

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

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MESSAGE ON THE CELEBRATION OF RESPECT FOR LIFE WEEK

Jaime Card. Sin, D.D.

THE MISSION OF THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT

Brian Clowes, Ph.D.

STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED MAGNA CARTA OF STUDENTS

CBCP

THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF THE PRIESTS

Pedro Tejero, O.P.



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The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

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Table of Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE 123 EXPRESSION OF CONCERNS FOR LIFE

PASTORAL WORDS

Jaime Card. Sin 125 MESSAGE ON THE CELEBRATION OF
RESPECT FOR LIFE WEEK

128 HOMILY ON LOVE, LIFE AND FAMILY

Brian Clowes, PhD. 134 THE MISSION OF THE PRO-LIFE
MOVEMENT

Fausto B. Gomez, O.P. 154 THE ROLE OF PRIESTS IN NATURAL
FAMILY PLANNING

John Paul II 165 MESSAGE FOR THE CELEBRATION
OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE

CONSULTATIVE WORDS

Excelso Garcia, O.P. 173 MARRIAGE CONVALIDATION

176 COMPOSURE OF THE PRIEST
AT THE MASS

DOCUMENTATION

John Paul II 178 **MESSAGE FOR LENT 1996**

CBCP 180 **STATEMENT ON THE LAHAR VICTIM
OF THE MT. PINATUBO ERUPTION**

182 STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED
MAGNA CARTA OF STUDENTS

186 DEVELOPMENT - THE **FRUIT**
OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

194 MOST REV. MANOLO A.
DE LOS SANTOS, D.D.
CURRICULUM VITAE

198 MOST REV. HONESTO C.
PACANA, D.D.
CURRICULUM VITAE

MEDITATIVE WORDS

Pedro G. Tejero, O.P.

199 THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE
OF THE PRIEST

GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW

Efren Rivera, O.P.

201 HOMELITIC AND BIBLIARASAL
POINTERS FOR MAY AND JUNE
1996

PRAYERS

227 *PRAYER OF BLESSING DURING*
THE JUBILEE YEAR

SECOND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
OF MANILA 1996

Expression of Concerns for Life

VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

Our publication is responding to the encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae* of John Paul II by concentrating on issue raised in no. 91: *Service of the Gospel of Life*. Our Church leaders in the Philippines and in Asia express concerns on how "to protect the family as a sanctuary of life" thus:

- *Sex Education particularly at the school and college levels should be undertaken and implemented by the Bishop's Conference and the concerned commissions.*
- *Responsible Parenthood and National Family Planning Programs should be encouraged and personnel trained in order to run this program effectively.*
- *Pro-life. Programs should be initiated immediately.*
- " *Homosexual and Feminists Programs should be taken up immediately. Facilitators, moderators, animators should be trained up to conduct the program elaborately throughout the whole/entire country - to make the family a human and Christian Family. Wherever possible, the Church could join hands with PRO-LIFE GROUPS in SECULAR SOCIETY.*
- *Formation of parents and school teachers to help them understand the true values of family life, relation and responsibilities among teachers, between spouses, and their children.*

- *Encourage adoption of unwanted children to save life and to build up the society.*
- *Intensify its program against anti-life policy of some governments as reflected in the following:*
 1. *The Family Planning Policy of some countries which includes coerced/forced sterilization.*
 2. *Legalized abortion/Euthanasia*
 3. *The Two-Child Policy with its consequences:*
 - a. *no maternity leave benefits for the third child*
 - b. *discrimination/violence against women*
 - c. *"anti-Girl Child" Policy*

May all peoples of Goodwill become "people of life and people for life".

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Members of

the Dominican Province of the Philippines

on the occasion of their

Silver Anniversary

December 8, 1991-1996

Message on the Celebration of RESPECT FOR LIFE WEEK

Dear faithful who value Life:

Peace be with you!

I am delighted to know that the pro-life movement is very much alive and well in the Philippines, despite the challenges posed before us by those who promote the "*culture of death*". On the occasion of the 1996 Respect and Care for Life Week from February 11 to 18, I wish to highlight for the reflection of all who hold the right to life close to their hearts the message of Pope John Paul II in his message last January 1st, the World Day of Peace: "*Let us create the conditions which will ensure that children can receive as the legacy of our generation a more united and fraternal world!*"

It is a sad fact that in many countries today, mothers are ostracized as being socially irresponsible if they decide to have more children than the norms established by State propaganda. As you very well know, these deceptive forms of indoctrination are operative and real in our country. The population propagandists themselves have claimed that they have won the media battle in the Philippines. But only they and the evil one can be happy when people are persuaded that the poor have less or no rights at all to have children while, on the other hand, the blessed wealthy have no desire to have children.

It is lamentable, too, that the contraceptive mentality has eroded the honor and respect that is due to expectant mothers, and even more so to the children they carry. Undoubtedly, the respect for pregnant women in the Philippines has perceptively declined as the contraceptive mentality has become more widespread. With this kind of atmosphere, where babies are received only grudgingly by their own parents and are looked upon scornfully by society as additional mouths to feed, and where a government visibly obsessed with power and economic progress pretends not to see the causes of sexual permissiveness that eventually lead to uncontrolled sexual passions and even abortion - is it surprising that babies who survive birth are either neglected and children are abused? It has to be said loud and clear: **our children are suffering more and more from abuse because of anti-birth, anti-child propaganda, which has a tacit alliance with pornography and commercialized sex.**

If that were not bad enough, the so-called "*Enriched Curriculum on Population Education for All Levels*" aims to guarantee that these children in their turn will become grudging parents themselves, with an even more severe contraceptive mentality. If this happens, very little love — or none at all — will be passed on by them to the generations to come. Elements of this curriculum will poison their minds and paralyze their hearts.

When more and more children end up "unwanted" by their parents and society, what must we do? We must point out that while some children may have been "unintended", all children can become "wanted" — precisely including those who were "unintended" by their human parents. The solution lies in **adding God's love where human love is lacking.** God's love is so vast, he is so capable of loving even the children who are unintended by humans. And so, where there is caring, and a compassionate presentation of pro-life options and alternatives, a woman with an unintended pregnancy can learn to want, and even to love her child. In a caring environment, parents are empowered to exercise free and informed "wanting" — and that is love.

The hope of the future lies in the children. And hope for the children lies in the family, because **the family** is the "**sanctuary of life**" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 92) and the "**school of peace**" (Message, 1996 *World Day of Peace*, 8). No wonder the Holy Father has decreed the inclusion of the invocation "*Queen of the Family*" in the Litany of the Holy Rosary. Let us be particularly close to Mary during Pro-Life Week, and ask her, as Jesus

did, "O, Woman, behold all your children — young and old! Show us that you are our mother. Teach us how to love."

Together, let us give the children a future of peace. *Mabuhay kayo at palaganapin ninyo ang pag-ibig ng Panginoon!*

Devotedly in Christ,

+ **JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN**

Archbishop of Manila

Villa San Miguel, February 2, 1996

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Homily on Love, Life and Family

JAIME CARD. SIN

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It is an honor and pleasure to address you these few thoughts to formally open the First Training Congress on Love, Life and the Family here at the University of Santo Tomas.

The theme must be discussed always and only from our catholic moral teachings and doctrine.

My dear friends, it is easier for us to understand human dignity when we realize that ultimately and above all, we belong to God. None of us had the honor of being consulted as to whether we preferred to exist or not. It was God who exercised that prerogative, and therefore we **cannot claim to own** ourselves. The principle is simple: **The maker is the owner.**

Important as the family may be, yet it cannot claim full ownership over its members. Jesus said: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (*Mt* 10:37). We do not even belong to ourselves. As Jesus added: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate... yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (*Lk* 14:26).

