

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

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PASTORAL STATEMENT ON 4TH
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN IN BEIJING

CBCP

MARRIAGE NULLITY
DECLARATION ON PHYSICAL
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IN THE FAMILY APOSTOLATE

Oscar Cruz, D.D.

THE CATECHISM OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH: SOCIAL
ETHICS AND THE PRIORITY
OF THE POOR

Fausto Gomez, O.P.

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The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.
ASSOCIATE EDITORS	FR. HONORATO CASTIGADOR, O.P. FR. TAMERLANE LANA, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	FR. FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P. FR. JOSE MA. TINOKO, O.P.
BUSINESS MANAGER	FR. DANILOTAG-AT.O.P.
ASST. BUSINESS MANAGER	FR. ROBERTO PINTO, O.P.
PUBLICATION ASSISTANT	CHRISTINE P. BERMUDEZ
COVER DESIGN	RODOLFO ATIENZA.O.P.

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AND CHRISTMAS

Ethics in the Year of Women

FR. VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.

The bishops of the Philippines have shown concern on the coming Conference of Women in Beijing (September 4-15, 1995). In their last pastoral letter entitled "I will make a suitable companion for her," they expressed their thoughts thus: "We commend the concern of this forthcoming conference to look more closely into the dignity of women, and call on governments on issues affecting women such as poverty, illiteracy, prostitution, violence against women and their exploitation in mass media.

The role of the representatives coming from the Philippines, which is the only country in Asia with predominantly Christian population is very important. To them these pointers, among others, are addressed:

- be uncompromising in their stand against feticide and abortion;
- encourage education in family planning;
- and fight all forms of violence against women.

In order to do this, the participants in the meeting must have an ethics that can be acceptable to all regardless of one's religious faith. For one thing, it was proven for instance in the last Cairo Conference on Human Development that the Christians can work together with the Muslims.

We believe that an ethics, which is strong in the principles that respect the gospel of life, and uncompromising in the basics of natural laws, is the only reasonable foundation of human rights. Such will save the world of women from destruction.

To all women of good will on the occasion of the International Year:
Long, live!

Pastoral Statement on 4th International Conference On Women in Beijing

"I Will Make A Suitable Companion For Him" (Gn. 2:18)

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The Book of Genesis narrates to us how the first man was created by God (Gn. 1:27) and how the first woman as well came into existence. (Gn. 2:18). In both stories Genesis mentions not only the complementarity of man and woman but their equality as well, being made in the image and likeness of God. "God created man in his image: male and female he created them" (Gn. 1:27). Seeing that man should not be alone, he said, "I will make a suitable companion for him" (Gn. 2:18). When the woman was created, the man exclaimed: "This is at last bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh!" (Gn. 2:23).

From this perspective, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II wrote in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on August 15, 1988 that the great dignity of woman lies in the fact that "God entrusts the human being to her in a special way" from the moment of conception in the womb. This sublime responsibility is carried on as the child is born and nourished in the home within the context of the family. Evidently, he stresses that in complementarity of, and in cooperation with man, the home and the family are the ordinary place of the woman.

In the context of this year's celebration of the International Year of Women, the United Nations sponsors the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing, China, on September 4-15, 1995. We commend the concern of this forthcoming conference to look more closely into the dignity of women and to call on governments on issues affecting women, such as poverty, illiteracy, prostitution, violence against women, and their exploitation in mass media.

However, the Draft Document of the Beijing Conference is based on the same ideology as that of the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development. There is the subtle yet persistent view to devalue life whose source is God. The Conference intends to impose on all governments of the world a secular humanistic philosophy which promotes contraception, abortion and sterilization. This is what the Holy Father in his recent Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, on the value of life calls "the culture of death." Thanks to the timely and forceful intervention of the Holy See, these issues did not pass through the doors of Cairo. Yet the struggle against those who espouse the "culture of death" is not over. As Beijing now becomes the new arena, the exponents of this philosophy want to enter anew by its windows. Reference to the diversity of "sexual orientation," and the "plurality of family forms" once again seeks to approve lesbian and homosexual unions as rightful expressions of sexual freedom.

We, Your Bishops, reiterate our unfailing commitment in union with the Holy Father in this fundamental struggle to proclaim the "gospel of life" against the forces that intend to suppress it. We raise our voices anew to resist the enemy and expose the evils expressed or implied in the draft document of the Beijing Conference. And we ask all our Lay Faithful to be one with him and with us in this battle.

In the same way, as an expression of our union with Peter, we call on our Brothers in the Episcopate in the different National Conferences of Bishops all over the world to join our voices together in the promotion of life and the dignity of every human person.

We call particularly on our Government that the Philippine Delegation would truly present the deep faith and traditions of the Filipino people and that women, noted for their Christian witness and firm faith, be sent among our representatives. In particular, we want that the Philippine Delegation to Beijing to:

a) be uncompromising in their stand against feticide and abortion, camouflaged in phrases such as "reproductive health" and "reproductive rights" thus opening the road to abortion. Abortion is unacceptable to us Filipinos not only because it is against our Constitution, but more important because it is against life, the most basic right of every person;

b) encourage education in natural family planning as this is most in consonance with the dignity of human beings and of women; and guarantee women's rights to informed choice by assuring their being informed of the dangers of the artificial methods of birth control;

c) fight against all forms of violence against women — physical, psychological and moral — including forced sterilization, forced contraception and forced abortion, which the governments of some countries are exercising;

d) be uncompromising in the definition of the family as a community formed by a man and a woman in marriage, based on mutual love, and for the purpose of procreation and education of children in the exercise of responsible parenthood;

e) highlight the irreplaceable and very positive role of woman as "life-bearer" and mother; and reject statements that imply that a woman's dedication to one's family and to the duties of the home is an obstacle to personal fulfillment;

f) combat all forms of poverty which force women to abandon family responsibilities in order to seek employment here and abroad, especially in jobs and places where they may easily become victims of economic and sexual exploitation and human rights violation as it sometimes happens to our OCWs (Overseas Contract Workers).

If we have to consistently and continuously raise our voices, it is because of the mandate entrusted to us as heralds of truth and life.

Women and men are equal in dignity in all areas of life, but they are distinct from one another. By harnessing the positive difference in men and women, the society can best achieve its goal of promoting dignity, development and justice. Unfortunately, the western ideology of feminism fails to recognize this and fights for the exaggerated individualism of the woman.

We continue to uphold our own traditional Filipino-Christian values of true femininity that is based on the unique genius proper to women. The true Filipina, cognizant of her God-given mission, is able to successfully combine her role as a mother, wife and co-provider of the family with her own desire for self-fulfillment. Rather than being unjustly influenced by the thoughts of secularized industrialized societies, the Filipina has much to teach on the authentic empowerment of women.

We call on all our Filipino Faithful in the different ecclesiastical jurisdictions to gather together in prayer and sacrifice around the 15th day of August 1995, marked by a triduum of preparation, for A RALLY FOR LIFE, FOR THE FAMILY AND FOR THE WOMAN. As the whole Philippine Church commemorates on this day the 400th year of its creation as an independent ecclesiastical province, let us manifest the growth in our life of faith by this rally of solidarity. In a spirit of thanksgiving, let us praise God for the gift of prophetic voice to proclaim the sublime value of life which our Lord Jesus has come to redeem.

As we the Filipino People, people of life and for life, make our pilgrim way in confidence towards our final destination, we look to Mary, most blessed among all women, as she who accompanied her Son in his earthly life and mission. Through her intercession may we imitate her in building a civilization of truth and love and in transforming our minds and hearts for the greater glory and praise of God, who sent in our midst the "Word of Life".

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

+ CARMELO D.F. MORELOS, D.D.
Archbishop of Zamboanga
CBCP President

Pastoral Letter On Filipino Migrant Workers

"Comfort My People, Comfort Them" (Is 40, 1)

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

May the love and peace of Jesus be yours!

Tragic Situation of Many of our Migrant Workers

The tragic deaths of Flor Contemplacion and Delia Maga captured the attention and stirred the emotions of the entire Filipino people. Their story and that of Sarah Balabagan, a sixteen-year-old girl from Maguindanao, forcefully brought to the fore the sufferings of our Filipino migrant workers and the need to protect and assist them. Seven years ago, on February 21, 1988, we, the Bishops of the Philippines, issued a pastoral letter on Filipino migrant workers, especially, on their protection. Much of that letter is still valid today but conditions and recent events in our country and abroad demand that we write another.

Call to Action

Today the Word of God to the prophet Jeremiah comes to mind: "I will break the yoke on their necks and snap their chains. They will no longer be the servants of aliens but will serve Yahweh their God..." (Jr. 30:8-9) By this message Yahweh promised to liberate the Israelites from

exile in Babylon. May we not, in faith, address today this liberating promise to the tragic situation of many of our four million migrant workers and to the bright possibilities of a different future? Although it is God's loving action that will fulfill this promise, we need also to expend our own human efforts for its fulfillment.

Protective Laws

We are glad that our government has enacted the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995." This important legislation, the Magna Carta of Overseas Workers, aims to provide comprehensive protection and assistance to our migrant workers. We strongly urge that it be effectively implemented.

Another positive event is the recent ratification by our Senate of the United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Let us pray and work that more nations will ratify this convention. In order to have the force of law, this agreement has to be ratified by at least 20 nations.

Important Considerations and Corresponding Actions regarding the Protection of Our Migrant Workers

Many good things come from migration. There are success stories. Remittances from Filipinos abroad have sustained families, put children through school, and raised the standard of living of many, giving them more access to the material and spiritual goods needed for their fulfillment. Our Filipino migrant workers have also contributed much to our national development. Our Filipinos abroad remit annually to our country around \$4 billion. On the other hand, a considerable number of them are subjected to many evils, such as injustice, loss of life and human dignity, inhuman abuse and maltreatment, exploitation, moral degradation, broken families, loss of faith, loneliness, and other sufferings. Because so much harm often goes hand in hand with Filipino overseas employment, the State should not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. We should not sacrifice higher values for economic gains. Overseas employment should be allowed only if protective measures are in place so that the dignity and human rights of the Filipino migrant workers be not compromised or violated.

The Church teaches that a person, because of an intolerable political or economic situation in one's country has a right to emigrate, to select a new home in foreign lands, and to seek conditions of life worthy of a human being. We, however, would like to remind our people that there is a human and social cost to overseas work. Some price is too high for just a better salary. Loss of life, loss of human dignity, moral degradation, or a broken family is too high a price.

Poverty is the main cause of Filipino migration. Most Filipinos do not want to leave our country for work. They are forced to seek their living in foreign lands because they see no viable future for themselves here. Hence, all of us, the government and the private sector, should work hard and generously for economic development. The recent tragedies that have befallen migrant Filipinas should move our leadership to summon the political will to work towards industrialization that will supply our people jobs at home. But economic development has to be guided by two basic social teachings: a) the just and equitable distribution of economic resources, incomes, and benefits, as well as equitable access to development b) economic development that has a preferential option for the poor. Let us remind ourselves that in our country too much concentration of the wealth in the hands of a few is the cause of the poverty of the many. Let us re-examine the present economic model of development of the country, which may simply perpetuate the status quo of an unjust distribution of wealth.

Illegal recruitment is the source of so much suffering for our migrant workers. It has been with us since the beginning of Filipino migration. So many campaigns against it have been launched by both government and private sectors. But, it remains strong until the present. One main cause of the little success of the drives against illegal recruitment is the lack of sincerity, honesty, and political will of many in our relevant government agencies. We also have to point out the lack of cooperation of many migrant workers. Because of dire economic need, many become "willing victims" of illegal recruiters.

The first duty of Filipino diplomacy is the protection of its citizens and not the facilitation of the activities and business of government functionaries. All Filipino migrant workers, whether legal or illegal, are entitled to the protection and care of the State by virtue of their Filipino citizenship. We are not encouraging illegal migration nor do we suggest

that our government justify it. But, even illegal migrant workers retain their basic human rights and our embassies should consider it their prime duty to protect these rights. Illegal workers, precisely because of their illegal status, are the most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The more so, if their own government abandons them.

We are calling attention to the fact that more than half of our overseas workers are women. Pope John Paul II reminds us that they are the most vulnerable and often suffer the most. Many of them are mothers with families at home. We urge our government that in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs regarding migrant workers its appropriate agencies should be gender-sensitive, should take into special consideration the situation of our women workers. We also urge the family life apostolate of our parishes to take a specific pastoral care of the families left behind by our overseas workers.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2241 teaches: "The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him." A migrant worker does service to the receiving country. It is also a fact that the work of a migrant worker benefits more the receiving country than the country of origin. Justice demands that the receiving country protect the migrant worker.

We take this opportunity to thank the many local Churches abroad who, with love and compassion, take pastoral care of our Filipino migrant workers, who are almost everywhere in the world.

The Duty of the Church to Provide Pastoral Care to Our Filipino Migrant Workers

We again exhort the whole people of God — bishops, priests, religious, and laity — to give more attention and pastoral care to our migrant workers and their families. The Philippine Church has done much for our Filipino migrants. We appreciate the selfless work that our priests, religious sisters and lay workers do for our Filipino migrants. However, due to the vastness of the work (four million migrants) and the limitations of personnel, it is not enough.

Every diocese must implement what the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines says in No. 108: "... We also need to provide pastoral and social care for the migrant workers and their families. In that way their spiritual and material welfare is served, their rights protected, and their faith strengthened." There is also need to stress that the Church should accompany our people wherever they go. When the Israelites were wandering in the desert for forty years, God accompanied them as a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. The Philippine Church should "journey with" our migrants through our priests, sisters, and lay pastoral workers. "Journeying with" our Filipino migrants, they are called to nourish and strengthen their faith, promote their rights and protect them from abuses. Whenever they are able, they should provide social assistance to our poor migrants. Let them also be the guides of our Filipino migrants in their integration to the country which receives them. In that way, they enrich with authentic Filipino values the community that receives them and are in turn enriched by the culture they are integrating to. (Article 56 #3 of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines).

