

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

Vol. LXXI, Nos. 784-785

May-June 1995

ENCYCLICAL LETTER ***EVANGELIUM VITAE***

ADDRESSED BY THE
SUPREME PONTIFF

POPE JOHN PAUL II

TO ALL THE BISHOPS

PRIESTS AND DEACONS

MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS

LAY FAITHFUL

AND ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL
ON THE VALUE AND INVIOABIUTY
OF HUMAN LIFE



BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	HONORATO CASTIGADOR, O.P.
ASSOCIATE EDITORS	VIRGILIO JOY, O.P. RODEL ALIGAN, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	ROLANDO DE LA ROSA, O.P. FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P. JOSE MA. TINOKO, O.P.
BUSINESS MANAGER	MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.
ASST. BUSINESS MANAGER	ROBERTO PINTO, O.P.
PUBLICATION ASSISTANT	CHRISTINE P. BERMUDEZ
COVER DESIGN	RODOLFO ATIENZA, O.P.

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, the Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published bi-monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and is printed at UST Press, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned. They will, however, be given courteous and scholarly attention. Writers are reminded that the scope of this review is ecclesiastical and broadly archival. While we wish to inform the whole Church, our readership is largely clerical and this should be borne in mind by prospective contributors. Articles herein published do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editorial Staff. Communications of an editorial nature concerning articles, cases and reviews should be addressed to the Editor.

Advertising and subscription inquiries should be addressed to the Business Manager.

Subscription Rates (Effective January 1995):

	One Year	Per copy
Philippines:	P/ 160.00	P 35.00
Foreign: (Via Sea Mail)	US\$ 30.00	\$ 6.00
(Via Air Mail)	US\$ 40.00	\$ 8.00

Subscriptions are paid in advance. In the Philippines, payments should be made by postal money order, telegraphic transfer or check with *regional bank clearing only*. Orders for renewal or change of address should include both old and new addresses, and go into effect fifteen days after notification.

Address all communications to:

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS
University of Santo Tomas
Espafla, Manila, Philippines
Tel. No. 731-31-01 local 251

Table of Contents

EDITORIAL

Honoraio Castigator, O.P. 248 IN THIS ISSUE

MAGISTERIAL WORDS

John Paul II

EVANGELIUM VITAE

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 249 | INTRODUCTION |
| 256 | <i>Ch.1:</i> PRESENT DAY
THREATS TO HUMAN LIFE |
| 281 | <i>Ch. 2:</i> THE CHRISTIAN
MESSAGE CONCERNING LIFE |
| 307 | <i>Ch.3:</i> GOD'S HOLY LAW |
| 339 | <i>Ch. 4:</i> FOR A NEW CULTURE
ON HUMAN LIFE |
| 366 | CONCLUSION |

GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW

Regino Cortes, O.P.

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 371 | FESTAL HOMILIES FOR
JULY 1995 |
|-----|----------------------------------|

EDITORIAL

In This Issue

HONORATO CASTIGADOR, O.P.

Just like what we did with the Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, we are publishing in *toto*, in this issue of *IheBoletin*, Pope John Paul II's recent Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*. We deem it urgent that the English translation of the text will be in the hands of our readers soon. There is no substitute to reading the text itself.

Reaffirming the Church's doctrine on life in no unclear terms and presenting it in a very positive, logical way, the Holy Father proclaims once again the Truth of God's Word amidst all anticipated objections and criticisms. In fact, negative reactions have already been expressed in various communications media. But the text itself *afEvangelium Vitae*, will prove the objectors wrong.

Festal Homilies for July 1995

REGINO CORTES, O.P.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 2, 1995

The first reading in today's Mass narrates the flight of Elijah to the mountain of God. There, the prophet was consoled of having experienced God, his fear of Jezebel's persecution now being dispelled and being assured of the wicked queen's punishment by Jehu and a successor in his prophetic office in the person of Elisha. The second reading comes from the exhortatory or parenetic part of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians. The Gospel Reading tells of Christ's rejection by the Samaritans with three passages on vocation.

FIRST READING: *1K* 19:16-21

After the famous sacrificial contest at Mt. Carmel where Elijah defeated Baal's prophets and put them to the sword and because of this the drought ended (7 K 18:20-46), Elijah became the object of Jezebel's hatred and threatened to kill him (19:1-3). Elijah fled to Horeb (this is the mountain of God in the Elohistic and Deuteronomic traditions; Sinai in the Yahwistic and Priestly traditions). There he had a brief encounter with God like Moses in Exodus 33:18-23. God manifested himself to Elijah not in a

mighty wind, nor in an earthquake, nor in a fire, but in a gentle breeze. He is going to achieve his purpose in Israel not through great show of strength but through simple instruments like Elijah and others whom Elijah will anoint. There were Hazael who would become king of Syria, Jehu who would be king of Israel and punish Jezebel. Then he would also anoint his successor in the prophetic mission in the person of Elisha, son of Shaphat.