* Homily delivered by His Eminence, Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila, During the First Training Congress on Love, Life and Family, held at the UST Faculty of Medicine Building, last October 26, 1995 at 5:00 p.m.

If these be so for family and self, can the human person be a property of Caesar? Obviously not. We do owe allegiance to the state, but we must give to God what is God's (cf. *Mt* 22:21). And we belong to God, who knit each one of us in His or Her mother's womb (cf. *Pss* 139:13) and who said, "I have called you by your name. You are mine!" (*Is* 43:1). My friends, everything flow from this truth.

This being the case, every person is duty bound to maintain his or her personal integrity - because we are only stewards of our own selves who must make sure that we return ourselves, intact and improved, back to the owner. No one is at liberty to damage or mutilate or in anyway pollute his or her body, mind, or spirit. We have no right to destroy what does not belong to us. We have to take care of the health of our whole person; and so, any intervention meant to upset the ecological balance within a human person is an affront to God's ownership. And any affront to God's ownership is a foolish declaration that we do not belong to Him, that is to say, that we own ourselves. This is the essence of sin, a challenge to God's dominion over the human self.

My dear friends. Is it alright to sell something that does not belong to you? No - that would be an injustice. In the light of what we have just discussed, it is now easier to understand why we have no right to sell ourselves, whether in body or soul or spirit. And as a corollary, nobody has the right to buy another person. That is called "prostitution" and "slavery", isn't it?

Much less is it alright to grab what is not one's own. That is why we cannot go around grabbing other persons for our personal use or pleasure. That would be called "abduction", "kidnapping" or "rape".

Least of all can we destroy what is not ours. It is not right for us to take our own lives nor the life of other human beings, since we were not the giver of that life in the first place. That would be "suicide" or "murder" or "abortion" or euthanasia", and there are many other names we call killing, including "capital punishment".

I once explained to a Chinese friend of mine who was not yet a catholic, that once upon a time, mankind had been sold to the devil. Then I explained how the human race was redeemed at a great price. Thereafter, I asked Him this question: would it be alright to give ourselves away for free? He thought about it for a moment and reply, "if selling ourselves

is bad business, giving ourselves away for free would be worse! He had very keen business sense, don't you agree?

However, we have to look more closely at this business of giving ourselves to others for free. It is not right to donate something that does not belong to us. But since God created us to love and to be loved, we are allowed - and even mandated (as in *Jn* 15:13, 13-34, 17:26) - to give ourselves away for free, out of love, unto death: on condition that we obtain God's clear permission and blessing.

For a man and a woman to give themselves to one another in this way, but in an exclusive manner, is part of God's design. This kind of permission and blessing is called "Marriage". Mutual donation without god's permission is a sin called "fornication" or in other instances, adultery. Marriage is the beginning of that holy way that leads two persons back to God, and by which they lead other new persons - their children - back to God.

It is for this reason that husband and wife have to make plans, in order to be responsible parents. Responsible to whom? Primarily to God, of course, who in fact already has the plan for them in his mind. There is nothing wrong with "family", and there is nothing wrong with "planning". "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" (*Lk.* 14:28). But when we talk about "Family Planning" for responsible parenthood, we must sort out the weeds and capture the authentic meaning of the term. For a husband and wife, it means a constant and prayerful discernment of God's plan for their married life and their family, followed by the faithful implementation of that plan. It requires a continuous consultation with God, because God unravels his plans to gradually, and if we are faithful to it, we shall see our lives and relationships metamorphose into something that satisfies the innermost longings of our hearts.

No "comprehensive program" devised by men (or women, for that matter) - no matter how craftily worded, technically sophisticated, or superbly financed - can rival God's Loving plans. The words of the prophet Isaiah ring true even to this day for those who conspire to create social change in a way alien to God's laws: "Woe to the rebellious children" says the Lord, 'who carry out a plan, but not mine; and who make a league, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who set out to go down

to Egypt, without asking for my counsel, to take refuge in the protection of pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!" (*Is* 30:1-2).

My observation is that our so-called "enemies" in the seemingly escalating "demographic war" and the family planning controversy are often wounded people who are anxiously - perhaps unconsciously - trying to justify some past mistake. They do this by striving to increase their ranks, to console themselves with the thought that it is normal to live with a battered conscience. My dear sisters and brothers, if you have the heart of Christ - a shepherd's heart - you will understand why our Lord Jesus wants us to love our enemies (cf. *Mt* 5:44). It is precisely because they are deeply hurt. And it is ultimately only the power of God's love - as shown in His mercy - that can comfort them and heal them. Come to me all you who labor and are burdened! He is calling them - and us (cf. *Mt* 11:28).

How do we deal with this "difficult subject"? We deal it by being disposed to receiving the "difficult virtue". We must call it by its true names: Chastity, cleanliness of body, mind and heart. Many of us seem to think that it is solely through a cerebral inquiry via the social, moral and ecclesiastical sciences that we will unravel the enigmas of sexuality, marriage, childbearing, and family living. This is not so. When the Apostles faced the "difficult cases" in their ministry, what did they do? They went to Jesus privately and said, "why could we not cast it out?" and what did our Lord reply? "Because of your little faith" (*Mt* 17:19-20) on another occasion, in the case of a deaf and dumb spirit they could not expel, the Lord answered: "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer". My friends, the answers to the most mundane mysteries of the flesh are found in the most sublime endeavors of the spirit: Pray, fast, and do good works. In order to understand and conquer ourselves, we must take the viewpoint of our own creator. We must become Godlike, in order to see his point of view, to be one with Him. "How blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (*Mt* 5:8). So what else is new?

I wish to end these reflections by speaking of the sacredness of the body - of Christ and his members. For Jesus promised that He and the Father would make their home with us (*In* 24:23). He also ascertained that His flesh is food indeed, and that those who would receive Him will rise again, body and soul. Make no mistake about it: the eucharist is at the very center of our faith. This is Jesus Himself, the Lamb of God.

The parts of our body which physically touch the eucharistic Jesus are those which we use to "take and eat" - the hands and the mouth. What would you think if a man were to have the sacred host on his palm in the morning, but in the evening holds the same palm open not for bread but for a rolled up piece of thin rubber? Or a woman who has the Lord on her tongue, and half a day later lays a birth control pill on the same tongue? The contrast is clear and graphic. For a christian it should be easy to understand why the living center of our faith and contraceptive technologies would be ultimately irreconcilable. If only we had even a little faith!

How do you reconcile on the same palm or tongue the host which conveys abundant and eternal life with a contraceptive designed to prevent the transmission of life in its origins? They are irreconcilable. But if you should insist on forcing the issue, there is one way to do so, and it is this: beat up your conscience. As I have remarked earlier, many of the consciences of God's people are black and blue from bludgeoning, and many more have been knocked out by the contraceptive and anti-life mentalities.

Lord God, your people are sorely troubled. How long, Lord? How long must we wait before you deliver us for the sake of your steadfast love? (cf. *Ps* 6:3-4). But your ways, O Lord, are not ours. Make us know your plans, lead us in the truth. We seek your kingdom and your justice above all, trusting that the good things in this life shall be given us besides.

My friends, it is time for us to heal the people of God. For this we need the help of Mary, Mother of Life and Queen of Peace, to intercede for us.

Lord God, your people are sorely troubled. How long, Lord? **Voices are being heard in our land, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; our women wounded by herodian technologies refuse to be consoled, because their innocent children are no more (cf. *Mt* 2:18).** How long must we wait before you deliver us for the sake of your steadfast love? (cf. *Ps* 6:3-4). But your ways, O Lord, are not ours. Stand beside us and save us from those who would condemn us to death (cf. *Ps* 109:31). Make us know your plans,

lead us to the truth. We seek your kingdom and your justice' above all, trusting that the good things in this life shall be given us besides.