Witnessing for Christ

"For every pain, there is a joy; for every sacrifice, a corresponding good; for every cross, a resurrection" (Pastoral Letter of CBCP on Migrants, February 21, 1988). Pope Pius XH, on July 23, 1957, said: "The phenomenon of the modern emigration undoubtedly follows its own laws, but it is really Divine Wisdom which makes use of human events, including sad ones at times, in order to fulfill the design of salvation for the benefit of the whole of mankind..." We are convinced that this is true with regard to Filipino migration. On May 17, 1987, in his homily during the Mass for Filipinos in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope John Paul II told the Filipino overseas workers: "Indeed, in Europe you are called to be the new and youthful witness of that very Faith which your country received from Europe so many generations ago."

Because of the evils that often accompany Filipino overseas employment, we do not promote overseas employment for the purpose of evangelization. We, however, exhort you our Filipino brothers and sisters who are already working abroad to live truly Christian lives. Lead lives of love. In that way, "you are telling the world of Christ's Love". (Theme song of World Youth Day).

May the migrant Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and St. Lorenzo Ruiz, our migrant saint, bless and protect our migrant workers and their families. May they "comfort them and turn their mourning into joy, their sorrow into gladness" (Jr. 31:13).

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines:

+ CARMELO D.F. MORELOS, D.D.
Archbishop of Zamboanga
CBCP President

Marriage Nullity Declaration On Physical Grounds: Its Implications in the Family Apostolate

+ OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D.

A. Practical Section: MARRIAGE RITE

Once we pay due attention to the Marriage Rite of the Church in terms of the words said, the symbols used, and the confirmation of the marriage bond entered into, in no small measure do we come to know the grave significance of marriage, to appreciate its serious implications, and to be more aware of its inherent dignity as a human endeavor — not to mention its sacramental content in the economy of salvation.

1. The words said seem to be familiar and yet possibly neither duly explained nor accordingly understood. Among others, the following are three rather fundamental questions asked for marriage intents and purposes:

a. "(name) did you come here of your own free will to bind yourself forever in the love and service of your husband/wife?"

The three basic realities forwarded to the Party Contractants through this question, for them to accept or otherwise, are "free will," "**bind** forever," "love and service," whereby the consensual dimension of marriage is emphasized, its indivisible and insoluble features are confirmed, and the good or welfare of the spouses themselves as a marriage finality is affirmed, respectively.

This question alone already says a lot about the substantive nature and inherent implications of marriage which are in fact very appropriately noted and connoted when the Church calls this intricate reality the "Conjugal Covenant."

b. "(Name) Do you take (name) here present, for your lawful husband/wife according to the rite of our Holy Mother the Church?"

In substance, this question asks the couple concerned if they really do or actually do not have the free and deliberate option to enter into that kind of marriage as categorically understood, taught and espoused by the Catholic Church according to the teaching of Christ and the pronouncement of the sacred Magisterium.

As humanity goes farther and farther from the time of Christ, there seems to be more and more different kinds of so called "marriages" that the world incongruously invents. The Church accepts and blesses absolutely no other kind of marriage except that she herself accepts, promotes and defends.

c. "Do you give yourself to him/her as his/her husband/wife? Do you accept him/her as your lawful husband/wife?"

The man and the woman presenting themselves for marriage are herein specifically asked: one, whether they in truth give or in reality do not give themselves to one another (giving of one self); two, whether they in truth accept or in reality do not accept each other (acceptance of the other); and three, concretely as a husband/wife (conjugal communion).

This is truly the crown question of them all. Reason: Even in the lay understanding, marriage in so many words and in so many ways after all means:, one, mutual self-giving;, two, mutual acceptance; and three, conjugal living.

2. The symbols used are but an expressive re-affirmation of the contents and consequences of the Marriage Vows in terms of the equally fundamental threefold answer "I do" to the above three fundamental questions. These symbols, whose importance is precisely measured by the meaning they respectively signify, are the following:

a. Rings: Representing one-self, when given to the other to wear, the giver gives self for the other to have, to treasure and to hold (Ring mark).

b. Arrhae: Signifying earthly goods and possessions earned through human toil or endeavor, the husband gives them to the wife in commitment to her temporal welfare, and the wife receives them in commitment to the temporal care of the whole domestic community (Anniversary Rite).

c. Humeral Veil: Usually one rectangular sheet of clothing placed on the couple, it proclaims that the husband and wife should live under one roof, eat from one table, and rest in one bed (Separation consequences).

d. Cord: This is in reality a jugal, i.e., a shape-8 harness equally worn by the husband and the wife in attestation that they will together both pull towards the same direction in married life, in the same way that they will both equally carry the load of conjugal living (Domestic disorientations).

e. Candles: Its lighting signals the formal start of the married life that is fittingly offered before the altar of God. Just as lighted candles grow shorter in the course of time until it lights no more, so also married life already grows shorter the moment it starts until it is duly ended (Marriage candle).

3. The formal confirmation of the marriage bond is made by the assisting Deacon, Priest or Bishop with this pronouncement: "And I, by the authority of the Church, calling on all those present here as witnesses, confirm and bless the bond of marriage you have contracted. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This formula of confirmation of a marriage entered into forwards the following more salient factors:

a. That the Deacon, Priest or Bishop assisting at the marriage must have the proper authorization from the Church through her competent Superiors.

b. That all those present at the marriage, when capable and willing, are called upon to be Witnesses thereto, although only two of these are asked to sign the Marriage Contract in formal testimony of the marriage held.

c. That it is the spouses themselves who opt for marriage, who enter the marriage covenant, who establish the marriage bond, and who are wherefore rightfully considered by the Church as the very Ministers

of their own marriage.

B. Canonical Section: MARRIAGE LAW

The standard or common capacity to elicit a naturally integral and juridically effective matrimonial consent is radically based on the faculty of knowing, wanting and fulfilling. Wherefore, the following are held incapable of valid marriage: One, those who "lack sufficient use of reason" that undermines the required cognitive element, i.e., "knowing" (Canon 1095 par. 1 CIC). Two, those who "suffer from grave lack of due discretion" that seriously impairs the evaluative-voluntary operation of the will act, i.e., "wanting" (Idem, par. 2 CIC). And three, those who are "unable to assume the essential obligations of marriage" that negate the moral possibility of observing the marriage imperatives, i.e., "fulfilling" (Idem, par. 3 CIC).

For the better appreciation of this third canonical incapacitating provision for marriage intents and purposes, which is herein our particular interest, it would be good to know what the law actually says how the law is commonly understood, and what is the distinct ecclesial consequence of its application.

1. The law through Canon 1095 pr. 3 CIC categorically says that persons are barred from contracting valid marriage when they are incapable of assuming the essential obligations of marriage due to causes of psychic nature. The following observations would be in order for a more correct insight into this signal disqualifying canonical provision:

a. The law is a positive expression of a matrimonial incapacity in the natural order. Marriage is a contract in the order of nature, elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament in the sphere of grace. A natural incapacity for the contract of marriage is certainly not the foundation for the sacrament of marriage.

b. The law is the end product of centuries of the pastoral solicitude of the Church in the homogeneous development of matrimonial doctrine and jurisprudence, hand in hand with the advanced findings in human behavioral sciences especially in the past three decades. Among all the seven sacraments in the Church, that of marriage admittedly receives the most doctrinal investigation and jurisprudential precision.

c. The law which was enacted in CIC 1983, while basically already settled in its substantial understanding and judicial application, is still undergoing some jurisprudential refinement. It can be said that the law is very alive in terms of its continuous scholastic study and practical observance.

2. The law is easier understood by elaborating on the following three key contents of this celebrated canonical incapacitating provision:

a. Incapacity to assume: While it is imperative both to have the knowledge and the understanding as to what marriage is and what marriage means, it is also mandatory to have the natural capacity to carry out what marriage implies. And one thing is this incapacity in the natural order irrespective of the preference of the subject thereof, and quite another is the free and deliberate option in the positive sphere of simply not wanting, not desiring to assume what marriage entails, which is something else.

In short, when a Party Contractant consents to something beyond his or her ability to give, to fulfill or to comply with, then clearly there is incapacity to assume what is consented to.

Marriage however definitely still remains within the reach of standard human capacity as a common way of life. The truth nevertheless remains that there are some people who are sadly deprived even of this ordinary personal capacity.

b. Essential marriage obligations: it is not hard to imagine that one can easily compose a rather long litany of accidental mandates and/or incidental agenda in married life. And while these may be important as they may be dictates of sound reason and prudence, the law refers itself to the "essential" or substantive marriage imperatives, i.e., obligations intrinsic to the conjugal covenant.

The more explicitly worded and more commonly invoked among the obligations essential to marriage are the following composite realities: One, "*bonum coniugum*" which is the good of the spouses themselves, their own well-being and welfare. Two, "*vitae consortium*" or the partnership of life based on the equality of persons and the complementary dimension of their attributes. Three, "*vitae communio*" that refers to one marriage bond productive of one conjugal life in line with the oneness of two in marriage. Four, "*relationes interpersonales*"

or the mutual relational intimacy of the persons of a couple bonded in marriage. And five, the triad good of the gift of children, of marital fidelity and conjugal insolubility in marriage.

To consent to marriage without the capacity to observe or to carry out the demands constitutive of marriage is to be afflicted with the incapacity to assume essential marriage obligations.

c. Causes of psychical nature: The human psyche is the specialized cognitive, conative and affective dimensions of a human person as a united being of spirit, mind and body. Their sound or unsound expressions in terms of attitudinal and/or behavioral manifestations or the utter lack thereof, are considered psychical in nature.

When the human psyche therefore is the very causal origin of the disability to satisfy the constitutive mandates of marriage, the law expresses this as incapacity to assume the obligations essential to 'marriage due to "causes of psychical nature." In other words, it is an impairing human psyche that brings about the incapacity.

Marriage nullity declarations on psychical grounds as provided by Canon 1095 par. 3 CIC, are by and large premised on personality disorders or psychopathic personalities, and sexual disorders or abnormalities which are all manifestly psychical anomalies with all their given etiologies, pathologies and typologies. Needless to say, the diagnosis and prognosis of these irregularities of the human psyche fall within the competence of behavioral experts, although it is still within the jurisdiction of Marriage Tribunals to pronounce on their judicial existence, relevance, gravity and curability.

3. The law when applied has the distinct ecclesial consequence of the attachment of a "Restrictive Clause" upon the person of the contracting party proven incapable of assuming the obligations essential to marriage on account of a duly established psychical cause. This limiting appendage has the following more salient features:

a. It restricts or conditions the right of the person concerned in entering into another Church marriage in terms of requiring the expressed permission of the Tribunal that rendered the nullity declaration by virtue of Canon 1095 par. 3 CIC, in collaboration with a qualified expert in behavioral science. The "Clause" is definitely not punitive in either content or intent but simply prudential in context and pastoral in finality less the person concerned again enter into

another *ab initio* null and void marriage for the same reason, again adversely affecting the life of others usually in an irreversible way.

b. It is certainly not a marriage impediment in the formal notion or understanding of the term, which only the Supreme Authority in the Church may declare as far as its nature and existence, its extent and binding force are concerned. Rather it is only an expressed prohibition demanded by reason under pain or illicitude and not necessarily of invalidity.

c. It may be lifted usually by the Tribunal itself that placed it through simple administrative procedure, primarily based on expert diagnostic pronouncement of subsequent amelioration of the personality constructs of the party concerned indicative of the required psychical capacity for marriage.

C. Pastoral Section: MARRIAGE APOSTOLATE

This praiseworthy service rendered to people on the occasion of Church marriage which is aptly known and called as the "Family Apostolate" or better still as the "Family Life Apostolate," is basically a preoccupation among and a mission of the laity also in favor of the laity in the Church. And rightly so because family life is evidently a lay venture.

The marked significance of this endeavor in the realm of faith, morals and reason is premised on the undeniable societal fact that during these our times, more and more ungodly people with their more and more narcissistic posture and hedonistic value system seriously and continuously undermine the notion and connotation of marriage, the nature and implications of family life, through their much flaunted scandalous living and/or loud amoral protestations that receive wide tri-media publicity with practically top billing, eroding public morality and right social conduct.

Family Life Apostolate usually covers the prenuptial phase which some call "Pre-Cana Apostolate," the postnuptial stage which they refer to as "Post-Cana Apostolate" or simply "Cana Apostolate," and the terminal chapter which the name "Lost-Cana Apostolate."

1. *Pre-Cana Apostolate:*

The importance and relevance of this apostolic work cannot be over

emphasized precisely because when well done, the Post-Cana Apostolate becomes rather light and easy while the Lost-Cana Apostolate is rendered irrelevant and purely academic.

a. Remote Pre-Nuptial Apostolate: There is no school, no college or university in this big wide world where marriage and family life are best known and well learned other than the home, with the parents as truly the greatest teachers by their own living of and witnessing to married life. In the same way, the fathers and/or the mothers could also be the most effective purveyors of errant thoughts and erratic attitudes to their own children about marriage and family life by their downright wayward if not truly vicious living as individuals; as men and women, as parents.

But this particular apostolate that admittedly begins at home should not in any way end there. Reason: Just as a home no matter how clean is entered into by the dirt outside thereof, in the same way, a wholesome marriage and sound family life can be slowly but surely eroded by adverse external factors found in and promoted by society, which therefore should also be the target of the apostolate through pertinent organizations and movements, public manifestations and advocacy in promotion and defense of the sanctity of marriage and the dignity of family life.

b. Proximate-Prenuptial Apostolate: It stands to reason that those who should be more qualified and more credible in the matter of marriage and family life are precisely those who actually have and live it — not those who are celibate by option. The principle of the so called "Apostolate of Like to Like," i.e., public officials to public officials, professionals to professionals, married people to people married or getting married, and the like, carries a good amount of sense.