Verses 19-20 narrates the call of Elisha. He must be well-to-do to have twelve yoke of oxen. Throwing his cloak, a kind of official vestment of a prophet or at least of Elijah, over Elisha symbolized his call. It was so understood by Elisha although he was given a free choice by Elijah. Elisha answered the call without reservation killing his oxen and using the plow for roasting the oxen which signified his complete turn over to his new vocation.

SECOND READING: *Ga* 5:1-18

The exhortatory part of Paul's letter to the Galatians starts in this chapter as lessons drawn from the doctrinal points which he has propounded especially the freedom of the Christian from the slavery of the law. In verse 1 *eleutheria* ("freedom") is taken as dative of purpose. The meaning, therefore, would be: "Christ freed us so that we would enjoy freedom." This idea is influenced by the liberation of slaves (*Ga* 3:13; *Ro* 3:24; *Col* 1:13-14).

The Galatians, therefore, should not *submit again* to slavery. Under paganism they were slaves of one master. If they allowed themselves to be circumcised they would be obliged to keep the whole law and be enslaved by the Law. Now they have to choose: freedom with faith in Christ or slavery under the Law.

The phrase *elpida dikaio syne*, literally "hope of justice," in verse 5, is explained by taking "hope" in its concrete sense as "the thing hoped for" and "justice" as an epexegetic genitive, that is an apposition to the "thing hoped for." This can be translated: "led by the Spirit we await by faith the good hoped for which is justice (this is eschatological justice initiated here on earth but have its fulness in heaven). Others take "justice" as abstract for the concrete: the just, and take it as a subjective genitive: "we await the good hoped for by the just."

Against the doctrine taught by Judaizers, St. Paul teaches the true way to achieve salvation: it is the way of faith which works through love (*pisds d'agapes energoumene*). Some authors take *energoumene* in its passive sense and translates: "faith actuated by love." In this way it is explained that love or charity is the form of faith. However, in biblical Greek it is usually taken as a deponent and, therefore, with an active sense. Hence the translation: "faith which works through love," or in the Jerusalem Bible: "...faith that makes its power felt through love." Still, whether it is taken in a passive or active sense, the faith which is the condition for justification in St. Paul is not taken alone but always in relation to love.

In verses 10-18, St. Paul exhorts the Galatians how to make correct use of their acquired Christian freedom. They must always be guided by the Spirit which is the interior principle of their supernatural life and not anymore by an exterior principle which is the Law.

GOSPEL READING: *Lk* 9:51-62

This starts another major section in the Gospel of St. Luke, the "Journey to Jerusalem Section."

Again Luke leaves Mark and inserted a large section, almost 9 chapters, and takes up the arrangement of Mark only in 18:15. This section of Luke from 9:51 to 18:14 has been called "the Great Insertion" and suggested by some to have come from another source.

Still Luke is not consistent with his topographical indications. Already in 10:38 they were in Bethany only a few kilometers from Jerusalem, but in 13:22 they were still a long way off which in 17:11 were only "along the border between Samaria and Galilee."

Luke's intent seems to be more theological than geographical. The section is unified by the fact that the narratives were thought of to have happened before his solemn entrance to Jerusalem where according to 13:33 he must meet his death.

Just like the start of his Galilean ministry (4:14), when he was rejected in Nazareth, this section begins with the rejection of Jesus in Samaria. It was during this incident that the two sons of Zebedee, James

and John, wanted to ask divine punishment for these Samaritans by means of a fire from heaven. That is why they were called "Boanerges" (Heb. *Betiey Regesh*) or "sons of thunder," (MA: 3:17).

This Samaritan-rejection episode is followed by three short stories of vocation which shows how dedicated one should be in following Christ. The first of these are mentioned by Matthew in 8:18-22 during his early days of ministry in Galilee.

"Leave the dead to bury their dead" is interpreted to mean: "let those who are spiritually dead (that is those who do not accept Christ's words) bury the physically dead. "The following of Christ leads to life."

HOMILY

Goodness is not welcomed by evil. Light cannot be appreciated by darkness. Sickness abhors the presence of health. It is not surprising that when Goodness Incarnate was on earth to dispel evil, he was not welcomed. The Samaritans were no exceptions although occasionally some souls let themselves be open to the light like that Samaritan woman in the gospel of John.