My friends, it is time for us to heal the people of God. For this we need the help of Mary, Mother of Life and Queen of Peace, to intercede for us.

The Mission of the Pro-Life Movement

BRIAN CLOWES, Ph.D.

God morning and welcome to all of the delegates from Macau, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines, and the United States.

My dear wife Kathleen and our five sons in the United States also would like to say hello to all of you.

Since we have five sons, my poor wife sometimes complains that she lives in a barracks. So, when we were expecting our last child, a friend of ours told me that, because of her great devotion to the Little Flower, she prayed for a sign as to whether or not the child she was expecting would be a girl. Sure enough, the next day, a friend of hers stopped by and gave her a beautiful bunch of flowers, a sign that the baby was a girl. They named their baby Margaret.

So one night I prayed to God for a sign, as to whether or not our unborn baby was a girl. But there were no brilliant signs from heaven or voices telling me what I wanted to know. So I stood up, picked up my shirt to put it on, and noticed the trademark tag in the collar for the first time. It said "FIVE BROTHERS."

And sure enough, a few weeks later, Daniel, our fifth son, was born.

•Transcript of a speech given by Brian Clowes, Ph.D., Human life International, at the First Asian Congress on Love, Life and the Family, at the University of Santo Tomas Continuing Medical Education Center, Manila, the Philippines, Friday, October 27, 1995.

The Mission of Christian Pro-Lifers

The topic of this talk is "the mission of the pro-life movement."

Before asking what our more specific mission as pro-life activists is supposed to be, we need to know why we are here on earth. What is our general mission here?

The answer can be found following the first question in most Catholic catechisms: "To know, love and serve God." How do we come to know God? By praying to him and by reading and hearing about him. As we come to know God better, we naturally love him more, because of all of his infinite perfections.

That leaves us with just one question remaining: How do we serve God? The answer to this can be found in Matthew 28:19: "Go forth, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." Now how do we do this? Some suggestions are given in Matthew 25:31-46; feed the hungry, visit the sick and imprisoned, and clothe the naked. Our mission in life is the same as that embarked upon by Our Lord: To seek out all those who suffer and give them the "good news of God's concern for them" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 32).

In addition to these tasks, there are other missions given to Christians by our Lord in the Bible. One of these is described in Proverbs: "Rescue those being dragged to the slaughter, hold back those staggering to their execution" (*Pr* 24:11), and "Speak up for the right of the voiceless and the unwanted" (*Pr* 31:8). And who is more voiceless and unwanted than the little baby in her mother's womb, who can be executed without trial or appeal?

This then, is our specific mission as pro-life activists: To rescue mothers, unborn children and society in general from the terrible effects of abortion.

We do many things to rescue the unborn. We operate pregnancy help centers, help mothers in trouble, picket, speak, educate, and legislate. Although all of these activities are vital, none of them is the ultimate answer to prenatal killing. None of them, even all of them, will ever stop abortion completely.

So how can we ultimately stop the killing?

The Teachers of Morality

There are five main teachers of morality in any country. There are three mass organs of influence - the government, the media, and the schools. These involve relatively small groups of people affecting many others with a disproportionate degree of influence. Then there are the two diffuse organs of influence - the family and the Church.

Students of history may know that there have been more than 1,500 violent and nonviolent revolutions of every type over the last 2,000 years. Yet, of all of these hundreds of revolutions, not one has survived in its original form for more than twenty years. It has either been overtaken by another revolution or progressively altered over time by the people until the original goals and progress of the revolutionaries have been mutated and diluted.

This is how all revolutions work: A group of people seize control of the mass organs of influence (the government, the media, and the schools) and then try to exert influence downward on the family and the Church. This is what has happened in all Western countries, including the United States, and this is what is now happening in the Philippines. This is why the government, media and schools are attacking the family and the Church so strongly in the Philippines right now: The revolution will not be complete until everyone is marching in lockstep, and until the people in charge can control all five organs of influence.

But, if the people can keep their families and Church strong, no revolution can prevail against them. We, the people, must not fall into the trap of launching a "pro-family" counter-revolution. It is not enough to control the media, government, and schools. We must start an evolution. An evolution is the opposite of a revolution because it works in reverse - we first strengthen the family and the Church and then, after we become strong enough, expand and exert influence upward and eventually take control of the government, media, and schools.

A revolution, by its nature, deals in mass influence. It involves a small group of people making the rules for everyone else. Values are imposed on each person from the outside in. An evolution works in reverse: We must convert each heart one by one, no matter how long it takes. In this manner, each person is permanently converted from the inside out.

What this means is that, after prayer, the absolute most important thing we can do as pro-lifers is to recruit other people into this movement. However, in order to recruit, we have to know the issues so we can answer the concerns that our friends, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and family members may have about the pro-life position.

How effective is recruiting? There are about 400 pro-life people in this room. Let's for a moment assume that we are the only pro-life people in the Philippines. Now let's say that each of us goes out and recruits one other person into the pro-life movement each week, and then each person goes out and recruits another each week, and so on.

How long would it take before everyone in the Philippines is a member of the pro-life movement? Would anyone care to make a guess?

Four months from now, everyone in the Philippines would be pro-life, in other words, by the first of March next year.

And, we keep going, the entire world would be pro-life by the middle of April!

There is enormous power in this room. The 400 of you will touch many lives each year in this great city of Manila. And, as goes Manila, so goes the rest of the Philippines. And, in a very few years, as the Philippines go, so may very well go the rest of the world.

This is what I mean by the power of societal "evolution" - changing hearts one at a time. By doing this, we can change the world!

Attacks on the Church

In order to be effective activists, we need to know how the pro-abortionists and population controllers operate. Remember that there are five great teachers of morality in every society - the government, the media, the schools, the family, and the Church. In the Philippines, the anti-lifers appear to have a firm grip on the first three at the national level, and now are attacking the last two, the family and the Church.

The family and the Church only become stronger if they are attacked from the outside. The anti-lifers know this, and so they are attempting to destroy them from the inside. Sun Tzu, the great Chinese strategist, said more than 35 centuries ago that "The crudest means of making war

is to fight on a battlefield. There is no higher art than defeating your enemy without a fight, by subverting everything of value to him.'¹

As far as attacking the Catholic Church goes, there are five common lies used against it by anti-life bigots like "Catholics" for a Free Choice and Planned Parenthood, and these are often repeated unknowingly by lukewarm "Catholics" who simply do not know their faith. You must know in detail how to refute these falsehoods, because, if you are going to spread the pro-life message, you will hear them again and again.

There is not enough time to go into them now, but you can find the proper responses in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and in *Evangelium Vitae*. You should obtain a copy of EV from Pro-Life Philippines in the book *Evangelium Vitae: A Hymn to Life*, because it has a detailed index.

The five main lies about Catholic Church teaching on abortion are;

- (1) There is a diversity of opinion in the Church as to whether abortion is allowable;
- (2) The Church allows abortion to save the life of the mother, so why not allow other exceptions, such as for rape, incest, and fetal deformities?
- (3) The Church has only opposed abortion since 1869[^] so the prohibitions against abortion are relatively new. This also proves that the Church can change its teachings on abortion again to follow the norms of society.
- (4) The Church's teachings on abortion and contraception are not infallible, and therefore can be disregarded by the laity.
- (5) Vatican n allows us to use our consciences in such delicate matters. A 'Catholics' for a Free Choice brochure entitled "You Are Not Alone" says that "If you carefully examine your conscience and then decide that an abortion is the most moral act you can do at this time, you're not committing a sin. Therefore, you're not

¹Sun Tzu, *On the Art of War: The Oldest Military Treatise in the World*. Translated by Lionel Giles, M.A., 1910.

excommunicated. Nor need you tell it in confession since, in your case, abortion is not a sin."