While the proximate canonical pre-nuptial requirements are better left to the Clergy concerned, such subject matters as male and female psychology, work arrangement and residential option, family financial management, responsible parenthood, in-law realities, children education-formation-discipline, and many other strictly family matters can be best presented and inculcated to those preparing for their proximate marriage by married couples themselves engaged in the Family Life Apostolate.

c. Special Pre-Nuptial Concerns: It is imperative for those in the Family Life Apostolate to pay particular attention to the more salient following special pre-nuptial concerns in the context of our subject matter at hand — with no prejudgment however in mind:

(1) Adverse Family History: With an emotionally, mentally and/or morally disturbed and disturbing domestic environ as the background of the critical socio-affective development and socialization process of party concerned, it would be rather incongruous to assume precisely that the person concerned would have the best personality constitution as an individual, would have the best credentials as a contemplated marriage partner.

It is the dynamism of the human person properly responding to counter sound circumstantial stimuli and to the promptings of the spirit with the grace of the Good Lord, that could overcome such adverse family history.

(2) Questionable Constitution: Strange pronouncements and/or actuation, gross immaturity, marked irresponsibility, violent disposition, amoral behavior, peculiar sexual orientation, libertine posture, anti-social action and reaction patterns and the like, are some of the more common indications and inaptitude for marriage. Marriage is a very distinctly complicated reality, a highly moral venture, a definite and defined institution that would not find acceptable installation in personality rendered questionable by such deviant manifestations.

(3) Appendage of a Restrictive Clause: This signal prohibiting and conditioning Tribunal resolution is so appended to the very person of the party concerned that it follows him, irrespective of time and place, as far as the Church is concerned — until it is accordingly lifted.

Tribunal experience seems to indicate that while it can be rendered certain according to the certitude required by law that a marriage is *ab initio* null and void on psychical ground and that a Restrictive Clause on the party concerned is wherefore in order, its lifting by the same Tribunal with all the expert collaboration required, does not give the same certainty that the said party is thereby psychically fit for marriage. Hence, maximum caution is still called for in the event of an opted another Church marriage by the same party.

2. *Post-Cana Apostolate:*

The Post-Cana or simply Cana Apostolate is the much needed on-going ecclesial service to married couple — with the thought that it takes but seconds to get married and yet it takes a lifetime to live it. This significant pastoral concern and apostolic agenda find their more concrete expressions in organizations, associations and movements in the Church undertaking and promoting Family Life Enrichment Programs, Marriage Encounters, Marriage Renewals and the like.

a. Mutual Support Apostolate: Marriage and family life are both enriching as well as demanding endeavors that require explicit affirmation as well as expressed encouragement among couples gathering together for periodic conferences, recollections or retreats in addition to regular meetings for biblical inspiration, for prayer and for fellowship.

b. Lay Guidance and Counselling: In the event of grave conjugal difficulties or outstanding family problems, couples guide and counsel couples, grown up children guide and counsel other grown up and younger children — but only when such difficult circumstances or problematic situation are in the realm of the ordinary way of life, in the sphere of the normal course of events.

c. Expert Intervention: When a particularly serious marital adversity or a given family liability already enters the abnormal, already belongs to the sphere of the sick and sickening, then it becomes not only irrelevant but also probably dangerous for lay advisers to assume guidance and counselling roles. This is the precise occasion when experts in psychiatry or in clinical psychology at least are called to take over.

3. *Lost-Cana Apostolate:*

When a couple is in fact living separately notwithstanding all appearances and protestations to the contrary, then the marriage bond is in effect broken and conjugal life is factually lost. It is under these sad circumstances of a "Separation-In-Fact" that the Lost-Cana Apostolate comes to fore.

a. Reconciliation Apostolate: The truly meritorious work of reconciling separated couples or mending up a broken marriage is not everybody's competence particularly so when the previous

difficulties experienced were severe or the emotional wounds inflicted were deep.

Understanding the male and female ego or psyche, identifying the core problem in the marriage, appreciating carefully the arguments in favor and against the reconciliation of the spouses, are but some of the items that go into the work of reconciliation. It would not be hard to assume that a good number of marriages that broke up and thus remain permanently broken could be attributed neither simply to the absence of reconciliation attempts made by well meaning people, nor plainly to the refusal to reconcile on the part of the couples concerned, but precisely due to lack of reconciliation competence.

But one final advisory must be made. Together with all the conceivable tack and skill demanded in the Reconciliation Apostolate, there seems to be something usually forgotten and yet absolutely necessary in this difficult task — the imperative of prayer and fasting on the part of the apostle. God is the silent Third Party in every marriage. Hence, he cannot but be remembered well and fervently pleaded to by the worker in this reconciliation work.

b. Civil Court: The laws of the land on marriage and family life as provided by the Family Code are by and large objectively fair and just. This however notwithstanding, given all the conceivable inconvenience of court litigations, it is understandable that a rather good number of married couples who broke up, content themselves with only a "Separation-In-Fact," living everything else to good will and/or to chance.

It would be highly commendable and truly advantageous if the Lost-Cana Apostolate could have the benefit of ready referral to morally upright and capable Legal Counsels in the event that there be cases manifestly requiring formal recourse to the civil court.

c. Church Tribunal: The Church is only too cognizant, too aware and too observant of the well known biblical injunction "What God has put together, let no man put asunder." The Church therefore became also cognizant, aware and observant of the contrary ordination "What God has put asunder, let no man put together." Thus the Church has Marriage Tribunals the procedural operation of which is always in favor of the biblical injunction until and unless by exception the contrary ordination is proven.

25 April 1995

CONSULTATIVE WORDS

Cases and Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

ADMISSION OF AGLIPAYAN ADULTS TO CATHOLIC CHURCH

In our parish we are two parochial Vicars helping the parish Priest, who is already old. There are many Aglipayans both in the town and in the barrios. Many are willing to become Catholics. But in many cases it is hard to know whether they are really baptized or not, because their ministers have been moved frequently and their books do not properly record the data on the minister who administered the baptism and how it was performed. Sometimes it was a delegated person and we cannot be sure what form was used in the administration.

Our parish priest keeps telling us not to be too anxious in bringing Aglipayans to our Church. We should rather show our interest in keeping our parishioners good Catholics by fulfilling their obligations faithfully, he says. However, we want also to help those Aglipayans who sincerely desire to become Catholics. Can you give us some guidelines on how to proceed in admitting them properly in the Catholic Church? I heard sometime ago that when adult numbers of other sects or churches want to become Catholics, they have to abjure heresy and make a profession of faith before being admitted into the Church.

A Parochial Vicar

I presume that the two parochial Vicars will start by instructing properly those Aglipayan adults in our Catholic religion. As adults they cannot be admitted into the Church without a thorough and precise knowledge of the Catholic doctrine, since the Aglipayan Church differs in its teaching from the Catholic Church in many points. Without this previous religious instruction they cannot be admitted into our fold. The two parochial Vicars have to ascertain whether those adults who want to become Catholic are really baptized or not and, had they been baptized, whether their baptism was valid or not.

I understand that in the past with regards to Aglipayans the local Hierarchy requested that each case had to be examined carefully, since in many cases the form used for baptism was not valid. Thus, the two parochial Vicars have to make a conscientious and diligent investigation about each individual case, specially if in that parish the Aglipayan minister was frequently changed and, as our Consultant says, baptism was administered sometimes by a delegate. Since the incorporation to the Church is effected only through the reception of a valid baptism, no efforts should be spared in this investigation.

A valid baptism confers an indelible character on the soul of the baptized person. This is the reason why it can never be reiterated. However, baptism being absolutely necessary for salvation, it is licit and compulsory to be repeated in case a person has doubtfully been baptized or when the baptism administered to him/her was doubtfully valid. In such cases the form to be used is: "N., if you are not yet baptized, I baptize you ...". Let us now examine some of the cases that can happen regarding this matter.

With regards to Catholics nobody, having been baptized in his/her infancy, can be baptized again because of a scrupulous doubt or suspicion of not having been baptized or that the baptism administered was invalid. Such doubts or suspicions are not reasonable enough and the iteration of baptism would be a sacrilege being administered to a person who is not capable of receiving the sacrament. If, however, the doubt is serious and reasonable, it would be licit to baptize that person again. In the latter case, there is no irreverence committed to the sacrament, which was instituted for the salvation of souls.

When the iteration of baptism is to be done, it has always to be performed *sub conditione*, as mentioned above. This can happen:

- a) in case of those who were baptized in the mother's womb;
- b) in case of aborted fetuses;
- c) in case of foundlings or abandoned infants;

A Catholic, whose baptism is seriously or reasonably doubtful, once he/she has reached the age of reason, should be exhorted to make an act of contrition for the sins committed **before** receiving again a conditional baptism; and **after** the administration of said baptism he must confess the sins committed and be given a **conditional** absolution. The reason for doing this is: in case the first baptism was valid the sins committed after the same are not remitted by the iterated baptism which is null and void, but are remitted by the confession done by him/her.

However, when **adult persons, belonging to a non-Catholic sect or church**, want to adhere to the Catholic Church, the following should be done:

1) If the proper investigation has been made and the findings indicate the validity of their baptism, they cannot be baptized again. Note that the abjuration of heresy is not required any longer from those who were born and validly baptized in a non-Catholic sect or church. For their admission to the Catholic Church, they should only make the profession of faith (Cfr. *Directorium*, nn. 19-20: A.A.S., 59-1967, p. 581, nn. 19-20). Any confessor can hear their confession, absolve them from sins and administer the Holy Eucharist, as it is done with other Catholics.

2) However, if the findings of the investigation show the nullity of their baptism or the non-administration of baptism, the persons converted to the Catholic Church are to be baptized *sine conditione* and no abjuration is required from them, since the reception of the sacrament of baptism erases everything wrong on the past. Obviously the converted being adults have to make an act of contrition before being baptized for the personal sins they might have committed.

3) But if the findings on their baptism do not dissipate the doubt of its administration or its validity, the following should be done:

- a) the profession of faith should be performed;
- b) conditional baptism is to be administered once the new converts have made an act of contrition for the sins they have committed;

c) sacramental confession with conditional absolution will follow in view of the possibility that a previous valid baptism could have been administered, needing therefore the sacrament of Penance for the remission of sins committed if they had they received a previous valid baptism.

We hope that the foregoing explanation of the possible situations wherein the Aglipayan adults might be, will help the two parochial vicars in the admission of those who want to become Catholics. The advice, however, given to them by the parish priest should, of course, be followed.

APPOINTMENT OF A HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

/ was ordained priest on December of last year. My Bishop sent me to Manila to study Education and obtain an academic degree, since he plans to open a school in our diocese. Due to the fact that my father is a close friend of the Administrator of a private Hospital in Manila, I am staying at the Hospital, hear confessions sometimes in the parish and take care of the personnel of the Hospital as Chaplain, while I am pursuing my studies. I was told that in the past one of the parish Vicars used to say Mass in the Hospital on Sundays, heard the confessions of the patients, nurses, doctors and employees, and anointed the patients when they were in serious condition. The parish Priest has requested me to act as Chaplain, so that the parish Vicar can dedicate himself fully to other parochial activities.

A few days ago, however, a priest from my own diocese, who studies Canon Law, told me that I cannot perform the office of Hospital Chaplain nor hear confessions here in Manila, since neither our Bishop nor the local Ordinary of Manila has given me faculties to hear confessions. As I said, I was ordained on December of last year. I think that my Ordination was perfectly valid. But I want to ensure that there is nothing wrong in performing my ministry as Chaplain, as I was requested. What shall I do?

A young Priest

This is not the first time we are consulted on this and other related matters. It is obvious that the procedure to be followed in appointing the young priest as Chaplain of the Hospital has not been followed. The parish Priest is not empowered to appoint him as Chaplain. The fact that the Hospital **is** within his parish is not a valid reason for him to appoint the young priest as Chaplain of the Hospital. The Code Of Canon Law states clearly that "unless the law provides otherwise or unless special rights lawfully belong to someone, a Chaplain is to be appointed by the local Ordinary, to whom it belongs to appoint one who has been presented or to confirm one elected" (can. 565). In this case, therefore, it is the local Ordinary of Manila the only competent authority to assign officially the priest who will take care of the Hospital as **the Chaplain**.

However, this does not imply, in any way, that what one of the parish Vicars has done in the past, i.e. "to say Mass in the Hospital on Sundays and occasionally hear confessions of the patients, nurses, doctors, and employees and anoint the patients when they were in serious condition" was wrong. It was perfectly done, since the Hospital is within the parish and its personnel is under the care of the parish Priest and parochial Vicars. What we are pointing out is that to entrust the Hospital chaplaincy to the young priest by the parish Priest is an obvious mistake. It is the prerogative of the local Ordinary alone to make this appointment.

Moreover, there is a serious error committed by the young priest in this case. He says: "I am staying in the Hospital and **hear** confessions **in the parish** sometimes ..." These words imply that even before having been entrusted with the "supposed chaplaincy," he has been hearing confessions in the parish without the faculty to do so. This is confirmed by what he adds: "A priest of my diocese ... told me that I can not ... hear confessions here in Manila, since neither our Bishop nor the local Ordinary of Manila has given me the faculties to hear confessions". Of course, the priest was perfectly correct in calling his attention. The young priest should know that to absolve validly from sins, two things are absolutely necessary, namely the power of Order and the faculty to exercise this priestly power. Canon 966 reads: "For the valid absolution of sins, it is required that, in addition to the power of Order, the minister has the faculty to exercise that power in respect **of the faithful** to whom he gives **absolution**."

Considering what we have explained, we can answer the question of the young Priest, as follows:

a) If he wants to be appointed as Chaplain of the Hospital, where he stays while he pursues his studies in Education, he must request the Ordinary of Manila to appoint him as Chaplain of the Hospital. It is advisable that this application be done through the parish Priest where the Hospital is located.

b) If he wants also to be given the faculty to hear confessions in Manila, he must request such faculty to the Ordinary of Manila too. He has to bear in mind what canon 969 states: "Only the local Ordinary is competent to give to any priests whomsoever the faculty to hear the confessions of any whomsoever of the faithful".