Human reactions to this situation of rejection is violent. The sons of Zebedee wanted lightning to come down from heaven and destroy those Samaritans. But the way of Goodness is different. It could be patient, it could wait, it could understand. The weeds should not be pulled out lest the wheat be pulled out too.

The Samaritans did not let Jesus and the apostles pass their village because they were going to Jerusalem. They must have hated the Jews so much since they made no distinction between friendly Jews and non-friendly ones. Any Jew for that matter was their enemy.

Jesus would turn the tables down. Samaritans were also God's children. He would cure a Samaritan leper, he would convert a Samaritan woman, he would narrate the parable of the Good Samaritan. With these he would erase barriers between nations, race and culture. He would destroy hatred because of nationality or color. His was the first anti-racist and anti-apartheid movement in the world.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 9, 1995

The first reading is taken from the last chapter of Isaiah speaking of the final age to come, a day which could be joyful for his chosen ones but terrible for the wicked. The second reading is also the final passage of the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians which was written by the hand of St. Paul himself and not by a secretary. We have in the gospel reading the sending of the 70 or, more precisely, 72 disciples only found in St. Luke which however follows in literary structure the sending of the Twelve.

FIRST READING: *Is* 66:10-14

The two last chapters of Isaiah, 65-66, speak of the eschatological age. An age of victory for Yahweh against his enemies, but a time for rejoicing for his chosen ones, the children of Jerusalem. Eschatological ideas abound in these chapters but the unified message is expressed in 66:14: "To his servants Yahweh will reveal his hand, but to his enemies his fury." This is expanded in verses 22-24 of the same chapter: "For as the new heavens and the new earth I shall make will endure before me — it is Yahweh who speaks — so will your race and name endure... and on their way out, they will see the corpses of men who have rebelled against me..."

But the children of Jerusalem will rejoice. This is the messianic Jerusalem. She is presented here as a mother nursing her young. Her prosperity comes from God who gives her all the graces of the messianic age embodied in the word *shalom* that is why Yahweh could say in verse 13 that "he will confront us like a son comforted by his mother." He is the source of the joys of the last age of his children.

SECOND READING: *Ga* 6:14-18

The passage in the second reading is taken from the epilogue of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians which according to him is in "his own handwriting and in large letters" (v. 11). This proves that he employed a secretary to write this letter like the letter to the Romans (cf. *Ro* 16:22) which was written by Tertius (cf. also *1 Co* 16:21; *Col* 4:11; *2 Th* 3:17).

For fear that their fellow Jews 'wsmM persecute diem, the Judaizers of Galatia had been advocating the circumcision of the pagan converts. This, for St. Paul, is "to glory in due flesh." But the real glory for him is the cross of Christ which means the whole salvation brought by Christ.

Neither circumcision nor inaicaracisiaB matter now but me new creature. *Ktisis* is here taken in the passive sense as "creature" not "creation." This is the new supernatural existence to which we are born by our incorporation to Christ Those who conform to this rule of life will receive "peace and mercy." These are the descendants of Abraham and "heirs of the promise" (*Ga* 3:29; *Ro* 9:6-8) in opposition to "Israel according to the flesh" (*I Co* 10:18).

Verse 17 reveals Paul's enraged spirit when he wrote the letler.it seems he was about to close when he again recalled to mind what the Judaizers were doing and their accusations against him that he was not a true apostle. To prove his authentic apostleship he said that he bears the *stigmata* of Christ. These are not the wounds of Christ during his passion which some saints had but rather the scars of the sufferings which St. Paul himself underwent during his apostolic ministries.

GOSPEL READING: *Lk* 10:1-9

There are two accounts in Luke in the sending of the disciples. First, the sending of the Twelve in 9:1-6 which is parallel with *Mt* 10:1-13 and the sending of the 70 or 72 in our present text (*Lk* 10:1-9).

Some authors think that this mission was the same mission of the Twelve during the time of Jesus since during the Last Supper as mentioned by St. Luke he tells of his sending them "without purse, or haversack or sandals" the same as in 10:4 rather than the passage in 9:3.

Most probably Luke took this account from a source which applied the same mission, originally to the Twelve, to a large group who in a way were the successors of the Twelve. The number of this group was fixed to 72 or 70 following *Ex* 24:1 and *Nb* 11:16.

Textual criticism is still not certain whether the original text has 70 or 72. Manuscript testimonies are balanced between the two. The present

writer favors 72 since it would-have been easier to round off the number to 70 in parallelism with Et 24:1 *andNb* 11:16 than to make 72 out of 70.