Other methods of attack against the Church will include attempts to raise an artificial "wall of separation" between Church and state. The anti-lifers consider this to be absolutely necessary, because they must eliminate all moral standards and reduce the government to reliance upon the "realistic" course of action. This cannot be done if the presence of the Church (or any another system of moral absolutes) is strong in government. Only if there is no objective moral standard will the population controller and anti-lifers have unlimited freedom of movement.

Finally, the anti-lifers will simply slander the Church, the hierarchy, and the laity. Common charges will include allegations that 'the Church is oppressive' (particularly of women), that the Church has a "need to control the lives of its members," and that 'the Church doesn't care about women.'

You must know how to decisively refute these simplistic and sloganistic allegations.

As one example of how to answer the charge that 'the Church doesn't care about women,' have a questioner pose as a young woman who is pregnant, needs help, but does not want an abortion. Have her call up an abortion clinic or Planned Parenthood and ask for help with groceries, rent, and education. They will always tell her that they aren't in the social services business. Then have the young lady call up Pro-Life Philippines or any Catholic Church and make the same request.

The contrast will be obvious.

Attacks on **the** Family

Next to the Church, the other great "diffuse" teacher of morality in society is the family.

Why are the anti-lifers attacking the family?

Because, as *Evangelium Vitae* repeatedly says (5, 11, 59, 88, 92, 94), the family is the "sanctuary of life," and the "culture of death" must destroy this sanctuary in order to be truly victorious. The cultures of life and death are not only incompatible, they will be in open warfare until one or the other finally triumphs.

Even more to the point, as *Evangelium Vitae* recognizes, "the future of humanity passes by way of the family" (94).

I have read and heard about Filipino society and the pivotal role of the family. One author wrote that there is a kind of "invisible string" of responsibility and devotion connecting each Filipino and scores of other people - parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, spouse's family, and so on.

The population controllers and anti-lifers will attempt to destroy the family in the Philippines just as they have in every Western country - by taking their scissors of 'social revolution' and cutting these strings one by one.

The result will be a society of individuals who feel no responsibility towards each other, and who care very little what happens to others just as long as their rights are not violated.

It is said that the Philippines has spent 400 years in the convent with the Spanish, three years in hell with the Japanese, and fifty years in Hollywood with the Americans. The result is a completely unique mold of Western and Eastern culture.

But, beyond visible differences, what fundamentally distinguishes Filipino culture from all others?

One thing: The strength of the family. If the family can be corrupted, what separates Filipino culture from American culture?

No much of importance.

So how specifically will the attack come?

Through the widespread availability of divorce, contraception, and sex education.

Contraception breaks the procreative bond between husband and wife.

Divorce breaks the unitive bond between husband and wife.

Explicit sex education and so-called "values clarification" exercises breaks the bond of trust between parents and children.

Once divorce, contraception, and explicit sex education are entrenched in a society, abortion is not only possible, it is inevitable, because sex education breaks down the innocence and inhibitions of children, causing them to want to fornicate. Then they think they are safe from pregnancy because they use contraceptives, but contraceptives fail so often that the pro-abortionists say that they must have abortion as a "backup."

As one example, there are two million contraceptive failures in the United States each year. This means that two-thirds of the women walking into abortion clinics were using contraceptives at the time they conceived.²

Once children can be killed by their mothers through abortion, the family is mortally wounded (EV, 59). Ultimately, the process of death will come full circle; if the parents can kill "unwanted" children through abortion, then the surviving children will one day come back and kill "unwanted" old and feeble parents through euthanasia. And what logical defense will the parents have once their turn comes?

The fundamental strategy that the anti-lifers are employing here is that they are trying to change the definition of love from total commitment and sacrifice for God and for another person to love of self only. Pope John Paul highlighted this difference when he said in *Familiaris Consortio* (6) that "...history is not simply a fixed progression towards what is better, but rather an event of freedom, and even a struggle between freedoms that are in mutual conflict, that is according to the well-known expression of St. Augustine, a conflict between two loves: The love of God to the point of disregarding self, and the love of self to the point of disregarding God."

Authentic love also means accepting person as they are, with their unique blend of strengths and weaknesses, not as you would like them to be. For example, I would like to ask you young ladies in the audience a question. What would you think if a young man told you that he loved your long, dark hair, your big brown eyes, your flawless skin, your melodious voice, but then asked you to take the birth control pill?

Is that true love?

¹United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *National Data Book and Guide to Sources*, "Contraception Use By Women, 15-44 Years Old, By Age, Race, Marital Status, and Method of Contraception: 1982." *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 110th Edition. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1990. Table 99.

See Also William R. Grady, Mark D. Hayward, and Junichi Yagi. "Contraception Failure in the United States: Estimates for the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth." Alan Guttmacher Institute's *Family Planning Perspectives*, September/October 1986, page 204.

Of course not! What he is saying to you is that he desires all of you except your fertility.

There is an interesting parallel between the way this young man treats this young lady and the way that the population controllers and multinational corporations are treating the Philippines. They love your fish - more fish is poached from the waters of the Philippines each year than Filipinos themselves eat - close to a million metric tons. They love your hardwoods - more than 80 percent of all Philippine mahogany has been clearcut and exported. They love your land - tens of thousands of rice farmers have been run out of business by corporations who then take over vast tracts of land and grow orchids, watermelons, asparagus, and many other crops, also primarily for export.

They love everything that the Philippines has to offer - except its people. That is why they are flooding the islands with birth control devices and are not helping the people with the most basic necessities of life. If every Filipino magically disappeared tonight, do you think the corporations and population controllers would be unhappy? Of course not, because then they could pillage this land without interference!

Is this true love of the Philippines? Is this true concern for the welfare of the people?

No, it is not.

I have only been in the Philippines for about ten days, but there is abundant evidence everywhere that the push against the Filipino people and against family is taking place.

There is a bill that would legalize divorce before your Parliament. It will not matter if the bill goes down to defeat this year; they will never stop trying until they get what they want. Remember that Margaret Sanger struggled for more than forty years to get contraception introduced in the United States.

During my three days in Davao, I saw several stone walls 50 to 100 meters long painted solid with family planning pictures and slogans: "Two children are good for the family;" "Two children will eliminate poverty;" "Two children only are good for the environment;" "Two children are healthy for the economy."

Is all of this propaganda really true? Is this country poor because there are too many people?

More People Does Not Equal Poverty

The statement that more people leads to a poorer nation is simple nonsense. Consider this fact: The population densities of many rich nations, to include Belgium, Israel, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, are all greater than that of the Philippines.³

The problem in this country is obviously not overpopulation but population maldistribution. As I was flying from Davao to Manila, I looked down upon countryside that is virtually empty, with only ten or twenty people per square kilometer. And then, by contrast, there is Manila, with 20,000 or more people per square kilometer.

So what we have is this: The multinational corporations and **the** corrupt elements of the Philippines government cooperate to make **it** virtually impossible for the farmer to out an existence on his little **plot** of land, so he sells out and looks for opportunities in the city. **The** corporations gobble up more and more land and cause huge amounts of environmental damage, and then the population controllers look **at the** crowded cities and the damage in the country and do not **lay the blame** where it belongs - on the corporation and the government - **but on the** individual Filipino.

The Four-Step Plan for Enslaving a Nation

Overview. The Philippines is the largest of only **thirteen nations** in the world where abortion is still completely illegal. **110 countries** of the world have either abortion on demand or have so **many exceptions** that the practical result is the same.