It should be borne in mind also that the faculty to hear confessions enjoyed by a duly appointed Chaplain is "to hear the confessions of **the faithful entrusted to his care**" (can. 566, 1). It is, therefore, a faculty restricted to hear the confessions "**of the faithful entrusted to his care**" only. Hence, if he has no faculty to hear confessions in general, he can not hear the confessions of other faithful in the parish church or other churches. His faculty is limited to-the Hospital personnel only: patients, nurses, doctors and employees.

On the other hand, the Chaplain of a Hospital is given by the law itself a special faculty, to be exercised only in the Hospital, and not enjoyed even by parish priests, namely the faculty to absolve from *latae sententiae* censures which are neither reserved nor declared (can. 567), as the excommunication incurred by those who successfully procure an abortion (can. 1398).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Social Ethics and the Priority of the Poor

FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P.

Introduction

Let us begin by quoting an important and relevant text from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

In the work of teaching and applying Christian morality, the Church needs the dedication of pastors, the knowledge of theologians and the contribution of all Christians and men (and women, we add) of good will. Faith and the practice of the Gospel provide each person with an experience of life "in Christ," who enlightens him and makes him able to evaluate the divine and human realities according to the spirit of God. Thus the Holy Spirit can use the humblest to enlighten the learned and those in the highest positions (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no. 2038). (Hereafter, we shall quote the CCC by putting the corresponding number in parenthesis.)

Within and without the Church, the moral doctrine of the Catechism has been the most often commented — and debated. In particular, those teachings perceived by modern and secular society as conservative and outmoded, such as, the ones related to contraception, homosexuality, homologous *in vitro* fertilization, exclusion of women from the priesthood

and divorcees from Eucharistic communion, and the death penalty and the "just" war. And also those teachings considered as too radical, such as, sins against justice and equality that claim to heaven, solidarity of the developed nations with the developing countries, restitution, "stealing" by the poor from the rich ...

he most repeated questions on the Catechism refer, then, to morality in general, and to sexual ethics/bioethics and social ethics in particular.

On this occasion, let us present, therefore, the social teachings of the Catechism, centering on the poor as its priority. (Throughout our presentation, we shall make some pertinent references to *The Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (CFC: 1994), which has already been presented to the Vatican for final approval.)

The Catechism takes up Christian ethics or moral theology in its third part. It explains why thus:

The Symbol of the Faith confesses the greatness of God's gifts to man in his work of creation, and even more in redemption and sanctification. What faith confesses, the sacraments communicate: by the sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become "children of God" (*Jn* 1:12), "partakers of the divine nature" (2 *Pt* 1:4). Coming to see in the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (*Ph* 1:27). They are made capable of doing so by the grace of Christ and the gifts of his Spirit, which they receive through the sacraments and through prayer (CCC, 1692).

This text explains briefly the reasons for the traditional order of the four parts of the Catechism. The CFC, taking another tradition, presents the moral life of the Christian before worship, that is, the commandments before the sacraments (cf. CFC, 18). Granting that CFC puts forward a good argument, we prefer the division of the CCC: sacramental grace is needed to live as children of God, our greatest dignity. No wonder the third part begins with these words by St. Leo the Great: "Christian, recognize your dignity ..." (1691).

Part three of the Catechism is aptly entitled *Life in Christ*: Christian ethics is the ethics of the following of Christ, and only if united to him may we produce fruits of salvation (2074). Jesus Christ is, in fact, the

norm of morality, the Beatitude of God, "the first and last point of reference" of Christian life and morals (1698; cf. VS, 19).

Life in Christ is divided into two sections. The first section (*Man's Vocation: Life in the Spirit*) is the classical fundamental moral theology that — following St. Thomas Aquinas—underlines virtues. The second section centered on the commandments is — it is said — the special Moral Theology of the Jesuits and Redemptorists (?). However, specific virtues are also highlighted through the study of the commandments.

Some moralists today subdivided ethics — and Christian ethics — into *Ethics of the Person* (to include interpersonal relationships, sexual ethics and bioethics) and *Social Ethics*. Social ethics speak of social structures in order to improve them, or change them according to social values, in particular (as promoted by the Social Doctrine of the Church) truth, freedom justice and love or solidarity.

One innovative point of the Catechism is its consideration of the social nature of the human person in the general section of Christian ethics, where it studies engagingly the human community. Thus, CCC develops social ethics within Christian ethics, or Christian moral life: section one, in general; section two, concretely, that is, within the commandments.

1. The Social Teachings of the Catechism

The study of social ethics may be organized differently according to different models of presentation. Three paradigms are usually considered: the model of justice (from St. Thomas), the model of the Social Doctrine of the Church, and the model of the commandments (from St. Alfonso Maria de Liguori and others). The CCC is a good blending of the three models, but, obviously, giving preference to the paradigm of the commandments. Within the commandments, the social Gospel, the social dimension of faith and morals is especially analyzed within the fourth commandment (authority and citizenship), the fifth (respect for human dignity and life, promotion of peace), the seventh (universal destiny of the good of the earth, private property, justice and solidarity), the eighth (truth and truthfulness), and the tenth (inordinate desire of the property of others, purity of heart). A fundamental text:

The whole Creed speaks of God, and when it also speaks of man

and of the world it does so in relation to God. The other articles of the Creed all depend on the first, just as the remaining commandments make the first explicit (199).

As we know, the principal dimensions of social ethics — a part of ethics and Christian ethics — are the economic, political and cultural dimensions. The CCC talks of *political ethics* within the fourth commandment. Some commentators find this inclusion a little bit farfetched. It *speaks of economic ethics* within the seventh commandment mainly, and also the tenth. The most radical social teachings of the CCC are found in the seventh commandment, where the social doctrine of the Church is cohesively explained, and the preferential love for the poor is strongly proposed as an obligatory option for all Christians.

Within the seventh commandment, we find another praiseworthy addition: *environmental ethics* (to be rooted in the teaching on creation, on God as Creator of heaven and earth — no. 279 & *if*).

Cultural ethics is touched when considering the family (within the fourth commandment), education and religious freedom. In other parts, the Catechism speaks of different peoples and cultures (814), of faith and culture (835), of inculturation (854), of respectful dialogue with others (856), of liturgical inculturation (1202 and 1206). In a sense, CCC leaves cultural ethics — inculturation, socio-cultural realities — to the local catechisms (1075).

CCC studies *sexual ethics* under the sixth and the ninth commandments.

From a Third World perspective, we feel that there are a few remarkable points made by the CCC, that are worth mentioning here. These points are, among others, the following: the reality of *global ethics*; the affirmation of the principles of *social justice*, which implies human equality at the personal and social levels, and of *human and Christian solidarity* or effective love of neighbor prioritized in the love of poor persons and nations. (Cf. Marciano Vidal, *La moral cristiana en el nuevo Catecismo*. Madrid, PPC, 1993, pp. 55-57; for a critical appraisal of the social teachings of the Catechism, see also James L. Nash, "Catechesis for Justice and Peace in the Catechism," in B.L. Marthaler (Editor), *Introducing the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1994, pp. 112-

With reference to the CFC, its development of social ethics is doctrinally cohesive, practically radical and truly contextualized. Partly because it does not follow strictly the outline of the Commandments, CFC's social doctrine appears well ordered — and prophetic. In its presentation, we single out chapter 20 on *Building Justice*, and also chapter 18 on *Love One Another*, and chapter 21 on *Respecting Truth*.

In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II says that the question of the young rich man of the Gospel to Jesus continues to be the main moral question, which is, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Cf. VS, no. 6 & ff). The universal Catechism opens section two of part three with the same question: "Teacher, what must I do...?" The answer? Christ's initial answer to the young man of the Gospel: "Keep the commandments" (CCC 2052). And his following answer: Follow me by observing the evangelical counsels, which are—according to CCC — "inseparable from the commandments" (2053).

The Decalogue (the "Ten Words") is a path of life with "liberating power" (2057), that contains "a privileged expression of the natural law" (2070). The first three commandments — one tablet — refer to the love of God and the other seven — the other tablet — to the love of neighbor, which is universal, but, principally, love of "the little ones," including the poor. Love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable (1878).

Social ethics today, especially Christian social ethics — including the Social Doctrine of the Church — speak radically of the *preferential love for the poor*; also of the *preferential option for the poor* (to stress that, although it is mainly an obligatory option of human and Christian love, it is also a required option of justice). For its part, CFC explains cogently this love, or option, in Philippine context (cf. CFC, nos. 947-949).

2. The Preferential Love for the Poor through the Whole Catechism

The Catechism's section one, part one, on the profession of faith (the Creed) begins thus: "I believe in God the Father." In God the Father, as Creator of the world, Father of the King of Israel and, "most especially, Father of the poor, of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his

loving protection" (CCC, 238). The Messiah of God will proclaim the Good News to the poor (*Is* 61:1-2). Jesus, the Son of God, does it (*Lk* 4:18-19). In his messianic entrance in Jerusalem, the subjects of his kingdom are children and God's poor (CCC, 559). Mary, the Mother of Jesus, stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who received salvation from him (489). God's Kingdom belongs to the poor and lowly. Let us reflect on this basic text from the Catechism:

The Kingdom belongs *to the poor and lowly*, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to "preach good news to the poor"; he declares them blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." To them — the "little ones" — the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned. Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his Kingdom (544; cf. 709; 786).

"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.": the Church as the People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, whose mission is — like Christ's, her founder — to evangelize the poor. Therefore, "urged on by the Spirit of Christ, she must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death from which he emerged victorious by his resurrection" (852). Christ's faithful — hierarchy, laity, consecrated life — form, as the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines proclaimed, the Church of the poor (PCPJJ, *Acts and Decrees*, Manila: CBCP, 1992, pp. XCIV, nos. 125-136; CFC, no. 947).

The Bishop's pastoral care must be especially addressed to the poor as well as to those persecuted for their faith and to missionaries (886). Religious women and men have to practice, in a special way, the spirit of the Beatitudes, and the vow of poverty — understood today as preferential love for the poor (cf. CCC, 932). All Christians are "administrators of the good of the Lord" (952).

"I believe in life everlasting." We believe in heaven, purgatory and hell. God wants the salvation of all, and Jesus' death is sufficient to save all. However, we can say "no" to God. Will anyone go to hell? "Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the

serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren" (1033). Commenting on the seventh article of the Creed, "He will come again to judge the living and the dead," the Catechism states: "On the last day Jesus will say: 'Truly I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'" (678). Speaking of the *Last judgment* the Catechism affirms: "The Last judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life" (1039). It quotes them a powerful statement written by St. Augustine:

When "our God comes, he does not keep silence" ... he will turn towards those at his left hand: ... "I placed my poor little ones on earth for you. I as their head was seated in heaven at the right hand of my Father — but on earth my members were suffering, my members on earth were in need. If you gave anything to my members, what you gave would reach their Head. Would that you had known that my little ones were in need when I placed them on earth for you and appointed them your stewards to bring your good works into my treasury. But you have placed nothing in their hands; therefore you have found nothing in my presence" (1039).

Part two of the Catechism develops the celebration of the Christian Mystery; its section two, the seven Sacraments of the Church. Speaking of the celebration of the Eucharist (cf. 1113), the Catechism points out the original custom of the collection: "From the very beginning, Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need. This custom of the collection, ever appropriate, is inspired by the example of Christ who became poor to make us rich" (1351).

Moreover, the Catechism tells us, Christ is present in the Eucharist in the most special way. But he is also present in many other ways: "in his word, in his Church's prayer ..., in the poor, the sick and the imprisoned, in the sacraments, in the sacrifice of the Mass and in the person of the minister" (1373). He is also present, then, in the poor.

The Eucharist, which is the source and summit of moral life (2031), commits us to the poor: "To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren" (1397). To strengthen this statement, the Catechism quotes St. John

Chrysostom:

You have tasted the Blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother, ... You dishonor this table when you do not judge worthy of sharing your food someone judged worthy to take part in this meal ... God freed you from all your sins and invited you here, but you have not become more merciful (1397).

Considering the *Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation*, the CCC points out the three traditional forms of penance, namely, fasting, prayer and almsgiving, which show integral conversion to oneself, to God and to others respectively. Among the gestures of conversion, we find concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right (1434-1435). Through the strong liturgical seasons and days of penance, we are urged to give alms to and fraternally share our goods with the needy (1438).

Regarding the *Sacrament of Holy Orders*, the grace of the Holy Spirit proper to the sacrament entails also, particularly in the case of Bishops, "gratuitous love for the poor, the sick and the needy" (1586).

Christian couples — even those baptized who are divorced - are asked to engage in appropriate apostolic activities, including their contribution "to works of charity and to community efforts for justice" (1651). Christian spouses who have no children can also have a conjugal life full of meaning, by radiating "a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality and of sacrifice" (1658).

Many single persons have no family, due to poverty. The doors of Christian homes and of the Church must be open to them: "The Church is a home and a family for everyone, especially those who labor and are heavy laden" (1658).

With regard to the Catechism's teaching on the Christian family and its obligatory preferential love for the poor, it must be complemented by John Paul II's pertinent doctrine in *Familiaris Consortio*, where we read: "The Christian family is thus called upon to offer everyone a witness of generous and disinterested dedication to social matters, through a 'preferential option' for the poor and disadvantaged" (FC, 64; cf. also Id., nos. 47, 71 and 21).

Part four of the Catechism is on Christian prayer, a lovely and moving part. Section two is on the Lord's Prayer. (We hope the CFC will consider

the Our Father not only in the Epilogue. Moreover, the commandments of the Church could be presented, perhaps, more significantly - CFC, 595). Explaining the fourth petition, we find good food for thought: "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" *Give us*, we are taught, also expresses the covenant. Us also recognizes God as the Father of all and we pray to him for all, "in solidarity with their needs and sufferings" (2829). *Give us our bread!* How about those brothers and sisters who hunger because they have no bread to eat? The Catechism says:

The drama of hunger in the world calls Christians who pray sincerely to exercise responsibility towards their brethren, both in their personal behavior and in their solidarity with the human family. This petition of the Lord's Prayer cannot be isolated from the parable of the poor man Lazarus and of the Last Judgment (2831).