Verse 2 like in Mf 9:38 serves as the introduction to the send-off. In St. Matthew it was definitely an introduction to the mission of the Twelve. Verse 3 which is a phrase also found in St. Matthew (10:16), but which, at the conclusion of the mission serves as a tradition to the persecution passage, is placed by Luke here at the beginning. This serves as a warning to the disciples that they would not always be welcomed with open arms. Verse 4, with some modifications, is substantially the same as 9:3.

They were told to salute no one on the road to stress the urgency of their mission. But when they enter a house they must salute it with "Peace to this house." The word used in Hebrew for the usual greeting is *shalom* which in Luke is associated with salvation brought by Christ. "Son of peace" is a Semitism for a man who is well disposed to accept peace or salvation. If there is no "son of peace" there, then, that peace will not have its effect, it will come back to the disciple as if it were not spoken at all.

The passage in verse 7: "the laborer deserves his wages," is cited in *1 Tm* 5:18 as scripture, which, for some, seems to indicate that St. Paul (if he wrote this epistle) accepted Luke as canonical scripture. The conclusion however is not certain.

With the sending of the disciples and their coming into the homes, first of the chosen people, the "kingdom of God" was brought nearer to the Israelites.

HOMILY

After so many years of hoping that scientific and technological progress would give mankind that peace and joy which every man is aspiring for, many are now disappointed. Instead of peace, science and technology seem to have promoted more wars, terrorism and violence in our century than all the centuries combined. Instead of enduring joy, our age seems to have breed more frustrations and shattered dreams in the life of an individual, of a family, of a nation.

•

But there is always a bright side to these dark times. Because of these disappointments and frustrations, the real face of the once-thought-of

saviors of mankind has emerged. They are not and cannot be the source of mankind's peace and joy. That is why many are still searching for this true source. Sooner or later they are going to find it as many have already done.

Jesus has willed that his kingdom which is the authentic source of peace and happiness for the individual, for the world, and for mankind should be preached by designated ministers, especially chosen by him. These ministers and their successors after them have gone throughout the whole world starting from Jerusalem reaching the furthestmost bounds of the world. But the harvest are still great and is becoming greater day after day. Millions of people are born into the world everyday. Millions who were redeemed by the blood of Christ and prospective heirs of the kingdom. These souls are waiting and hoping for their salvation. Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to reap this bountiful harvest.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

July 16,1995

The great commandment is the dominant idea in the gospel reading illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan. The first reading from the book of Deuteronomy expresses in chapter 30, verse 11 that the law of the Lord is not beyond one's strength. This is more true with the law of Christ which is the law of love according to the measure of Christ's love. A very rich christological passage is given in the second reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

FIRST READING: *Dt 30:10-14*

The passage of Deuteronomy which actually starts from 29:16 to 30:20 most probably dates from the exile (587-538 B.C.). This is reflected in 30:3-5 where it speaks of the "gathering of the scattered." "Had you wandered to the ends of the heavens, Yahweh your God would gather you even from there, would come there to reclaim you and bring you back to the land your father possessed..."

Blessing and prosperity are promised to the Israelites if they obey the voice of Yahweh. These are his laws and commandments. "Obeying the voice of Yahweh," "keeping his commandments," "return to Yahweh your

God" are all synonymous phrases. The Law (v. 11) and the Word (v. 14) are here taken as equivalent terms.

As expressed in verse 11, the law of the Lord is not beyond one's strength. It was only because of the additions of other observances which Jesus called "human traditions" (*Mk* 7:8) that the observance of the law became burdensome which led St. Peter to exclaim that neither "we nor our ancestors were strong enough to support" (*Ac* 15:10). During the time of our Lord there were 613 prescriptions of the Law which the Jews call the *Taryag Millim* (613 words). If we add the numbers corresponding to the Hebrew consonants in the resulting word TaRYaG we get 613. Thus: T (Tau) = 400; R (Resh) = 200; Y (Yod) = 10; G (Ghimel) = 3.

Nevertheless, in Deuteronomy the Word of the Lord is not burdensome. "It is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (v. 14).

SECOND READING: *Col* 1:15-20

The pericope, although short, is one of the richest christological passages in the letters of St. Paul which tells Christ's relation with God, with creatures, and with the Church.

St. Paul has here expressions extremely fertile with meaning concerning Christ: "image of the invisible God," "first born of all creatures," "first born among the dead," etc.

In relation to God, Christ is the image. Christ, in virtue of his eternal generation from the Father is the image who reflects the infinite perfection of the invisible God. In relation to creatures, Christ is the "first born of all creatures." All things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible were created "in him, by him or through him and for him."

"First born" does not only mean priority in time but also pre-eminence in dignity. The expression "of all creatures," although strictly speaking can mean that the first born is included among the order of creatures, still it can also be excluded from this order as other phrases will show. Thus, if all things were created in him, through him and for him, he must be outside the realm of creation.