And every one of these 110 nations followed the same **road, the road** that your nation is now beginning to take.

There are four steps on this road. The people themselves take the first step, and the population controllers complete the process. Most people

³United States Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the United States. United States Government Printing Office, 1993. Table 1,374, "Population, by Country, 1980, 1990, and 1993, and Projection, 2000."

think that abortion begins with contraception, but the process really begins much sooner than that.

The First Step. In the very beginning, the people lose sight of Satan. He becomes invisible, and anyone who mentions **him** is **laughed at**. Malcolm Muggeridge once said that "Satan's greatest **triumph is that we** no longer believe in him."

If we lose sight **of** the source of sin, we **eventually begin to lose** sight of personal sin as **well**. Pope Pius XII said **in December 1946 that** "The sin of the century is the loss of the sense of sin."

Gradually, all responsibility for sin is shifted from the individual to society. We hear all the time in the United States that rapists, child molesters, murderers and thieves are not really at fault, it is society that made them this way. And the sermons in our churches always seem to stress God's love and mercy, and never His justice. The sense **of** responsibility fades away, to be replaced by a craving **for more and more** rights.

So what we have is **a** nation of entitlement-addicted people **who have** lost their sense of sin. And if there is no sin, there is **no** need to fear God's judgment. Gradually, we have lost sight of the **natural** law. And when this happens, we replace it with man's law, with all of its accompanying imperfections and injustices. Look at the contrast: God's law is simple in the extreme, while man makes tens of thousands of laws to govern every aspect of our existence. This proliferation of control is necessary if the people cannot guide themselves.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1, 954; 1,956) quotes Pope Leo XIII and Cicero on natural law: "The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every men, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to do sin ... to replace it with a contrary law is a sacrilege..."

The Second Step. When the people have lost sight of the natural law and embrace man's flawed law instead, the ground is ripe for the population controllers,, who then initiate the second step of the process: They set to work putting their own laws into place, laws that destroy the people's sense of chastity, modesty, and innocence.

Naturally, this is best facilitated through the media (EV, 17). Television, radio, and movies emphasize the sensational and responsibility-free way of living while ignoring the virtue inherent in everyday Christian living. The scandals of public figures increasingly titillate the population. And everywhere the attack on modesty escalates. On the way over here, a journey of just five kilometers, there is ample evidence of this trend: Tabloids in English and Tagalog with the latest pictures of sexy girls in little (or no) swimsuits, ten-meter high billboard luridly advertising the "topless exchange lifeguards," and young men modeling jeans - and nothing else.

Also, of course, sex education that is as graphic as possible is introduced into both the secular and Catholic schools. This "education" stresses that children have the right to make their own decisions about sex, and that the parents must not become involved or even give guidance. This is accompanied by a strong push to remove religion from the schools entirely and replace it with the acknowledged religion of secular humanism. And so, as the Holy Father described in *Familiaris Consortio*, the focus of each person gradually shifts from God to self.

The Third Step. Once the people's sense of modesty and chastity is broken down, they naturally begin to fornicate. And when single people fornicate, of course, they get pregnant - unless, of course, they are given contraception. Meanwhile, married couples have been propagandized into believing that the only socially responsible road to take is to have at most two children and then be sterilized. Therefore, they "need" contraception as well.

The Fourth Step. Finally, after contraception is available in every convenience store and pharmacy, the push for abortion begins, because, as I mentioned above, contraception fails very frequently. Condoms break 3% to 15% of the time. They tell you that the birth control pill is 98% effective - but they don't tell you what is the method effectiveness rate. In real life, women on birth control pills have an eight percent chance of becoming pregnant each year and a fifty percent chance of becoming pregnant in five years.⁴

⁴William R. Grady, Mark D. Hayward, and Junichi Yagi. "Contraceptive Failure in the United States: Estimates for the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth." Alan Guttmacher Institute's *Family Planning Perspectives*, September/October 1986, page 204.

None of the 110 countries that I mentioned earlier has yet accepted widespread contraception without eventually yielding to the demands of the pro-abortionists for abortion on demand.

Population statistician Emily C. Moore of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) expressed the consensus view of the population controllers when she said that **"The population explosion compels us to take every means necessary to curb our growth rate. Since contraception alone seems insufficient to reduce fertility to the point of no-growth, and since population experts tell us that eliminating unwanted fertility is necessary, we should permit all voluntary means of birth control (including abortion) so as to avert the necessity for coercive measures."**⁵

Even more to the point than mere utilitarianism, if we don't believe in God's justice any more; if we have lost our sense of modesty; if we can say "NO!" to God with contraception; why is abortion such a big problem, especially if the people have been propagandized into believing that the unborn child is just a "blob" and a "part of the woman's body?"

The Long-Range Solution to Population Maldistribution

In developing countries all over the world, people are not poor because they have many children they have many children because they are poor.

The poor have many children because of two reasons.

The first is that the infant mortality rate is very high in some places, and so poor parents can only insure that they have enough children to care for them in their later years if they have a lot of babies. The second reason is that, for farmers and country people, the only help available comes from one's children. Children are needed to help clear land, plow and plant, haul water for irrigation, and make handicrafts for sale.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of what the Holy Father has called the "culture of death" is that its adherents are always shortsighted. And so, the vast majority of the foreign aid that comes into the Philippines

⁵Emily C. Moore, Ph.D. "The Major Issues and the Argumentation in the Abortion Debate." Pages 33 to 43. In a looseleaf booklet entitled *"Organizing for Action."* Prepared by Vicki Z. Kaplan for the National Abortion Rights Action League, 250 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 51 pages, no date.

is in the form of IUDs, birth control pills, abortion suction machines, and condoms.

All this has done over the last decade is turn poor large families into poor small families. This has done absolutely no good at all for the people.

Once again, *Evangelium Vitae* (91) addresses this problem directly;

"... interventions must always take into account and respect the primary and inalienable responsibility of married couples and families, and cannot employ methods which fail to respect the person and fundamental human rights, beginning with the right to life of every innocent human being, it is therefore morally unacceptable to encourage, let alone impose, the use of methods such as contraception, sterilization and abortion in order to regulate births. The ways of solving the population problem are quite different. Governments and the various international agencies must above all strive to create economic, social, public health and cultural conditions which will enable married couples to make their choices about procreation in full freedom and with genuine responsibility" (91)

What is needed instead of contraception is money to be poured into rural electrification, irrigation systems, modernized farming equipment, facilities for the proper storage and transportation of crops, basic health care for the country people, clean drinking water, the elimination of graft and corruption at all levels, and above all, the right of each family to own a few hectares of land by which they can support themselves and perhaps grown a little extra food that can be sold to purchase necessities.

If this long-range plan is implemented, two things will happen. The first is that the country people will no longer drift into the city looking for opportunities, because they will be able to support themselves in the countryside. In fact, the cities will begin to shrink and the urban infrastructure - the roads, the drinking water supply, and the electric system - will finally be able to keep up with the population. Brownouts, water shortages, citywide traffic jams, and choking air pollution will be relics of Manila's past.

The second thing that will happen is that people in the country will naturally have smaller families because infant mortality will be reduced,

and because children will no longer be needed to help with heavy manual labor.

If this long-range plan is implemented, the Philippines will take its rightful place as the youthful powerhouse and rice basket of Asia.

But if this country's leadership insists upon aborting, contracepting, and sterilizing its people out of existence, the Philippines will instead become a crippled old man, begging for handouts, scorned by all.

Why Go To All the Trouble?

The four steps I have described above are being implemented all over the world by tens of thousands of full-time workers in hundreds of multinational population control organizations from the Association for Voluntary Surgical Contraception to Zero Population Growth. I estimate that more than 100 billion pesos will ultimately be spent in the Philippines alone to break the resistance of the people and instill in them the desired anti-life mentality.