Indeed, the newness of God's Kingdom must be shown "by the establishment of justice in personal and social, economic and international relations, without ever forgetting that there are no just structures without people who want to be just" (2832).

Give us our bread. *Our bread!* "Our" is the one loaf for the "many." In the Beatitudes, "poverty" is the virtue of sharing, that calls Christians "to communicate and share both material and spiritual goods, not by coercion but out of love, so that the abundance of some may remedy the needs of others" (2833).

Earlier, the CCC told us that there exist also *sinful inequalities*, that are in open contradiction of the Gospel," like peoples of the one same race" (1938). The Catechism also wants us to remember the catechetical tradition related to "sins that Egypt, the cry of the foreigner, the widow and the orphan, and injustice to the wage earner (1867).

Let us close this section by adding 'with the Catechism' that the specifically Christian sense of the fourth petition of the Our Father is concerned with the Bread of Life: "The Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist" (2835).

3. Universal Destination of the Goods of the Earth Private Property and the Poor

Some radical theologians have accused the universal Catechism of deluting the preferential option for the poor, in particular by placing it under morals and not under dogmatic theology (Cf. Julio Lois, "*Consideraciones críticas*," in *El Catecismo posconciliar. Contexto y contenidos*. Madrid: San Pablo, 1993, pp. 250-260.) As we have already seen earlier, this accusation is not fully true, even if — as it should be — the preferential love for the poor is considered mainly within the moral life of the Christian: it is practically an option of justice and solidarity, that are the two main social virtues and values.

The central teaching on justice and love for the poor is thus found — in the Catechism as in traditional theology — within the study of the seventh commandment, that is, "You shall not steal" (*Ex* 20:15). Following the strong pronouncements of the prophets, the Fathers of the Church and St. Thomas Aquinas, religious ethics, or the reflection on the first three commandments, stresses repeatedly that worship without justice or love of neighbor, particularly of the needy neighbor, is false worship (cf. CCC, 2100).

Speaking on the third commandment, the Catechism says that God rested on the seventh day and, therefore, the human person, especially the poor, must also rest on the Sabbath day (2172). Moreover, the Christians who can rest on Sunday should remember those of their brethren who have the same needs and rights, but cannot rest from work because of poverty and misery (2186).

The fourth commandment, which speaks of family life, reminds us that the members of the family ought to learn to take care of and be responsible to the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped and the poor (2208).

The fifth commandment speaks of the obligation to respect the sacred dignity of all human persons, and their inalienable rights — beginning with the right to life from the moment of conception to death (cf. 2270 & 2273). While studying *bioethical issues* mainly within the fifth commandment, the Catechism develops briefly a catechesis of peace (and "the just war"), too. This pedagogy of peace is very important in social ethics, which is, an ethics of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. A most dynamic and illuminating statement in this regard: "Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity" (2304).

In relation to our concrete theme, the priority of the poor, the Catechism speaks against deterrence and the accumulation of weapons, and denounces forcefully the spending of enormous sums of money on weapons instead of using them to aid poor populations (2315).

The seventh commandment forbids to take or to retain unjustly the goods of the neighbor and to wrong him in any way regarding his goods. It commands justice and charity in the administration of earthly goods and of the fruits of the work of man. It asks for respect for the universal destiny of the goods of the earth and of the right to private property (2401).

Main points of consideration: (I) The universal destiny of the goods and private property; (II) The respect of persons and goods; (III) The social doctrine of the Church; (IV) Economic activity and social justice; (V) Justice and solidarity among nations; (VI) Love for the poor. (This article is, mainly, then, on *economic ethics*.)

a) Universal Destination and Private Property

UNIVERSAL DESTINY OF THE GOODS. At the beginning, God entrusted the earth and its resources to the "common stewardship of humanity." Thus, the goods of creation are destined to the whole human race. However, the earth is distributed among all peoples by reason of security. The appropriation of goods is legitimate to guarantee the freedom and dignity of the persons, and to take care of their fundamental needs and those of their dependents. Nevertheless, it should make possible a natural solidarity among men (2402).

Private Property. The right to private property does not annul the original gift of the earth to the whole of humanity. The universal destiny of the goods remains primordial, although the promotion of the common good requires the respect for the right to private property, and its exercise (2403).

However, goods possessed privately are also common property, "in the sense that they must also profit others" (GS, 69). Private property makes its owner an administrator of providence (2409). Moreover, the owners of useful and consumer goods must use them with moderation, reserving the best part for guests, the sick and the poor" (2405).

Civil authority has the right and duty to regulate the legitimate exercise of the right to property for the same of the common good (2406; GS 71; SRS 42; CA 40, 48).

b) Respect for Persons and Their Goods

In economic matters, the respect for human dignity demands the practice of the virtues of *temperance, justice and solidarity*. Let us read an important text:

In economic matters, respect for human dignity requires the practice of the virtue of *temperance*, so as to moderate attachment to this world's goods; the practice of the virtue of *justice*, to preserve our neighbor's rights and render him what is due; and the practice of *solidarity*, in accordance with the golden rule and in keeping with the generosity of the Lord, who "though he was rich, yet for your sake ... became poor so that by his poverty, you might become rich" (2407; cf. 2187; VS, no. 100).

Respect of private property. Theft is against the seventh commandment. Applying the doctrine of the universal destination of the goods of the earth, in case of "*urgent and evident needs*," when the only means to remedy immediate and essential needs (food, shelter and clothing ...), it is justifiable to take and use the goods of others; in this case, there is no theft (2408).

Likewise, against the seventh commandment; to retain purposely goods borrowed or objects lost; to cheat in buying and selling; to pay unjust salaries; to raise prices speculating with the ignorance or needs of others. Also: corruption, work poorly done, tax fraud, excessive expenses, waste ... (cf 2409).

Commutative justice regulates contracts among persons. *Legal justice* orders the citizens to give their due to the community. *Distributive justice* regulated what the community owes to the citizens in proportion to their contribution and their needs (2411).

Restitution. The reparation of an injustice done demands restitution of the good stolen to its owner (2412).

Games of chance (card game, etc.), or *betting*, are not against justice

by themselves; but they can be, if they deprive those involved or others of what is necessary to provide for their needs and those of others. Moreover, a passion for playing can become "a grave servitude." To bet unjustly or to cheat is immoral (2413).

Workers as objects. Anything that enslaves persons — like buying, selling or exchanging them like merchandise — is against the seventh commandment. It is a sin against human dignity to reduce persons by violence to objects of consumerism or to a source of profit (2414).

Environmental Ethics. Animals, plants and inanimate beings are destined to the common good of humanity — past, present and future. Human dominion over them is not absolute (responsible to future generations), and "religious respect" for the integrity of creation (cf CA, 37-38; CCC, 2415). The animals are creatures of God; we have to show respect to them (like St. Francis) (2416). Hence, *relative dominion over them*: it is legitimate to use the animals for food and clothing; they can be domesticated — to help man; within certain limits, they can be used as subjects of medical and scientific experimentation (2417). Contrary to human dignity; to make animals suffer; to invest on them sums of money that should, in the first place, be invested to remedy the misery of men; to give to them affection due only to human beings (2418).

c) The social Doctrine of the Church

The Gospel, revelation, has a social message. The Church makes moral judgments on social issues and concerns. Through the Social doctrine, the Church interprets social events, in the light of Christ's teaching, with the assistance of the holy Spirit (2422).

The Social Doctrine of the Church presents (1) principles of reflection (e. gr., human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity); (2) criteria for judgment (the preferential option for the poor); 93) and guidelines for action (nonviolence).

The Catechism says "no" to historical socialism (communism) and capitalism (individualistic, primacy of capital over human work, moral relativism). "It is convenient to promote a reasonable regulation of the market and economic initiatives, according to a just hierarchy of values and in a view to the common good" (2425).

d. Economic Activity and Social Justice

Economic activity is ordered to the service of persons and communities. It is autonomous, but within the limits of the moral order and according to social justice.

Human work is a duty. It honors the gifts of the Creator and the talents received from him. It can also be redemptive and a means of sanctification and animation of human realities in the spirit of Christ (2427). Work is for man and not the other way around (2428). We work to sustain our life and the lives of others, and to render service to the community (2428).

Responsibility of the State: to guarantee the security needed for economic activity; to respect individual freedom; to be alert so that human rights are not violated (2431).

Economic and ecological responsibility of the different enterprises. These have "an obligation to consider the good of persons and not only the increase of profits (2432).

Access to employment and to professions must be open to all (2433).

Just salary is a legitimate fruit of labor. It is a grave injustice, not to give it: "The agreement of those involved is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages" (2434).

The *labor strike* is morally legitimate when it is an inevitable recourse or at least, if it is necessary to obtain a proportionate benefit (2435). It is not acceptable when it is contrary to the common good or violent (2435).

e) Justice and Solidarity Among Nations.

The gap between those who have and those who have not is "abysmal." (CFC says: "Never has the gap between rich and poor Filipinos been so wide, so tangible and so shameless" — no. 569.) On one hand, those who possess and develop the means of growth; on the other, those who accumulate debts (2437). There is a need of global solidarity, of a new world, order, of new priorities and scales of values, towards objectives of a moral, cultural and economic development (CA, 28; 2438).

The *rich nations* have a duty of solidarity and charity with the developing nations; at times, also a duty of justice, when the welfare of rich nations comes from unpaid resources taken from poor ones (2439). Appropriate responses: direct help in time of urgent need; reform of international economic and financial institutions which will promote and strengthen equitable relations with the less developed countries. Need to support the efforts of the poor countries, especially on agricultural labor: "Peasants especially in the Third World, form the overwhelming majority of the poor" (2440).

In the Church, not the pastors, but the lay faithful intervene directly acting on their own initiative, in *political activities*. However, social action can be plural in form. It belongs to the laity "to animate, temporal realities with their Christian commitment, by which they show they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice" (SRS, 47; CCC, 2442).

f) Love for the Poor

God blesses those who help the poor and rejects those who do not (cf. *Mt* 5:42). The Good News is announced to the poor (*Mt* 11:5; *Lk* 4:18). At the end of life, Jesus will judge us according to what we did, or did not do, to the poor (cf. *Mt* 25:31-36).

The love of the Church for the poor belongs to a constant tradition (CA 57). It is inspired in Jesus, his Gospel and his poverty. The love for the poor is one of the motives for human work — to be able to share with them (cf. *Ep* 4:28). It extends not only to material poverty, but also to numerous kinds of cultural and religious poverty (2444). The love for the poor is incompatible with a disordered love for wealth or its selfish use (2445) (cf. *Jm* 5:1-6). (St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Great).

The works of mercy include deeds of charity towards the neighbor. Alms given to the poor is one of the main kinds of witnessing fraternal charity (2447).

Following Christ, we are asked to be compassionate with all, particularly with the "little ones"; "those oppressed by misery are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church" (2448).

"You will always have the poor with you, but not me ..." (*Jn* 12:8). With these words, Jesus invites us to recognize his presence in the poor who are his brethren but does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against "buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals" (*Am* 8:6) (2449). St. Rosa de Lima, when her mother reprimanded her for taking care of the poor and sick at home, answered her: "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Christ. We should never get tired of helping our neighbor, because in them we serve Jesus" (2449).

The Christian is asked by Jesus to choose him over everything else: "to renounce all possessions" (*Lk* 14:33) for him and the Gospel (cf. *Mk* 8:35). The precept from the Gospel, on detachment from wealth, is obligatory to enter the Kingdom of heaven (2544). Indeed, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (*Mt* 5:3); "Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom belongs (2546).

The preferential love for the poor is, above all, an obligatory option of charity as love of neighbor, or human and Christian solidarity. But, the commitment to the poor is also a commitment of justice; this is why, theologians speak also of the preferential option for the poor as an option of justice. All human beings, the Catechism tells us, possess the same dignity (1934). There are among them some differences, which are natural and according to God's plan (1937); but there are also "scandalous inequalities" that claim to heaven, and affect millions of men, women and children. These inequalities are against justice —and God (cf. no. 1938). (According to theologian Julio Lois, the most unfortunate members of the CCC are nos. 1936 and 1937. He has a point, but — in our opinion — he does exaggerate it! See his article "*Consideraciones Criticas*," in O. Gonzalez de Cardedal and J.A. Martinez Camino (Editors), *El Catecismo Posconciliar*. Madrid: San Pablo, 1993, pp. 250-260.)

And yet, charity is the main virtue and value to help us heal pride, selfishness and social ills — and injustices to the poor. And charity's priority is the needy and poor (1932).

All Christians, in particular, have the radical duty to become a "neighbor" to all others, particularly, and urgently, to the needy (1932). Only charity, the main Christian social value, will make us see in every man and woman a "neighbor," and prompt us, with urgency, to help the

neighbor in need (1932).

Against greed and avarice — and envy — (forbidden by the tenth commandment), Jesus proclaims poverty in spirit and the proper cultivation of the desire to happiness, as paths to full happiness, to Beatitude, to the Kingdom — to see God!

- Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that (they have)" for his sake and that of the Gospel. Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on (*Lk* 21:4). The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (CCC, 2544).

4. Conclusion: Lived Morality

Love is the human value *par excellence*, and charity, the Christian virtue, the form of all virtues. The theological virtue of charity is one of the threads running throughout all the pages of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In part three, Jesus asks his followers to imitate him "along the path of love" (VS, 20; cf. CCC, 1694).

Charity is "the soul of holiness — to which we are all called" (826). It is "the form of all virtues" (2346), "the soul of the whole apostolate" (864), "the greatest social commandment" (1889). Charity finds "in every man a neighbor, a brother" (1931). The duty of charity "becomes more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged" (1932).