Verses 18-20 will speak about his status as redeemer. He is the head of the Church, the "principle and first born among the dead" It means that he was the first one who resurrected from the dead and others would follow.

Christ's pre-eminence would ultimately depend on his Father who willed that all plenitude should dwell on him as the Christ.

GOSPEL READING: *Lk* 10:25

The parable of the Good Samaritan which is only found in Luke was Jesus' answer to a lawyer's question: "Who is my neighbor."

The introductory passage to this parable has, in fact, parallel passages in *Mt* 22:34-40 *mdMlc* 12:28-31 with certain divergencies. The context in Matthew and Mark was part of Christ's dispute with different groups: against the Pharisees and Herodians on the payment of taxes (*Mt* 22:15-22; *Mk* 12:13-17); against the Sadducees on the resurrection of the dead (*Mt* 22:23-33; *Mk* 12:18-27). Immediately, this passage "on the greatest commandment" follows in Matthew and Mark (*Mt* 23:34-40; *Mk* 12:28-31) with a Pharisee as the questioner in Matthew and a scribe in Mark. In Luke it was a lawyer (*nomikos*).

Still following a parallel arrangement Matthew and Mark joins this pericope with the passage on "Christ as Lord of David."

St. Luke has a similar arrangement of pericopes in chapter 20:20-44 as Matthew and Mark but with one exception: he omits the text of the "greatest commandment" in between the dispute against the Sadducees "on the resurrection" and the pericope on "Christ the Lord of David" which he transferred to chapter 10:25 as introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The adversary in this case was a lawyer who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Our Lord responded with another question forcing the lawyer to answer his own question. Not dismayed by being placed in an awkward situation, he shot another question: "and who is my neighbor?" Jesus did not define the concept of a neighbor in his answer. He did not say: "all men are our neighbors," contrary to the Jewish perception that only their countrymen are their neighbors. In his parable he showed how the love towards one's neighbor should be understood.

There seems to be a certain incoherence in the final question of Jesus and the initial question of the lawyer. The lawyer's question was; "who should I love as my neighbor?"* (v. 29); while after the parable Jesus queried: "who acted in the parable as a true neighbor?" The lawyer asked for the object of his love. Jesus answered indicating the subject and thus not directly answering the question.

In fact the lawyer was asking for the limit of his love thinking that Christ would define his neighbor as his co-nationals. He was surprised to know that a Samaritan could become a neighbor of a Jew.

HOMILY

The spirit of the Good Samaritan is fast declining. What is gaining ground is the spirit of the "cowardly priest" and the "cowardly Levite" of our Lord's parable. How many times do we see a neighbor in need and we turn our backs away? Sometimes we do it in the name of prudence which could be false prudence while the real reason is cowardice or lack of involvement

We hear stories of how spectators just stand by while somebody is being robbed, mugged, molested or terrorized without even lifting a finger to help. The usual reason is that they fear for their life.

Yet many things could be done under this situation if really we are concerned with our neighbors. Not doing anything is a sign that we do not really love our neighbor. Were that person being robbed, mauled or mugged your son or your daughter or your *loved* one the situation would have been different. But this is precisely the point. Christ would have us love our neighbor as equal as, if not more than, the love we give to a son or a daughter or a loved one.

Anybody in need is our neighbor. Opportunists are not in need; fake beggars are not in need; swindlers are not in need. A neighbor in need is a neighbor indeed.

A rich man sometimes may be more in need than a materially poor man who in fact is contented and happy of what he has. That wealthy man may be in need of friends, in need of spiritual help, in need of consoling words. A poor man may be in need not exactly of dole-outs or financial

assistance but of education, training and help to make them help themselves. In short, to love one's neighbor is to help him live peacefully and happily as a child of God.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 23,1995

"The Visit" would be the unifying idea between the first reading and the gospel reading in today's Mass. The first reading recalls the visit of Yahweh mysteriously represented by three personages who brought the news of Isaac's birth. On the other hand, the gospel reading narrates the visit of our Lord to the house of Martha and Mary of Bethany. The second reading continues the text from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians of the previous Sunday speaking of how the apostle fulfills his mission of preaching the Good News.

FIRST READING: *Gn* 18:1-10

This chapter narrates the visit of Yahweh to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. In the previous chapter (17) his name was already changed from Abram to Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sara. In the history of traditions this is the Yahwist's account on the prediction of Isaac's birth, which was already done in chapter 17 but taken from another tradition, that of the Priestly source. In fact the name Isaac was taken from the reaction of Abraham (17:17) or Sarah (18:12 ff.) when they laughed after hearing the prediction of the divine visitors. Isaac is a word-play of the Hebrew *yishhaq*, "he laughed."