This same 100 billion pesos, if spent on rural development instead of contraception and abortion, would provide rural electrification, irrigation water, and comprehensive health care to five million people, and would fundamentally change the future of this country for the better.

So why are the population control organizations going to such a tremendous amount of trouble and expense, if all of their money would instead improve the lives of millions?

The Senegalese novelist Himodou Kane once referred to the "colonization of the mind." He said that the surest way to subjugate a people and make them do your will is not through force or arms, because then they will continue to resist with their minds and their bodies.

The best way to control a people is instead to make them think that they are controlling their own destiny, when in reality they are obediently following the lead of the colonizers.

Article 15 of Humanist Manifesto II says that "It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide... birth control techniques to the developing portions of the globe."

So the anti-lifers talk about divorce empowering women, so you can be just like Americans. They say that you must have "freedom of choice" to kill your unborn children and be just like Germans. And they will say that you must have "death with dignity," so you be just like the Dutch.

But while they distract you with all of these new-found and illicit "rights" and "freedom," they are gradually taking hold of the resources of your country in a stranglehold that will never be broken.

Dr. Charles Ravenholt, Director of the Population Office, candidly explained that "Population control is needed to maintain the normal operation of United States commercial interests around the world. Without our trying to help those countries with their economic and social development, the world could rebel against the strong United States commercial presence. The self interest thing is a compelling element. If the population explosion proceeds unchecked, it will cause such terrible economic conditions abroad that revolutions will ensue. And revolutions are scarcely ever beneficial to the interest of the United States."⁶

This condescending attitude is at the heart of the West's "contraceptive imperialism."

It is said that Filipinos have spent "400 years in the convent with the Spaniards, three years in hell with the Japanese, and fifty years in Hollywood with the Americans," and have managed to absorb and inculturate the best of these societies. But now this society is on the brink of being absorbed into the featureless moral landscape of the anti-life culture that controls most of the rest of the world, the "culture of death" referred numerous times to by the Holy Father in *Evangelium Vitae*.

The only way to resist the multinational corporations and the population controllers is to tell them "No, we will not be deceived into accepting your false values. We will keep our Church, our families, and our love of life strong and alive."

Shortsightedness of the Culture of Death

I have already mentioned that the anti-lifers are notoriously shortsighted. When faced with a decision between the difficult and moral option

⁶Dr. Charles Ravenholt, Director, Population Office. Quoted in "*Population Control of Third World Planned: Sterilization Storm in U.S.*" Dublin, Ireland Evening Press, May 12, 1979, page 9.

and the quick and easy fix, they will always choose the easy way out, regardless of future consequences.

But pro-lifers know about the universal TANSTAAFL principle - "There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch." This means that you never get something for nothing. If you try to fix things quickly and sloppily, you will always pay much more in the end.

The anti-lifers are telling you that freedom leads to happiness, and in order to be free, you have to have gay rights, divorce, abortion, contraception, euthanasia, pornography - in short, anything and everything that systematically perverts God's gift of love between man and woman.

But has all of this freedom made people happy?

Those who lead the Philippines can look at many other countries that have accepted all of these things, and can see for themselves whether or not their people are healthier and happier.

Look at the United States. 35 years ago, we did not have contraception, abortion, gay rights, infanticide, widespread divorce and pornography, and euthanasia.

The anti-lifers promised us "freedom of choice" and we took the bait. We believed them. Now we have it all. But are we happier and better off?

The rate of rape is four times higher than it was in 1960. The murder rate is three times higher. The suicide rate among young people has increased ten times faster than their population. The average marriage in the United States now lasts less than seven years. Ten million children are now fatherless. Five million live in poverty now that divorce is easily available. Herpes, hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhea, and a dozen other venereal diseases are making strong comebacks.

The pro-abortionists also told us in the United States that legal abortion would end child abuse - after all, we'd be getting rid of all of those "unwanted children," wouldn't we? But instead, in the United States, the child abuse rate has risen by a factor of ten in the last 35 years. We now kill over 2,000 of our children each year, and why not? If we can kill our children before birth, why not after? It turns out that many women who kill their born children have had abortions - like Susan Smith, who

drowned her two little boys in an Arkansas lake last year. We still have "unwanted children," but now they are born.⁷

The anti-lifers say that pornography is healthy and gives people an outlet for their sexual desires, but they ignore what comes later - increased rates of rape, wives abandoned or abused by their husbands looking for greater sexual thrills, and children enslaved and killed by the industry.

They say that "gays" should have equal rights as a matter of airness, but they don't see what comes years later - thousands of tiny children dying of AIDS, whole hospital wards full of living cadavers watching their lives ebbing away, billions spent trying to stop a pervertible disease.

And they say that abortion and contraception are a woman's right - and they callously deny and ignore the pain of the thousands of women who can never forget their dead children, the hundreds who die each year of coronary thrombosis and strokes brought on by use of oral contraceptives, and the hundreds of thousands whose reproductive systems are butchered by the abortifacient IUDs, Norplant, Depo-Provera, and others.⁸

Most significant of all, every public opinion poll taken in the United States on the subject of personal happiness shows that we believe that we are worse off than we were 35 years ago. Every positive indicator (honesty, hard work, faithfulness and commitment) is perceived as being less abundant, and every negative indicator (cheating, lying, lack of responsibility) is more common.

Americans are unhappier and more confused than we have ever been at any previous point in our history.

As Goethe once said, "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe that they are free."

⁷United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Reference Data Book and Guide to Sources*, "Suicide Rates, By Sex, Race, and Age Group: 1970 to 1986." *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 110th Edition. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1990. Table 125.

⁸Warren Hem. *Abortion Practice* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1990, page 45. Also see H. Ory. "Mortality Associated with Fertility and Fertility Control: 1983." *Family Planning Perspectives*, 15:57, 1983.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this talk by describing two great cities to you: Manila and the city where I was born, Frankfurt, Germany.

Some years ago I visited Frankfurt again. The streets were absolutely clean. Whenever someone inadvertently dropped a piece of litter, the next good citizen who came along would pick it up and put it in his pocket. There were no potholes in the streets. All of the cars sparkled in the sun. The air was clean. The buildings were spotless. There was even toilet paper in the comfort rooms!

This is the kind of city that is pleasing to the eyes of man.

But I did not see my first child until the second day of walking along the streets. Everyone seemed to be old. I could not believe the number of white-haired people I saw.

And absolutely nobody smiled.

When I told my friends that I was coming to the Philippines, some of them said that I wouldn't like it. After all, the air pollution in Manila is terrible. The roads are bumpy and there is trash in the streets. There are even naked children. They said "You will be going to a backward country."

So I was a bit apprehensive when I came here to Manila. And, as I strolled through Chinatown and down along the waterfront on the Pasig River, I saw trash, potholes, and naked children, just as my friends had predicted.

I grew up almost alone and have always disliked being around large numbers of people, especially in a big city. But for the first time, I felt at home in Manila. It seemed as if everyone smiled and waved. And the children were everywhere, shouting "Hello, Joe!," and running up and taking my hand.

Manila is the kind of city that is pleasing to the eyes of God.

One thing my friends did not tell me is that the Philippines is perhaps the last living Catholic culture in the world, where family and Church still thrive.

Someone could say that, in some ways, this country is backward - but only if you see things through the eyes of man. If you look at the Philippines through the eyes of God, you will see the most advanced country in the world, a country that still follows God instead of man, a true spiritual powerhouse that will endure for as long as Church and family remain strong and are renewed by the people.