Charity is *love of God and love of neighbor; above all, it is love of the poor neighbor*. As we have seen, the preferential love for the poor is considered not only within the seventh commandment (mainly here), but also throughout the Creed, the Sacraments, the other commandments — and prayer. Thus, the preferential love — or option — for the poor is also a theological and moral thread through the Catechism.

Before closing, let us recall two patristic texts quoted by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2446). The first text is from St. John Chrysostom: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." The

second text is from Saint Gregory the Great: "When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice."

Part three of the Catechism, or *Life in Christ*, must help us all realize in a deeper manner that what really matters in our Christian lives, in particular concerning morality, is not mainly orthodoxy (correct doctrine), but orthopraxis (correct practice). Certainly, both are needed, and are mutually enriched by fertilizing each other (Rene Coste). But, in fact, only true practice, living our faith, witnessing a graced moral life, opting preferentially for the poor will save us — and transform the world. The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "Ask where the good way is and take it and find peace for your soul" (*Jr* 6:16).

The Church, the People of God — hierarchy, religious men and women, laity — show the prophetic dimension of their Christian lives when they become "Christ's witnesses in the midst of the world" (CCC, 785; cf. *Id.*, 905, 1068). Witnesses of *the Way* (*Ac* 22:4): the way of the Lord (*Ac* 18:25), the way to salvation (*Ac* 16-17); that is, the way of Christ, the way of love (CCC, 25), of merciful love.

May the Lord be able to tell us after our earthly life: *"I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me"* (*Mt* 25: 35-36).

"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* 25:40).

Anthropology According To The Catechism of the Catholic Church

MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

I. Introduction

A general view of the Anthropology of the Catechism of the Catholic Church can be stated as follows: Man is the center of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) and God is the center of man. In these simple statements we can see the relevance of man in the CCC.

Thus, if man is the center of the CCC, then the main question in our reflection should be: How is man seen by the Catechism of the Catholic Church? The main feature and the foundation of the whole anthropology of CCC is to consider man as the image and likeness of God. From this fundamental appreciation, the CCC considers man in three different aspects: 1) as a WHO or subject, that is, a being who has a capacity for God, 2) as a WHAT or object, that is, man's nature and constitution, and 3) as CALLED or the vocation of man, that is, a being who is called to share in the beatitude of God.

These three considerations of man correspond to the three dimensions of man, namely: man as subject, a person who has a capacity for God and who is responsible of his acts; man as an object or as a reality, as constituted and as existing in the world, that is, the concept of man that CCC proposes; and finally, the vocation of man which is the dynamic aspect

of man, or his finality and destiny. This is the consideration of the answer to the question: Why do I exist?

Man is the center of CCC but God is the center of man. For God is the origin and creator of man. Man is created to the image and likeness of God, and man is created to share in the beatitude of God. Thus man depends on God for his existence; his full existence is accomplished when he fully resembles God; and his destiny is to be with and in God.

I wish to search in the Catechism of the Catholic Church this triple aspect of man: Man who knows, man who is known, and man who acts as they are reflected in CCC. The subjective aspect is considered in the first chapters of the Catechism, the objective consideration is included in the usual place of theology as man is a part of creation, and lastly the final end of man which is considered at the beginning of man's moral life. Thus our topic is divided into three parts: subjective aspect of man in CCC, objective aspect of man in CCC, and vocation of man in CCC.

II. **Man** as a subject: A Who with a capacity for God.

The consideration of man as a subject or as a knowing being is one of the innovations of CCC over the previous catechisms of the Catholic Faith. This does not mean that this aspect was absent in the past, only it was overshadowed by the objective presentation so that it was hardly noticeable. While at the outset of CCC man appears as a being in search, in dialogue, in need, CCC develops this aspect of man under four characteristics: 1) man desires God; 2) man searches for God; 3) man encounters God; and 4) man surrenders to God.

1. **Man** desires God.

From the very beginning of the CCC man is presented as the subject of the CCC. In the interrelations of man with God, the initiative is always from God but the problem is man. God is the creator, the redeemer, the Lord, the ultimate end of man.

God "created man to share in his own blessed life." (CCC, Prologue, Pt I, n. 1) This phrase and other similar phrases mean that God is the initiator, the active part in the God-man relationship. The study of God as he reveals himself is the object of the science proposed by the CCC, but the subject which is to be perfected by this knowledge is MAN.

Thus the target of the CCC is man or rather the Christian man who is searching for his perfection and consequently searching for God (cf. n. 12). Man is the wayfarer who travels the roads of knowledge and human activity in order to become perfect. But man's perfection cannot be attained outside God. Thus man is in need of God, for man's happiness cannot be outside God (cf. n. 28).

In this situation God comes to man's aid by revealing himself to him. Thus, a dialogue is established between God and man. God who reveals himself, his life, His goodness, and man who recognizes God, who accepts God because it is through the acceptance of God that man will satisfy his inner desire.

The first chapter of the CCC deals with "man's capacity for God" (n. 27). The opening words are a reiteration of the theme: "The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God." It is this acknowledgement of man's desire for God that we want to emphasize. It is an inborn desire, that is, a desire, a tendency which springs from man's nature itself. Before he is conscious of himself man searches for God.

2. Man searches for God

Man searching for God is manifested in man's unconditional tendency to admire the beautiful, to possess the truth, to pursue the good (nn. 35-37). These unconditional tendencies are so strong in man, so radical, so imposing that even when man fails by falling into error or by choosing what is evil he does it thinking that he is possessing the truth, or reaching the good. Thus God who is the Truth, the Good, and the Beautiful attracts man as the end-term of his activity. Man is the center of CCC and God is the center of man.

The quest for God is not a prerogative of Christian faith since it is inborn in the heart of man. This is asserted and ratified in the CCC by its acknowledgment that man's quest for God is testified in the different religious manifestation that has taken place from the outset of man to our days. But when man in his search for God relied only in himself, he took different directions, many of them erroneous. He exerted tremendous efforts, many of them resulting to wrong doings, that led him to a kind of existential despair. For this reason God comes to the encounter of man.

God reveals himself. God enters into a dialogue with man.

3. Man encounter God

God's dialogue with man should not be understood in the latest manifestations of God's revelation (nn. 51-64). God revealed himself to Adam and Eve, God revealed himself to the Patriarchs. The history of man is a history of God revealing himself to man. It is in the latest development, when the plenitude of time had arrived, that God manifested and revealed himself through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. God revealing... is not enough. This revelation of God had and has someone to receive it. God reveals himself... to MAN. Thus man is the one to whom God is dialoguing with. Man is the recipient of God's revelation.

4. Man surrenders to God.

But man created by God as a free being has the power to accept or to reject this revelation of God (n. 160). Here we enter into one of the most wonderful mysteries of God, the mystery of his love for man, his desire that man comes to him, his going out of himself for the sake of man. Despite of all these, man is free to accept or not to accept the revelation coming from God. Man, this creature of God, this being who totally depends on God for his existence and his happiness, can say NO to God. It is in this Third Chapter of the CCC that we understand, if we can understand, how God again and again comes to the encounter of man by revealing himself.

It may happen that man is so engrossed in his search for God that, even when God is in front of him, he does not recognize him. This is because man wants to see a god who is as man is. He is looking for a god limited and material. And when the true God appears surpassing his capacity for knowing and loving, man does not accept him.

The reason is that man wants to know, to be sure in his knowing while God is asking him for trust and faith. Man wants to be sure by his seeing, by his grasping the thing itself, while God offers him the security of his infinity and majesty. While man remains within the horizon of the natural he cannot see God and cannot live the life of God. For this reason God asks man to go out of his natural confinements and habitat, to seek the new vision, the new habitat that God will show him: God Himself.

(Cf. nn. 153-159).

It is in this aspect that CCC puts man facing his Creator. Man has to accept God's revelation. Man must fall on his knees and say / *BELIEVE*. For to believe means to surrender his mind and his will. And this is the cross of the problem. Man obeys and through his obedience he surrenders his will; man is asked to obey his parents, his superiors. Man needs to obey. But man is never asked to surrender his intellect to any other man. Man may be compelled to obey but he can never be compelled to believe. God would never force him to believe. For the act of faith is a free act by which man surrenders his mind to God, or even to another man.

It is here that when we see the greatness of God who respects his creation, and the dignity of man who is called to level with God. God freely and lovingly offers himself to man as the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful; and man freely and lovingly accepts God as the Truth, the Good, and the Beautiful. The more that man accepts God and loves him, the more that God enriches man by his presence, and the more that this communion of love and truth makes possible for the beauty of God to transform human nature into the radiant beauty of man as the image of God.

in. Man as an object: as a What:
Man as the Image of God

The second aspect of the anthropology in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the consideration of man from the objective point of view.

The CCC deals with man in the treatise of Creation. Thus the first characteristic of man is to be a creature of God, "man was created to the image and likeness of God." Man being an effect of God depends on God for his existence and must somehow resemble him.

1. *Man was created to the Image and likeness of God.*

A certain resemblance of the creature to the Creator is common to all created beings. But while the other material creatures are vestiges of God, or footprints of God, man who was created to the image and likeness of God, resembles God as an image resembles the original because of his

spiritual soul. This image of God of which the CCC is talking does not refer to One and Immortal God only but it also includes the Trinitarian aspect of God.

Thus CCC teaches that the image of God is present in every man, and in the community as "it shines in the communion of persons." The union of the faculties of man reflects the image of God "in the likeness of God in the union of the divine persons among themselves" (n. 1702).

How does man reflect the image of God, One and Triune? In number 1704 CCC says: "By his (man's) reason he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By his free will, he is capable of directing himself toward his true good." By his sentiment, man is capable of appreciating the beauty of the Creation of God.

From these doctrine of the image of God, CCC draws several consequences.

1) *Man's Dignity.* The nobility of man's nature is the root of his dignity. Being the image of God man is "the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake" (GS 24 Pt 3 CCC, 335). It is based on this image of God that man is a person "he who is not just something but someone" (CCC 357). Because he is a person, that is, a being endowed with intellect and will, he is a free agent: He is "*endowed with freedom*" (1705). Thus man's dignity arises from his being a person who resembles God. CCC stresses that man is the image of God.

2) *Man is the king of Creation.* Man is the king of creation since "God created everything for man" (358). But he is not an absolute king. As the whole material creation is ordained to man, so he "was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation to him" (358). Man has the obligation to return the whole creation of God. How is man going to return everything to God? By using it rationally and for the purpose for which it was created. Thus in this simple phrase of the Catechism lies the foundation of the theology of ecology, since man must consecrate, that is, make holy the creation of God by the proper use of it.

3) *The mystery of man revealed in Christ.* The mystery of man in his relation to God, in his origin and destiny finds its revelation in the mystery of the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. If man was created to the image and likeness of God, Jesus Christ who is the Word of God,

the true Image of God, when incarnated reveals in himself God. "He who sees me, sees the Father." (Jn 15:10).

4) *Community of mankind.* By quoting St. Peter Chrisologus it stresses that man has one common origin: Adam and Christ, (cf. CCC 359):

5) *Law of solidarity and charity.* In virtue of this unity man is bound by the law of solidarity and charity, (cf. CCC. 361).

2. *Man is composed of body and soul, but substantially united*

After CCC has considered man as created to the image and likeness of God, it comes to the consideration of the second point: man is composite unit. CCC admits the composition, distinguishes the parts, but stresses the unity which exists between body and soul, that is, substantial union. For this reason both parts: the soul and the body are to be considered as integral and components parts of man.

2.1. POINTS STRESSED REGARDING THE SOUL:

- a) Although the soul may refer to the "entire human person" (631), it is the principle of life.
- b) It is by the soul that man is principally the image of God;
- c) It is the soul which is the "spiritual principle" in man.
- d) The human soul "is not 'produced' by the parents," (366), but it "is created immediately by God";
- e) The doctrine of duality of soul and spirit is rejected, although CCC recognizes that it has been used by St. Paul and some Fathers of the Church (367).

2.2. ON THE BODY:

Regarding the body CCC teaches that the image of God in man is found also in the human body. Its dignity rests in the fact that a human body was destined to become the body of Christ and that "is the temple of the Holy Spirit." The stress on the dignity of the human body and the consideration of the body as an integral part of man reveals the positive doctrine that our body is a companion and not an enemy. It is part of us and is not something against us.

2.3. SUBSTANTIAL UNION BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL

The union between the soul and the body is "profound", that is, substantial. The soul is the form of the body and thus both constitute a single being which is man. Thus the CCC rejects the doctrine that the body and the soul are two natures. It rather affirms that "their union forms a single nature."

3. *Equality of man and woman*

The third point, is the consideration of the equality of man and woman in the line of human nature. Taking the text of Genesis as the springboard, the CCC comes to the conclusion: male and female He created them, equally in nature, diverse in roles.

3.1. EQUALITY OF NATURE

Man and woman are equal in nature. This statement means that in regard to human nature there is no distinction between male and female since both possess human nature in its fullness. Thus both male and female are created to the image and likeness of God. Both male and female possess the same human dignity and both of them are persons.

3.2. DIFFERENT ROLES

Man and woman are equal in nature and yet, they are different. The difference between male and female is to be considered from the biological role each one has in the procreation of human being and not human nature. However, this difference in role in procreation should not be an occasion for one to take advantage of the other or to put the other down. Differences should be observed but in the context in which they were created.

4. *Evolution and man*

With respect to the origin of man CCC categorically affirms that man was created by God. With this doctrine and the direct creation of the soul by God, CCC rules out evolution in man as far as his intellectual soul is concerned without entering into any discussion or confrontation with science, (nn. 362, 366).

By the same token, the CCC affirms the doctrine of monogenism which becomes the foundation of man's solidarity and charity. All men descend from Adam and from the "Second Adam": Jesus Christ, (n. 360).

5. *Man in Paradise*

5.1. *State in which man was created.* Everything that God created was good. "And it was good" are the words by which the Bible tells us how God evaluated His own creation. Man as the product of God was good. The goodness of man depends first, in the harmony of his nature, the harmony of man in his relation with God and the harmony of man and nature.