There is a curious change of personages in this story: the interchange of three and one. Verse 1 speaks of Yahweh only, but in verse 2 they were three "As soon as he saw *f/ie/n* he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet *them*." Yet in verse 3 his address is in the singular: "My*Lord*" he said," I beg you (singular in Hebrew), if I Find favor with you (also singular), kindly do not pass your (singular) servant by." In verse 9 it again shifts to the plural. "'Where is your wife Sarah?' they asked him." But in verse 13 it is again Yahweh who speaks.

Some authors have seen here an image of the Trinity. Although this

is not improbable, **since** the Trinity is a reality in biblical revelation, we **have to take** into account the mingling of traditions in this story.

SECOND READING: *Col* 1:24-28

In **verse** 23 of this same chapter, St. Paul affirms that he has been constituted minister of **the** gospel. Now he speaks on how this mission would be fulfilled. For the sake of the gospel he even considers suffering as a joy.

What does St. Paul mean when he says that "in my own body I do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church"? Does this mean that the passion of Christ was incomplete? Not at all.

Some authors, following St. Thomas, give the following explanation. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, must conform in every way possible to its head participating in his sufferings so that it could participate in his glory (*Ro* 8:17-29). Christ, the head of the Mystical Body, has already fulfilled his share but not all the members who must conform to the head according to the measure given to them by the Father. There is nothing incomplete in the sufferings on the part of *the personal Christ* but on the part of the *Mystical Christ* with regards to the members.

However, since the present context in this passage speaks of the preaching of the gospel, some commentators, without rejecting the above explanation, interpret it in another way.

Certainly the act of redemption has been fulfilled in the passion and death of Christ. Still the spread of his gospel is not complete. It has to be preached to the whole world and in this preaching the apostles, who now take the place of Christ, must undergo sufferings and inconveniences for the sake of the gospel. It is the sufferings which Christ would have undergone if he himself were the one preaching the Good News of salvation.

GOSPEL READING: *Lk* 10:38-41

The episode with Martha and Mary has been applied in Christian spirituality to contrast two ways of life: one, the active life and the other,

the contemplative life. This depends on the translation of *agathen mer'ida* as "the better part." Both are equally good but the one chosen by Mary was better. But if *agathe* is understood in the positive degree and not in the comparative degree, then, the whole sense changes and to Barak for a comparison of the active and contemplative life in this passage would become problematic. The meaning then would be that in this particular circumstance the part chosen by Mary was "the good one." The one of Martha was not. Could this be an echo of what Jesus would say in *Lk* 12:19-31: "But you must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry. It is the pagans of this world who set their hearts on these things, Your Father well knows you need them. No, set your hearts on his kingdom, and the other things will be given you as well."

The historical context still says that Jesus and his apostles were on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus then was not alone on this occasion which explains the solicitude and the anxiety of Martha (her name means "Lady," the feminine of the Aramaic *mar*).

HOMELY

Only one thing is necessary. The others are either useful, superfluous or harmful. This one thing necessary is to listen to the word of God and keep it.

Our affirmation is in consonance with the Greek original of what our Lord said to Martha: "*only one* thing is necessary and Mary has chosen the *good* part."

The other translation, "Mary has chosen the *better* part" seems to favor Martha that what she was doing was also necessary. But no, our Lord's words taken in its proper sense says that only one thing is necessary and that was chosen by Mary.

Other affirmations of our Lord, I believe, support our interpretation. When a woman praised him by saying: "Blessed is the womb who bore you and the breasts that give you suck," he replied, "rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it." This does not diminish the dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of Jesus, but the blessedness of being

the mother of Jesus follows from the blessedness of hearing the Word of God and obeying the will of the Father. When Mary said her "fiat" she became the Mother of God.

During the time he was tempted by the devil in the desert who wanted him to change the stone into bread he replied: "not by bread alone does man live but from the Word that comes from the mouth of God." In the sermon on the mount he declared: "seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things will be given you besides."

