and the cures at Gennesaret. St. Luke, after following St. Mark closely until the multiplication of the bread, omits a large section of Mark (6:45-8:26) and only joined Mark and Matthew again in the profession of faith of St. Peter (*Mt* 16:13-20; *Mk* 8:27-30; *Lk* 9:18-21). St. Luke then does not have the episode of Christ's walking on the water and this controversy about the ritual of purification and dietary laws. It is in this text that Jesus abolished the laws concerning the clean and the unclean.

The word *pygme* in verse 3 is variously translated. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) found it perhaps difficult to translate and so omits it. The liturgical text translates it as "scrupulously"; the NAB, "carefully"; the JB, "as far as the elbow." The Vulgate has *crebro* ("often") which is also the translation of the King James Version. This however depends on the reading in the Sinaitic Codex which is ("frequently").

Jesus insists on internal purity rather than on external purity. He makes a clear distinction between "God's commandments," and hence can never be changed and "human traditions," which are subjects to the vagaries of time and place. Christ showed his divine authority even changing the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law.

#### HOMILY

There are two concepts designated by the term "tradition" (*paradosis* in Greek). This may be the body of beliefs accepted by the

community that gives it continuity with past generations and unity within itself. This is also called in the New Testament as the "deposit" (in Greek: *paratheke*). The other meaning is the process by which these beliefs are transmitted, either by oral means through preaching and teaching, through the celebration of the liturgy and through writing. It is clear from this meaning that even the Bible may be considered as one way of transmitting the deposit of faith.

But tradition as a body of beliefs may be also of different kinds depending on their origin. If this body of beliefs originates from God then it can be properly called "divine-tradition"; if from the Church, "ecclesiastical tradition"; and if purely from man, "human traditions." Jesus sanctioned the Jews because they had been "clinging to what is human tradition." God's commandments are examples of divine traditions. What God has revealed to the prophets and sacred writers and what Christ revealed to the apostles which the apostles later on transmitted to the Christians of future generations with the help of the Holy Spirit concerning faith and morals are divine traditions. Since the apostles are also involved we can properly call these traditions, "divine-apostolic traditions." The baptism of the Gentiles to Christianity without circumcision is an example of a practice which God revealed to St. Peter and confirmed by the Holy Spirit (Ac 10) which now constitutes a "divine-apostolic tradition." Dogmas about the Blessed Mary, her assumption, immaculate conception, perpetual virginity are of divine-apostolic tradition. The form and matter of the sacraments are of divine-apostolic tradition and can never be changed. We cannot use in the name of inculturation rice and tuba as matter for the Holy Eucharist.

It is true there are also ecclesiastical traditions in the Church. The discipline of celibacy is one. It is still practiced in the Latin Church because of the good it renders the whole community, the Mystical Body of Christ. There may come a time when it would not be anymore for the good of the community, then that would be a time for change. Many changes in the liturgical rites follow this principle of the community or the faithful's good. The essence of the Mass never changed. This is divine-apostolic tradition. What changed are the rites, the liturgical paraphernalia, but not the matter and form.

There are also "human traditions" in the Church. There is no divine or ecclesiastical tradition mandating us to send Christmas

cards, put up the nativity scene, decorate our homes during Christmas. These are purely human practices or traditions. The memorial of Masses dedicated to particular Saints is part of the Church's liturgical tradition but "*fiestas*," are definitely of human origin so that we would not be rendered spiritually poor if we stop celebrating them. What is greatly important is to cling fast and hard to divine-apostolic traditions, respect ecclesiastical traditions and have more discernment in the practice of human traditions.