The perfection of man at the outset of creation was only surpassed by the new creature: the redeemed man.

5.2. *Characteristics:* The main characteristics of this state of man were, his intimacy and friendship with God, the inner harmony of the human person, and his mastery of the world beginning with the mastery of his self.

6. *Fall of man*

6.1. Reality of sin. In this respect the CCC stresses (nn. 386-387):

6.1.1) The fact of sin by stating that "sin is present in human history."

6.1.2) Sin cannot be properly understood without understanding first the intimacy between God and Man. For the rejection of God by man can be seen in its magnitude when we come to know how close man was with God.

6.1.3) Only through the revelation of God is sin perceived in its proper perspective.

6.2) *Sin is an essential part in our faith,* (nn. 388-389) Without sin there is no redemption, no incarnation, no Jesus Christ, no Church and no Sacraments.

6.3) *Original sin.* Leaving behind the sin of the angels let us consider the first sin of man.

6.3.1) Original sin is considered by CCC as a test to man's freedom. Man depends on his creator, but man wanted total independence. "To know the good and the evil" means to be totally

independent from God, that is, only man can put boundaries to himself (n. 396).

6.3.2) Man disobeyed God and preferred himself to God (398).

7. *Consequences of sin* (398 ff.).

The consequences of the first sin are twofold: those affecting the individual, Adam and Eve; and those affecting the human nature.

1) Adam and Eve immediately lost their original holiness.

2) They became afraid of God.

3) The harmony within themselves was destroyed, and with the breaking of the harmony in man there also followed the destruction of the harmony of the world.

4) Death entered into the world. Death as penalty and not as a living process. With death and sin came all the other consequences: wars, destruction, greed, crime, sickness, ignorance...

8. *Original sin and mankind.*

The effects of sin enumerated above are present in mankind. Original sin is proper to each individual although it does not have the character of personal sin. But man feels in himself the effects of sin. He experiences the difficulties of harmonizing his drives, in establishing the proper hierarchy in his desires, etc., (n. 402 ff.).

9. *O felix culpa.*

The treaty of man ends with the promise of the redeemer. Man was not abandoned by God. He promised man a redeemer, a savior. Thus man possesses hope. He is a man with future. God has called man to himself again. Man, then, is not only created by God. God redeemed him, too (n. 410).

IV. Man as Called: Vocation of man

1. *By way of Introduction*

The destiny of man or the purpose of human life is one of the greatest problems affecting man. CCC in number 1700 describes with a master's stroke man's vocation and dignity. "The dignity of human person is rooted

in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude."

a. *Man's dignity.* The dignity of man rests on his being a person, that is, an individual of rational nature. Because of the spirituality of his soul man is created to the image and likeness of God. His being like God puts man over and above all other corporeal creatures (cf. n. 27, 357, 1700).

But there is another aspect that should be taken into consideration when talking about the dignity of man. This aspect is his elevation to share God's beatitude. All men are called to become children of God, that is, to participate in the divine life through Jesus Christ. Man, then, is not only an image of God. He is the adopted son of God. Man is the image of God because God created him, but man is the adopted child of God because God redeemed him. The fact that man was redeemed is a very important element of Christian anthropology which is underscored again and again by CCC.

b. *Vocation to beatitude.* God is love, says St. John and man's vocation is to love, man experiences the inborn tendency towards his happiness. This road springs from the eight Beatitudes which "depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful ..." But most of all, the Beatitudes "reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: GOD CALLS US TO HIS OWN BEATITUDE" (cf. n. 1716 ff.).

2. Man's responsibility

But the calling to the divine beatitude confronts man with moral choices. These choices that man has to take are his own decisions. God calls, God helps, God redeems, but the choice belongs to man. By his freedom man shapes his own life and destiny (cf. n. 1731).

Man's freedom means that he is in possession of his acts. He can act or not act. He can do this or do that. But this freedom makes him responsible for his life. Even though man's rationality is diminished by the attacks of ignorance, passions, duress, etc. Still, he is responsible for his acts (cf. n. 1732).

Sin is not act of freedom. On the contrary, CCC sees sin as a failure

in man's freedom. For sin alienates man from his own very nature and from God. Sin severs man's relation with God and alienates him from himself who is a creature and son of God.

CCC stresses two threats to freedom: first, the proclamation of the total autonomy of man. Man is totally independent, totally self-sufficient, and is totally dedicated to enjoy the earthly joys. Second, man's freedom is threatened when "the economics, social, political and cultural conditions that are needed for a just exercise of freedom are disregarded or violated" (a 1740).

Man's freedom and responsibility are enacted through his conscience. It is through the proper formation of conscience that man's right choices are fostered. The formation of conscience implies two elements: first, the formation of the intellect by acquiring sufficient knowledge of what to do and what to avoid, that is, proper discernment of the situation; and second, the rectitude of the will by the formation of virtues so that man is inclined to choose that which is good.

3. Community and responsibility

This aspect of man is a new emphasis of CCC. Man in society or his responsibility as a member of the community was considered before as a part of the virtue of justice. Without denying it, CCC stresses the social aspect of man (nn. 1878 ff).

a) *Image of God and society.* CCC sees man as social being as a new aspect of the image of God. The communion of persons in the Holy Trinity is the exemplar for the communal life in society.

b) *Man needs society for his full development.* If man is a social being, then he must live in society. And there is a Christian way to look at society:

1) God is the common end the common good of human family: "All men are called to the same end: God himself (n. 1878).

2) The human person needs to live in society, since he needs others to achieve his full development.

c) *Participation in social life.* Man as member of society must participate in the life of society. Through authority man directs his activity towards the attainment of the common good.

All authority comes from God, (n. 1899) and it deserves the respect of others. But authority to be exercised legitimately must be directed to the attainment of the common good (1905).

The CCC considers three fundamental elements of the common good:

- 1) The common good presupposes the respect for the person as such;
- 2) The common good requires the social well-being and development of the group itself.
- 3) The common good requires peace.

d) *Need of participation* (nn. 1913 ff). Participation is the voluntary and generous engagement in a social interchange. There are three ways of participating in the social life:

- 1) By taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility: family, work, etc.

- 2) By taking part in public life. How is this exercised? The CCC leaves it to the ingenuity of peoples and individuals.

- 3) As any other ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed conversion of social partners.

e) *Social justice is only achieved by respecting the human person and his transcendent nature.* This entails the respect for human rights.

f) CCC recognizes the *equality of nature which exists in all men*. All men are created by God according to his image and likeness. But at the same time, differences in age, sex, physical abilities, intellectual capacity, moral aptitudes, etc. should be acknowledged.

g) And finally, *human solidarity*. Man, as a child of God, as a member of the society, must share with others in an equitable distribution of goods; be it economical, intellectual, moral, social.

CCC also stress the solidarity of nations. The developed countries should help the underdeveloped in order that all men share in the riches of God.

Festal Homilies For Advent And Christmas

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

December 3, 1995

Readings: *Is* 2:1-5
 Rm 13:11-14
 Ml 24:37-44

Ideas: *Awareness, let us, good.*

Today we start *Advent*. During this time we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord at Christmas and the *coming* of the Lord in his Parousia.

With Advent, a new liturgical year begins. We start the Cycle A and the gospel of this year will be *Matthew*.

The *violet* color indicates that is a time of praying and penance.

We need to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord, but *howl*... The Opening Prayer starts in this way: "All-powerful God, increase our strength of *will* for *doing good*." This is the "how" of our preparation: "doing good."

To live in "doing good" we need to be strengthened by the Lord: *"All-powerful God, increase our strength..."* Without His help we can do nothing.

To increase our will to do good we need to *pray*. The prayer, done in calm and with the heart, transforms our lives. It is in prayer that we will get the strength of "doing good." We must not rely in our own strength because *"without me you can do nothing"* (Jn 15:6). Let us increase our life of prayer, for it is in this communion with the Lord that we will find "power," "energy," "enthusiasm" in spending our lives in doing good.

The whole life of Jesus was to do *good* everywhere. Peter confessed this truth in Cornelius' house: "God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus *went about doing good* and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil" (Ac 10:38).

Jesus in the Sermon of the Mount invites us to be *light* shining forth "good works" and "seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

The prophet Micah tells us what the Lord wants from all of us: "To do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8).

In our readings we have a word that is repeated over and over: *"Let us..."* It is a constant invitation to do good, to walk in the light, to live honorably: **Let** us *climb the mountain of the Lord ...* (To encounter the Lord in peaceful prayer), **let** us *walk in the light of the Lord!* (behaving as children of God) (Is 2: 1-5); **Let** us *cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light ...* **Let** us *live honorably as in daylight...* **Let** us *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rm 13:11-14); *"I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord* (Ps 122)

The gospel (Mt 24:37-44) warns us to be always awake and prepared for the Lord's Coming. During the time of Noah the people "were totally unconcerned until the flood came and destroyed them." Therefore, "stay awake so that you may be ready."

Saint Paul, in Romans, repeats the same warning: "Now is the time to wake up, since our salvation is close at hand. The day draws near."

We need to pay attention to our behavior, to watch over, to correct our mistakes, to reflect about our lives and to examine our conduct. The word is "to watch," "to be awake," "to be aware."

The Lord is coming. The "*day*" draws near and we need to be prepared, to be aware that "*at the time you least expect*" the son of Man may come. Therefore, watch! Be alert!

Anthony de Mello in his book *The Song of the Bird* has the following story about constant awareness:

Even though it was the Master's Day of Silence a traveler begged for a word of wisdom that would guide him through life's journey.

The Master nodded affably, took a sheet of paper and wrote a single word on it: "*Awareness.*"

The visitor was perplexed. "That's too brief. Would you please expand on it a bit?"

The Master took the paper back and wrote: "*Awareness, awareness, awareness.*"

"But what do these words *mean*?" said the stranger helplessly.

The Master reached out for the paper and wrote: "*Awareness, awareness, awareness means AWARENESS.*"

This *awareness* must help us to "awake" from our "sleep" and to put on Christ in our lives trying to do good for everywhere.

JOSE MARIA GONZALEZ, O.P.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10, 1995

Readings:

U 11:1-10

Rm 15:4-9

Mt 3:1-12

REPENTING AND REPAIRING

Human Situation

A story goes: A certain priest lay dying from broken heart on account of slander and calumny committed against him. A lay person, who had been one of the principal offenders, came to ask forgiveness from the dying priest saying. "Father I am sorry for the many sins of slander, detraction and calumny I committed against you. If there is anything I can do for you yet, tell me, and I shall most gladly do it."

The dying priest pulled out a pillow from under his feeble head and handed it to her, saying. "Go up to the church tower and empty this pillow all the feathers."

To please the good priest, the lady went out and did as she was told. The feathers were blown by a stiff wind in all directions. She returned and assured the priest that she had done as he had asked.

Now," said the priest, "go out and gather all those feathers and put them back into the pillow case again."

"Impossible!" cried the lady. The wind has carried the feathers far and wide. (Bruno Hagspiel)

Gospel Message

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." This is the main lesson from the gospel today. However, every act of repentance has its object. Because, repentance cannot be just theoretical. Now the object of a repentant act depends on the type of immoral act done.

In the case of the given story, the object of repentance is supposed to be the repairing of the good name of the priest destroyed by the calumny committed against him by the woman.

When we meditate about repentance in the season of advent, we therefore look at our specific failures. Every failure will require a specific act of amendment.

Christmas will not be that happy, if we do not make amends as required. Destruction of the good name of one fellowman will necessitate apology. Theft will require restitution. Rape will demand imprisonment. Idolatry will require confession of the true God. And many others.

Christian Response

What may be demanded from each one of us is a long soul searching, before we can determine what we should make amends for. But no matter how long we will search our innerself, there will always be a nook we cannot reach.

Moreover, it will take a lot of energy to find out the specific action to take, but whatever action we will take that will be proportionate to the harm done.

Like the story, the woman will never be able to gather the feathers, or be able to restore the harm done. This will bring us down on our knees' in the spirit of repentance, asking for divine mercy. What the human person cannot fully satisfy, the graces flowing from the Mercy of God will make up for what is lacking.

VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY

December 8, 1995

Readings:

Gn 3:9-15, 20

Ep 1:3-6, 11-12

Lr 1:26-38

I want to focus my reflection on the salutation of the angel to Mary, "Hail Mary, full of grace." The Jerusalem Bible translates, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour!" (*Lk* 1:28).

What is the meaning of this phrase which we have repeated as many times as we have prayed the Holy Rosary? The Second Vatican Council puts it thus: "The mother of Jesus ... enriched from the first instance of her conception with the splendor of a unique holiness is hailed (greeted) by the heralding of the angel, by divine command, as full of grace."

This is a conclusion arrived at after many centuries of Christian reflection. At the same time it is a repetition of what early Christians had believed always.

How did Mary herself understand these words? Can we know it? While we cannot with absolute certitude assert what went on in Mary's soul at the moment of the Annunciation, we can, however, discern the intention of the evangelist who presented Mary in this light.

"Rejoice." This word evokes four biblical prophecies that speak of the coming of the Lord. Two are found in the book of Prophet Isaiah, one in Prophet Zechariah, and one in Zephaniah.

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion
for I am coming to dwell in your midst...

"Shout for joy daughter of Zion,
Rejoice, shout aloud,
The Lord is king in your midst
You have nothing more to fear."

Isaiah, Zechariah, Zephaniah: While we are familiar with the first one, seldom do we pay much attention to the "minor" prophets. However,

their message is very beautiful, and enlightening.

The message contained in these prophetic words sheds light on the words of the angel to Mary. There are three points of contact: "Rejoice"; "In your womb = In your midst"; "the name Jesus = God saves."

For the prophets of the Old Testament, the phrase "daughter of Zion" was a personification of the People of God, the people that God chose and loved as his own. And the destiny of this people was identified with the fate of Jerusalem: should Jerusalem fall or rise, thus will the People of God.