But before anybody thinks that Jesus is teaching us not to work for our daily living he has another guess coming. Our Lord himself spent many years of manual work before his public ministry assisting St. Joseph in his carpentry shop. He was known as the son of a carpenter. St. Paul considers work as a service offered to God (*Cot* 3:22 - 4:1; *Ep* 6:5-9). He himself practiced his work as *askenopoios*, "maker of tent cloth" (not exactly tent-maker) from the famous cilician goats' hair to earn his living (*Ac* 18:3; *1 Co* 4:12; *1 Th* 2:9)

In the life of the apostles and the early Christians, prayer and work are two inseparable things and all these follow from hearing the Word of *God first* who taught us to pray and work according to his will.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 30, 1995

The first reading in today's Mass is the continuation of Yahweh's visit to Abraham but now to announce the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The idea which links it with the gospel reading is the idea of prayer and continuous petition. Abraham pleaded with God for the salvation of the cities. His prayers would have been heard if the conditions on the part of the cities were met. Indeed in the gospel Christ taught us to pray and pray unceasingly which he promised to be a most effective prayer. It is in this context that he taught his disciples the "Our Father." The second reading is also the continuation of the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians manifesting St. Paul's solicitude about the faith of the Colossians.

FIRST READING: *Gn 18:20-32*

The continuation of the visit of Yahweh to Abraham which was a visit of salvation announcing the birth of Isaac, was the visit to Sodom and Gomorrah which was a visit of doom effecting the destruction of the two cities.

There is still the change of the number of personalities as in the previous verses. In verse 20 it was Yahweh who proposed to "go down and see whether or not they (the two cities) have done "all that is alleged in the outcry against them." Yet in verse 22 ff. only the two messengers (angels in 19:1) left there while Yahweh kept conversing with Abraham.

In the ensuing conversation with Yahweh, Abraham's solicitude over the salvation of others was manifested. He acted as a mediator which was a very appropriate gesture of the chosen ancestor of the community of salvation in whom nations would be blessed (v. 18).

SECOND READING: *Col 2:12-14*

The context in which the passage of the reading is situated speaks of St. Paul's solicitude of the faith of the Colossians which for him is part of his obligation as minister of the gospel which he affirmed in chapter 1.

Verses 12-14 express St. Paul's favorite theme of our incorporation with Christ through baptism and faith: two facets of the same reality. In baptism we die and are buried. By faith we rise in him.

Then follows a poetic description of how our Lord accomplished this from our past situation of being spiritually dead because of sin to our new life in him. He did this by "canceling every record of the debt that we had to pay;... by nailing it to the cross." The Greek has *cheirographon tois dogmasin*, "record of debt written in decrees." The same word used for "decrees" in *Ep 2:15* shows that these decrees refer to the Law. Debt was incurred with its penalties for breaking the Law. All these were canceled when Christ was nailed to the cross.

GOSPEL READING : *ZA 11:1-13*

The gospel reading in today's Mass has 3 parts: St. Luke's version

of the "Our Father" (1-4); the Parable of the Importunate Friend (5-8); and Effective Prayer (9-13). These passages are all united by the main idea of prayer.

St. Matthew places the Our Father in the context of the Sermon on the Mount (6:9-13) as contrast to the prayers of the pagans and pharisees. In St. Luke it was a response to the request of one of his disciples to teach them to pray.

Perhaps during the time of Luke there was no fixed formulation of the Our Father as yet, that his version was shorter than that of Matthew. There are seven petitions in Matthew while only five in Luke. Luke does not have: "your will be done on earth as in heaven," and "save us from the evil one." St. Mark mentions one petition (11:25).

Luke in the introduction has only "Father" as Jesus usually addresses God (*Lk* 10:21; 23:46) while in Matthew which corresponds more to the Jewish mentality we have "Our Father in heaven."

"May your name be held holy": just like in Ezekiel 36:22-32 the sanctification of his name is the display of Yahweh's holiness before all mankind. God sanctifies his name by revealing himself superior to all creatures, powerful, wise, faithful and good. This is shown especially by his work in Jesus his Son (*Jn* 12:28 ff.). The verbs are in the aorist expressing an eschatological moment, once and for all.

The same aorist form is used in the next phrase: "your kingdom come" referring again to the eschatological stage at *theparousia*. Still the initial manifestation of the Kingdom of God is in the Church through which and in which Christ gathers together his people to whom it pleases the Father to give the Kingdom (*Lk* 12:32).

Instead *otdos* in Matthew, (aorist imperative *otdidomi*, "Igive"), St. Luke has *didou* (present imperative) and *semeron* (this day) instead of *kath 'hemeran* (day after day). The present imperative connotes continuity.

The *epiousion* is not very clear despite so many studies made. The following senses are offered: a) substantial bread necessary for existence; b) daily bread; c) bread for the next day, for the future. The Gospel to the Hebrews according to St. Jerome has *wa/tar*, "tomorrow." We prefer the

sense of (b) meaning bread sufficient for the day, or "daily bread" (cf. the *lehem huqi*, "my share of bread" in *Pr* 30:8).

The *opheilemata* (debts) in St. Matthew becomes *hamartias* (sins) in St. Luke with both verbs in the present tense taking into consideration most probably his gentile readers.