This is why the anti-lifers are attacking you so viciously - because you are the last stronghold. If this country takes on the values of the West, the last light of true human civilization will be extinguished, and the "culture of death" will prevail. We in the United States and the West in general are depending upon you to hold onto your values and resist the anti-life tide, because one day you will send missionaries all over the world and lead us out of the darkness.

So please do not become spiritually backwards like my country, the United States.

That would be a loss that the world simply could not bear.

The Role of Priests in Natural Family Planning

FAUSTO B. GOMEZ, O.P.

"Love, Life and the Family for the Asia Pacific Region" is a most significant theme! The family, the good family is and tries to become more a community of life and love - a community, a domestic Church, where there is conjugal, maternal/paternal and filial love. I believe it was St. John Chrysostom who said that husband and wife are like two cities separated by a river. The child is like a bridge that links the two cities.

According to Vatican II, mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love are the ends of marriage (cf. GS, 49-50). A potential effect of marital love - of maternity/paternity - is the child. *How many children must a couple try to have?* The couple concerned is the one to answer the question; that is, to answer the question freely and responsibly.

This mutual marital decision is radically dictated by responsible maternity/paternity. With the proper reasons, the couple will decide the number of children they can responsibly have. This decision entails the use of the family planning methods which are in consonance with human nature, the nature of marriage and of Christian faith. These methods are the Natural Family Planning (NFP) methods.

Has the priest anything to do concerning NFP? Before I try to answer this question, let me present some preliminary notes that I - as a priest - consider important in the context of the general theme of the session, that is, "Responsible Parenthood and NFP Programs."

1. SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES

a) *Pro-Life and Pro-All Life*

When we speak of NFP, we have to do it in the context of life: it is, indeed, a pro-life activity. Human life ought to be promoted by all humans and Christians, as John Paul II puts it, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. In his powerful and dynamic song to life, *Evangelium Vitae*, the Holy Father condemns absolutely abortion and euthanasia in the strongest possible terms; he is also against the death penalty almost absolutely. Is Pro-Life against capital punishment?

A consistent life-ethics condemns the death penalty, too. Richard Nicholson writes: "It must be a very fruitful field of inquiry to examine why there is often a close concurrence between pro-life views and support for capital punishment" (Richard H. Nicholson, "Is Capital Punishment Ever Ethical?," *Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 25, No. 4, July-August 1995, p. 5). The author of this assertion does not know about Pro-Life Philippines, a committed member of the Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

As Christians, we are asked to defend human life, as John Paul II has asserted, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. Human life is "an indivisible good (EV, 80), like "a seamless garment," and the human person, a son/daughter of God the Father of all, an icon of Christ. We do believe in just, medicinal, corrective punishment, but not in capital punishment: "Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity" (EV, 9). In the context of the family, that is our context, the death penalty appears as a more unjust and cruel punishment. In *The Last Days of the Condemned*, Victor Hugo wrote: "Do you think that the fatal stroke wounds him alone? That his father, his mother, or his children will not suffer by it? In killing him, you vitally injure all his family and thus again you punish the innocent."

With John Paul II, I am against abortion and euthanasia in a firmer degree than against capital punishment. Furthermore, I am, also with the Holy Father, against abortion, sterilization and contraception; however, abortion is the greatest of the three evils: it is "an unspeakable crime" (GS, 51; EV, 13).

b) Pro-Life and Pro-Poor

Pro-Life is also Pro-Poor! It is for every human and humane life, for a life of dignity for all, in particular for those at the margins of life, including poor families. John Paul II writes in *Familiaris Consortio*. "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, no. 64; cf. Id., nos. 47, 71 and 21).

The family, the Holy Father tells us, is "the first school of the social virtues that all societies need" (FC, 36). Foremost among these are the virtues of justice and solidarity.

Moreover, prayer is a necessary Christian value and constantly a personal/family need. The Our Father, the Lord's Prayer, is the daily family prayer. Among the seven petitions, we have the fourth: "Give us this day our daily bread." Give us our bread! How about those families who hunger because they have no bread to eat? *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* thunders: "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 parables of the poor man Lazarus and of the Last Judgment" (CCC, no. 2831).

Pro-Life is exemplarily against abortion and euthanasia, and also the death penalty. It is also - I am sure - against "situations of injustice and violence in which the life of whole peoples is degraded and trampled upon" (EV, 18).

c) Pro-Life and Pro-Science

Pro-Life is not only a vigorous declaration on human dignity and rights. It is also a practice against a culture of death and for a culture of life. It is, then, theory and praxis. For this praxis, to be positive and enriching, it has to be fertilized by faith, grace and love, and based on truth - true scientific data.

When we Christians fight, for instance, against the anti-tetanus toxoid vaccine, or against Depo Provera, or against abortifacient pills, we do it well grounded upon true scientific data - and, of course, sound human and Christian ethical principles. When we do not have reliable scientific data, we have to say so. Only the truth will make us free (cf *Jn* 8:32).

Granting their immorality, how dangerous - health-wise - are contraceptive pills, IUD, sterilization? What are their certain and/or doubtful side effects? Other important questions: How effective are the NFP methods, in particular the Basal Body Temperature, the Billings and the Sympto-Thermal methods? (cf. Mary Shivanandan, "After Rhythm: the Development of NFP," *Ethics & Medics*, Vol. 20, No. 4, April 1995, pp. 3-4).

d) *Pro-Life and Pro-Laity*

That, in the past, most of the books - if not all - on sexual ethics and marriage were written by celibate priests is, in a sense, understandable. That today most of the writings on these matters continue to be authored by priests and religious men is, perhaps, less understandable. Fortunately, some excellent articles and essays on morality and the family, are being written by lay men and women theologians. This fact is a most welcome and needed development: an initial step towards the much talked about emergence of the laity in the Church, considered by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) as one of the priorities of new and renewed evangelization.

The Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, is the Mystical Body of Christ: mystery, communion and mission. The Church of Christ is the People of God, a community of disciples composed of priests, religious men and women, and lay persons, who are all workers in the Lord's vineyard (cf. *Mt* 20:3-4), all equal in dignity: "All share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ" (GS, 32; cf. *Code of Canon Law*, c. 208). Although, in the Church of Christ, priests, religious and lay persons are all equal in dignity and rights in theory and doctrine, they are not yet co-equal in practice. Without undue aggressiveness, let us all work - and pray - together towards the real achievement of equality among priests, religious men and women and the laity.

2. PRIESTS AND NFP

a) *Mission of Priests*

In the community of Jesus disciples, there is one mission for all, namely, evangelization, centered on the proclamation of the Good News that is Jesus Christ. And there are many ministries tasked with the Church's

evangelizing mission, that entails Word, sacrament and service, or catechesis, worship and charity. Committed to the ministry of the Word, the ministry of worship and reconciliation, and the ministry of the social apostolate - of pastoral charity (cf. John Paul U, *Pastores Do Vobis*, no. 57) -, the priests, servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, promote community "in and from the Eucharist" (Vatican U, PO, 6).

Through the integral formation he received in the seminary, and constant continuing formation, the priest knows - has to know - his faith and morals, and is obliged to teach them to his flock. He is called to preach not his opinions and ideas, but the doctrine and praxis of the Church, including the teachings of the Ordinary Magisterium on sexual ethics and marriage. The priest ought to reflect often on these words of Christ to the apostles: "Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (Lk 10:16).

In *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II underlines that the unity of moral and pastoral judgment by priests" is uniquely important and, therefore, "must be carefully sought and ensured, in order that the faithful may not have to suffer anxiety of conscience" (FC, 34).

A pro-lifer, the priest is called by his vocation to contribute to the formation of a national, diocesan and parochial pastoral plan for pro-life activities (cf. National Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation*. Washington, DC: US Catholic Conference, 1985).