In the midst of Jerusalem, as if it were in its womb, there was the Temple of God. There God dwelt.

But this daughter of Zion, Jerusalem, was often faithless, and this made its Lord abandon her. God would no longer be in their midst; its temple would become a mound of ruins.

Here is where the message of the prophets brings hope: God returns to the daughter of Zion offering his love. He wants to make her pure like a virgin. He offers her a new heart:

"Like a young man marrying a virgin
so will the one who built you wed you,
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride
so will your God rejoice in you" (*Is* 62).

Then, Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion, will be able to give birth to a new people, the New People of God:

"Shout for joy, barren one who has born no children!
break into cries and shouts of joy, you who were never
in labor

For the children of the forsaken one
are more in number than the children of the wedded one,
says the Lord" (*Is* 54).

St. Luke picks up this highly metaphorical language of the prophets of the Old Testament to illustrate the birth of a new people of God, to tell us that Mary assumes the role of the new daughter of Zion. Thus

we are entitled to assume that Mary represents all the expectations laid on the daughter of Zion.

Luke uses the title "Full of grace" as a nickname given to Mary by the angel. Note that in the Bible the giving of a new name signifies something special. Mary is the "full-of-grace" because God has made her new by his love, perfectly virginal in love, immaculate, without stain. And once made the "full-of-grace" God comes to dwell in her, like in the Temple of the Daughter of Zion, in her midst, in her womb.

A last point in our reflection: Mary has not yet responded to the proposal God is going to make to her, that is, of becoming the mother of the Savior, and yet she is being filled with God's grace and gifts. She is holy. Note also that "holy" in biblical parlance does not mean pious. Holy means "separated," set apart," "reserved." As the temple is holy because it is consecrated for the service of God; as the chalice is holy because holy when they are separated for the use at the altar. Mary is holy because she is consecrated, set for the role of bringing forth salvation — Jesus.

The gospel ends by telling us that Mary does not comfortably sit down on her newly acquired glory. Luke goes on to tell us that Mary puts herself entirely at the service of God in his plans for mankind. "Behold — she says — I am the Lord's servant ..." Then she goes off in haste to the service of Elisabeth as the angel had suggested.

In celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the feast of Mary-the-full-of-grace, we ought, more than anything else, rejoice too, and give thanks to God because in Mary, one of us, He shows us that we too can be full of grace, like Mary we can become the dwelling place for God. Like Mary, we can overcome the powers of evil, if not from the beginning of our lives, from the beginning of a new life that can start at any moment.

Let us also remember that she who is the full-of-grace, the maid servant of the Lord, is ready to help, guide and protect us, as she did her son.

ANGEL APARICIO, O.P.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - Gaudete

December 17, 1995

Readings

Is 35:1-6, 10

Jm 5:7-10

Mt 11:2-11

1. *"Rejoice in the Lord" (Ph 4:4)*

The Liturgy of the Mass on the third Sunday of Advent bursts into a hymn of joy and happiness in its readings and prayers. "Rejoice in the Lord; again I say, rejoice; the Lord is near." It seems that Christmas has already come (Baur). The triple coming of Jesus: Christmas, Grace and the Second coming is the reason for the bliss of today's celebration. *Gaudete!*

2. *"God himself is coming to save us" (Is 35: 1-6, 10).*

The second reading reminds us of a beautiful poem of the return of the Israelites from the captivity in Babylon. Christians can express themselves in identical terms when they reflect on the blessings of Christ's redemption. "Be strong, fear not! Behold your God ... He will come and save you. Joy and gladness will be with them, and sorrow and lament be ended."

3. *"Do not lose heart for the Lord's coming will be soon" (Jm 5. 7-10).*

The early Christians thought that the Second Coming of Christ would take place in their own time. They were restless and impatient. Some did not care about work and wasted time in idleness and indifference. Today we are reminded that we should not worry about the year and hour of the Second Coming of Christ. This is a mystery known only to God. It would be senseless to hear false prophecies and fearful predictions concerning this question. What really matters is the preparation for the coming of the Lord into our lives and in the midst of our society. We are called to be instruments for this mission, particularly in the family circle and in the structures of human society. Much has to be done in order that the Gospel may become the yeast to transform the world in which we live.

4. "*Here is my messenger*" (Mt 11: 2-11).

Jesus Christ is the Savior. He came to free mankind from the clutches of sin and death. It was but fitting and proper he should have a messenger in the person of John the Baptist, a man of unblemished life and great zeal. "Prepare the way of the Lord," he cried loudly. Anything that is crooked in the lives of men, like graft and corruption, injustice, hypocrisy, egoism, hedonism and secularism must be wiped out if the Lord is to be received appropriately. Advent, therefore, is a precious time to reflect on personal and social levels. If Christmas is going to retain its meaning Christians are to prepare the way of the Lord in the manner John preached and in the way the Church is teaching and preaching today.

PEDRO G. TEJERO, O.P.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 24, 1995

Readings: *Is* 7:10-14
 Rm 1:1-7
 Mt 1:18-24

On the last Sunday — and the last day — of Advent, let us reflect on the Liturgy of the Word and commit ourselves to witness it in our lives.

1. *Liturgy of the Word*

FIRST READING: *Is* 7:10-14. Young davidic king Ahaz is afraid of a possible invasion by his neighboring enemies: he does not believe much in God's help. The prophet gives him God's salvific sign: "The virgin shall bear a son." The virgin, Virgin-Mother, will be Mary and her Son, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, that is, "God-with-us," God's gift to us all!

SECOND READING: *Rm* 1:2-7. Paul presents himself as Christ's apostle called to preach the Gospel, the Good News of God: that Jesus, the Son of God became man, died and rose from the dead.

THIRD READING: *Mt* 1:18-24. From the infancy narratives: the birth of the Son of God from Mary and the Holy Spirit, and the faithful acceptance of Joseph, Mary's spouse, of his legal paternity of Jesus, which

means "God saves."

We close our hopeful journey of Advent — a metaphor of life as a pilgrimage to God — by approaching humbly and silently Joseph and Mary to learn from them to experience Jesus in our Christian lives.

2. Reflection

How do we read Joseph's important part in today's gospel? The shocking fact: Mary, her spouse, is on the way; she is with child, but not his! Facing this painful situation, Joseph, the just man, decides to take the most noble way: to leave her secretly.

Before carrying out his decision, God's angel appears to Joseph to explain to him the Incarnation of the Son of God through the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. Joseph accepts God's plan, which is different from his personal plan. His mission now? To be Jesus' legal father, or — as John Paul II has written beautifully — *Redemptoris Custos*: the guardian or custodian of the Redeemer, and the spouse of Mary, the mother of the Son of God. Grateful to Joseph, we ask him to help us trust God and obey his — not our — plans, even through the desert of life, or the dark night in our pilgrimage.

Mary also went through her dark night — the night of faith — at the annunciation of the Incarnation by an angel: a virgin, who does not know man, is with child by the Holy Spirit. At the threshold of Christmas, Mary, too, teaches us to believe in God's Word and to surrender to Him: "Let it be done according to your word."

Mary, Our Lady, is the main character through Advent. She is our best model to follow in preparing for the Birth of the Lord at Christmas. Like her, we have to try to be faithful — and more *faithful* — to God's word: indeed, "Let it be." And *prayerful*: pondering upon the meaning of Christ for our lives. And *humble*: "I am the handmaid of the Lord," she said. And *compassionate*: bringing Jesus to our neighbors, as Mary, the first evangelizer, brought him to Elizabeth.

3. Response

Tonight we will celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ. What a great

honor and wonderful joy for all of us, followers of Christ: "If God became man, to be a man is the greatest thing one can be" (Ortega y Gasset).

Tonight Jesus, our Savior, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is coming again in the liturgy of Christmas, which re-lives his birth in Bethlehem. How may we experience Jesus' birth in our lives? Like Joseph: with faithful obedience to God's plan, to his holy will. Like Mary: with loving and prayerful surrender and in total availability to God.

Let us remember that when Jesus came the first time, when he was born in Bethlehem, there was no room for him in the inn. Is there a room for the Lord in our hearts? If there is no room for him in our hearts — Fr. Schillebeeck, O.P., tells us —, there is no possibility of celebrating Christmas.

To make room for Jesus today entails to make room for the poor, the sick, the abandoned, that is, the "little ones" who represent Christ in a very real way. The Lord keeps telling us: "What you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it to me" (*hit* 25: 46). To make room for Jesus at Christmas, then, implies to be in solidarity with the poor, "proxies of Christ" (St. Basil).

May Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, continue to be born in our lives in a deeper manner, and may those around us notice it by the way we love one another — and the poor. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says: "Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us" (n. 526).

May Saint Joseph and Our Lady help us experience Jesus in our lives this Christmas — and always. Amen.

FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P.

Christmas 1995
December 25, 1995

Readings:

Is 52:7-10

Heb 1:1-16

Jn 1:18

"GOD IS NEAR US; HE IS WITH US"

Human Situation

It seems that God is far from us. Why? Because many are sick; many are poor; and many are without peace.

Many are sick: in youth and in old age. Try to visit a Children's Hospital or visit a pediatrics division. Babies are born with sickness because their mothers are drug addicts, alcoholics or afflicted with AIDS. And consider too the aged: they complain about diabetes, arthritis, allergy, or even cancer.

Many are without food: pictures of poverty are in the faces of people from Africa, China, and Manila. Some seventy percent of the world population are poor.

Many are without peace: there are wars in Europe like in Bosnia. But there is also lack of peace in Mindanao or in Burma.

Gospel Message

God reveals himself today to all nations. That is why we say God is near us. God reveals himself not only to the family of Israel or the Christians but to all. For God's plan of salvation is for all peoples, as said in Isaiah: "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (52:10).

God has spoken to us: that is why we say that God is near us. Joseph and Mary were witnesses to this. The shepherds and the people of Nazareth were witnesses too (*Lk* 2:15-17). Moreover, Peter, James, John and the other ten apostles saw the deeds of Jesus. And finally the crowds were fed, and preached to; many were cured. They could not but become the mass witnesses.

God dwells with us: that is why God is near us. The Lord's manner of dwelling may be twofold. The first is the dwelling of God in the household of Israel. The second is the dwelling of the Lord in the house called the human heart. And all men are capable of welcoming God in their hearts.

Christian Response

God is far from us no mote. The mission of the Christian believer is much simpler than what we usually hear from preachers. We complicate no further the mission: i.e., to tell all nations that God is near.

God is found even in sickness, poverty, and war. Not because we want to exalt sickness, poverty, and war. But, because sickness, poverty and war are situations that make it easy for mankind to remember that there is God.

Our Christmas mission is to tell all nations that God is near. Very near indeed. We tell peoples that God's household is the human heart. Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew and many others will have no difficulty in understanding this. Usually people who claim that there is God know that he is not distant, but he is a Being that dwells in women's and men's hearts.

VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH
December 31, 1989

Readings:

Si 3:2-6, 12-14

Col 3:12-21

Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

THE HOLY FAMILY, PATRON OF SQUATTERS

Go to Egypt ... Return to Israel ... Settle down in Galilee. These are the three orders which today's Gospel (*Mt* 2:13-15, 19-23) reports to expound the sudden flight of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Egypt.

King Herod received a visit from some Magi, who, coming from the East, inquired about where the king of the Jews had been born.

At this enquiry Herod was profoundly disturbed, but he knew how to hide his anxiety even to the extent of showing joy at the news.

"Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: 'Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I, too, may go and worship him'" (*Mt 2:8*).

After the meeting of the Magi with Child Jesus, the wise men, warned by an angel, did not return to Jerusalem, but went back to their own country by another road.

The decision of Herod upon learning of this was to kill the newborn King, and to be sure of getting him, "to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger."

No one can admire this decision of Herod, the Bloody One as he was called, since it stained his hands with blood. Later he ordered the drowning of his son-in-law and the strangling to death of one of his ten wives as well as the killing of three of his own sons. Herod's cruelty was by then proverbial in Rome. He was pathologically jealous of his throne of power.

How many people do you think Herod killed? Forty? Fifty? That would be nothing compared to what modern Herods do these days.

These are today's modern Herods:

- the abortionists
- the divorcists. In divorce the greatest victims are the children.
- the planners and facilitators of artificial birth control against the freedom of couples: laws that obstruct marriage; laws that limit the size of the family, the number of children; rules that give preference to those who have no children or have only a few.
- the physicians and other medical practitioners who make money out of sterilizing people by tubal ligation or vasectomy.
- the businessmen who gain huge profits by manufacturing or selling different types of contraceptives, sterilizing and abortifacient products.

By extension we can include in the list of modern Herods those who deal with the chronically sick, the impatient patients, the aged, and those who practice a well disguised euthanasia.

But Herod was not able to kill the Child God, because "an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said: 'Herod will be looking

for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."

That very night, Saint Joseph together with the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Child headed for a far, unknown and strange country, Egypt.

How great were the deprivations and sufferings of the Holy Family! Away from their homeland, unknown, strangers, without any gainful employment!

With reason, the Holy Family gives it Patronage to immigrants and Overseas Workers. Admittedly, such people earn more than we do here. But as you know, "there are many things in life that money cannot buy."

The Holy Family also leads in Patronage to those who are without a decent home or shelter, without adequate employment, without recourses for food, clothing, medicine and suitable education for their children. Common parlance calls them "Squatters." The Holy Family is the Patronal Title of "Squatters."

Even as we have to thank God for his magnanimous providence towards our families during this about-to-end year, let us earnestly ask for that Christ-like largeness of heart that will make us understand, console and help those families who are now suffering what the Holy Family once suffered.

Christianity is definitely not a religion of completely isolated hermits or solitary, recluse beings. Jesus, as God, from all eternity, formed one family with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and in time, when he became man, he opted to form one family with Joseph and Mary: a Trinity in heaven and a Trinity on earth.

Those who form a family need much faith and trust in one another. This is what occurred in the Holy Family.