The doctrine which the Parable of the Importunate or Persistent Friend illustrates is perseverance in prayer. The term used which would make the friend get up and what the other friend is asking for is *anaidia* which literally means "lack of shame" (*cut-aidos*).

The next passage of affective prayer which still has the idea of perseverance is between son and father. The verbs are all in the present imperative and connote continuous action: ask continuously, seek continuously, knock continuously.

HOMILY

Jesus taught us to pray and to ask our Father continuously our daily bread. There is a Tagalog word for this which, I believe, can describe very well the way how Jesus wants us to pray. He wants us to be "*makulit*" with God. There is nothing wrong, then, of being "*makulit*" in our prayers. In fact we have to pray unceasingly. There is nothing wrong also in praying for our daily needs, what we call the "prayer of petition." What is most improper is to forget to give thanks to God (prayer of thanksgiving) even just for giving us our own existence, and to praise him (prayer of praise) for what he is and for what he has done. This prayer of praise is briefly but very well expressed in the Our Father: "hallowed be your name."

Jesus, hence, wants us to pray and pray as if all depends on him, but, as we said in last Sunday's homily, he wants us also to work as if everything depends on us.

There is no contradiction at all between these two affirmations. The reason is in our own situation as human beings raised to the level as children of God but still totally dependent on the Father for our own existence. We are still pilgrims on our way to our real home.

H.E. Most Rev. BRUNO TORPIGLIANI

The local Church has been blessed with exceptional leaders, one of whom was Archbishop Bruno Torpigliani, former Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines (1973-1990).

He was born on April 15, 1915, in Siena in the heart of Tuscany in Italy. In 1924, at the age of nine Torpigliani entered the seminary of Arezzo, and in 1933 he studied for Theology at the regional seminary of San Luigi, Posillipo in Naples, where he earned his degree of Licentiate in Theology in 1937.

He was ordained priest on October 24, 1937. Fr. Torpigliani moved to Rome to pursue his doctorate degree in Theology at the Jesuit Gregorian University and meanwhile served as parish priest in San Giovanni Montecontieri. He later earned another doctorate degree this time in Canon Law at the Lateran University. He also took up classical studies at the National University of Florence, and taught literature at the public institute of Asciano, the city of his birth. He was fluent in three languages: French, Spanish and English.

He left his parish at San Giovanni Montecontieri in 1946 to enter the diplomatic service of the Holy See. Mons. Torpigliani then served in the Secretariat of State and in the Pontifical Representation in Bogota, Lima and London. He was ordained Bishop on October 25, 1964. In the same year he was appointed as Titular Archbishop of Malliana and Nuncio in Guatemala and El Salvador. In 1968 he was Apostolic Nuncio in Zaire. And on June 6, 1973, Archbishop Bruno Torpigliani was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines.

Before the Nuncio's arrival, his knowledge of the country was scant and secondhand. He knew the Philippines only through his work with the Vatican Secretary of State, when from 1946 to 1948 he handled Church matters, mostly problems involving English-speaking nations including the Philippines.

Yet, by the Nuncio's very own admission, he had already loved the Philippines and became deeply attached to the Filipinos. This was to be

proven later when, during his residency, he became especially close to the poor. He would often visit squatter areas in Manila where he became personally known to destitute families.

He had been known for his simplicity and naturalness, firmness of character, and his refined and attractive ways. His affection for the Filipinos was further manifested when reacting to a common observation that he actually looked like a Filipino in physical appearance, he commented that he "would like the resemblance to be spiritual," and that he "would like to be a Filipino in aspiration and realization."

True to his words, the Church in the Philippines witnessed a tremendous growth under his leadership. Serving the country for seventeen years — no other nuncio has yet served this long — 50 new bishops were appointed, and 6 new archdioceses, 18 new dioceses, 2 new prelatures, and 1 new apostolic vicariate were created. Pope John Paul II, during the celebration of the Nuncio's 50th anniversary of priesthood in October 1987, had acknowledged: "We look at these and other worthy achievements that ought to be praised, rejoice with you on account of the sacred ministry carried on lengthily and unwaveringly, and we convey to you Our benevolence corresponding to your excellent merits..."

On the eve of the Nuncio's 75th birthday, April 15, 1990, in a gesture of prompt obedience to existing legislation, he placed on the Holy Father's hands the task of Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, which in turn was entrusted to our present Nuncio, Most Rev. Gian Vincenzo Moreni.

Our former Apostolic Nuncio died of cancer in his hometown in Siena, Italy, on May 3, 1995, just a few weeks after his 80th birthday. He was buried in the afternoon of May 4. Surely, he will be remembered by many Filipinos whose lives he had touched.