In particular, the priest has to reach and preach - from the pulpit, in the schools, to parish associations and movements - the pro-life agenda, including NFP.

Why some priests are not too sympathetic to NFP methods? Why some of them allow-or even recommend - artificial contraceptive methods as dT"lesser evil" ? Why do some other priests still think that the NFP methods are less effective than the artificial ones? And still others think that, although effective, NFP methods are not suited to the poor and uneducated?

I believe that the two strongest reasons of the clergy's disagreement on the matter stem from widespread theological dissent and from misin-

formation or deformation on the nature and effectiveness of NFP and contraception.

Concerning theological dissent, I refer to the authoritative teaching of *Veritatis Splendor*. While theological pluralism is a positive and healthy stand, confrontational public dissent is not. Writes John Paul II: "Dissent in the form of carefully orchestrated protests and polemic carried on in the media, is opposed to ecclesial communion and to a correct understanding of the hierarchical constitution of the People of God. Opposition to the teaching of the Church's pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression either of Christian freedom or of the diversity of the Spirit's gifts." The Holy Father also points out the main reason against public theological dissent: "The right of the faithful to receive Catholic doctrine in its purity and integrity must always be respected" (VS, 113).

Regarding NFP, and its proven effectiveness, I will not dare to explain it before this august audience of committed pro-lifers. Allow me, then, to stress a few points that I consider significant to my talk on priests and NFP.

b) A wholistic Approach

The Church's teaching on family planning is part of her total teaching on human sexuality, marriage, love and family life. Sexual ethics is an essential dimension of the ethics of love. Love is the value, the virtue of human life in human and Christian perspective: "The most authentic meaning of life is the giving of self in love for one's brothers and sisters" (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 49).

More concretely, the teaching on NFP is rooted in the doctrine on the sacrament of marriage, conjugal love and its relational and genital expressions. The genital expression of conjugal love - the act of sexual intercourse - has two inseparable meanings: it's love giving (unitive meaning) and life giving (procreative meaning); "each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life" (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no. 11; cf. John Paul II, *Letter to the Families*, no. 12).

In this context, the faithful, including priests, are obliged to know, understand and accept the teaching of the Church, in particular, Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965) Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, (1968) and John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) and *Evangelium Vitae*, (1995) and *Letter to Families* (1994).

c) *Responsible MarternitylPaternity*

The Church teaches responsible parenthood. As the Bishops of Peru said recently, the Church does not promote an irresponsible procreation (*On Family Planning*, August 25, 1995). "Parents should realize that they are cooperators with the love of God the Creator, and are, so to speak, the interpreters of that love. Thus they will fulfill tneir task with human and Christian responsibility." "Sons of the Church may not undertake methods of regulating procreation which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine Law" (GS, 50-51).

According to *Hwnanae Vitae*, responsible parenthood entails the following: the knowledge and respect if biological processes; the integration of the passions within reason and will - and under them; the decision to have children, or for serious reasons, based on the. physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, limit family size; through the formation of a "right conscience," that establishes a deep relationship with "the objective moral order established by God." Responsible parents, therefore, "recognize fully their own duties towards God, towards themselves, towards the family and towards society, in a correct hierarchy of values" (*Humanae Vitae*, no. 10):

Responsible parenthood (to space, increase or limit the number of children) is not carried out in contraception and sterilization, and much less in abortion. Married couples practice responsible parenthood through Natural Family Planning.

The decision of a couple - not of the State, not of the Church - to limit their family for serious reasons is good, and, therefore, commendable:

Avoiding pregnancy can be good, responsible, or even necessary for married couples. The Church is convinced, however, that certain ways of avoiding pregnancy are morally flawed. These methods compromise the very meaning of marriage and marital intercourse. The use of contraception is an attempt to re-design the nature of marital intercourse by eliminating its procreative meaning and trivializing the promise of total self-giving and mutual acceptance.

Charles and Elizabeth Balsam, *Family Planning: A Guide for Exploring the Issues*, 1986, p. 34).

As the Philippine Bishops have said, expressing the traditional teaching of the Church, "*the Church advocates Natural Family Planning as the only morally acceptable way of practicing responsible procreation*" (CBCP, *Guiding Principles on Population Control*, *IQQO*, no. §; cf. 000, no. 2.370). The effective methods of NFP (the Basal Body Temperature, the Billings and the Sympto-Thermal methods) are according to nature and according to faith. Their practice require, like most right things in life, temperance, continence, and the help of grace and prayer.

Pro-lifers are called to persuade all, including in particular physicians and priests, that the methods of NFP are ethical and Christian, and do work; that they are as effective as the artificial methods; that have no bad side effects while artificial methods do have; that they can be learned easily; and that it takes two to practice it - not only the wife! (cf. ASM, "Contraception: The Dark Side," *Ethics & Medics*, Vol. 20, No. 10, October 1995, pp. 3-4.)

Furthermore, we need that more physicians and married couples spread convincingly and joyfully the good news that in NFP. We need more testimonies, the positive stories of couples who practice NFP.

Natural Family Planning couples are the best witnesses to its positive value and impact on marital intimacy. Many couples will admit that NFP requires growth in self-control, self-sacrifice, dying to self, and other virtues needed by those who wish to follow Christ. Seen in this light, genital abstinence or continence is not merely a strategy or a technique for avoiding conception. It is a necessity for subduing one's tendency toward selfishness and developing the virtue of self-mastery. Far from being anti-sexual, continence enables a couple to embrace intercourse as a special language of total and reciprocal self-giving. Research also shows that couples who abandon contraceptives for fertility acceptance methods are the most adamant about the difference between the two lifestyles. They see their contraceptive-free life as being filled with faith in God the Creator who enables them to love each other and their children more deeply" (Charles and Elizabeth Balsam, o.c, p. 38).

(By the way, when NFP is used to limit the number of children responsibly, the marriage acts are not contraceptive but "naturally infertile.")

d) *NFP Advocacy*

As pro-lifers, we Christians, including priests, advocate responsible maternity/paternity through NFP. The way to fight abortion, and also contraception, is the non-violent way (cf. *EV*, no. 27). It is the true and humble non-violent way, the reasonable and dialogical peaceful way: the persuasive way.

Speaking on "Abortion, Morality and Public Policy," Charles E. Bouchard, O.P., distinguishes four paths of advocacy. First path: *Ethical imperialism*, practiced by those who think that only they have the right answer and the right to impose it on others who think otherwise. Not good: "Holier and wiser than thou" attitude. Second path: *Sectarianism*, followed by those who consider the world evil, and withdraw from it. Not good: We are of Christ, we are in the world and try to transform it according to human and Christian values. The third path is *accommodationism*, the path of those persons who try to get along with society by making a distinction between private and public life: private faith does not influence public life. Not Christian: Our faith tries to become a coherent faith that permeates our whole life. Finally, the path of *persuasive collaboration*, taken by those who try to persuade men, and women who do not agree with them through reasonable arguments. It is the human and Christian path. In a pluralistic society, we Christians say our piece and try to convince others by our arguments (preceded and accompanied by our witnessing), rooted in our human nature, dignity and rights. We work towards consensus as much as possible and, perhaps - when this is the only way - allow a truly "lesser evil," as John Paul II has done in *Evangelium Vitae* when speaking of more permissive and more restrictive laws on abortion (cf. *EV* no. 73: VS, 80).

In a pluralistic society - I commented to Fr. Bouchard -, compromise is, at times, necessary (cf. VS. 73); but even then, we have to continue proclaiming the moral truth: "We believe, therefore we speak" (2 Co 4:13); we speak "the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). The most radical and general principle of ethics and moral theology is "Do good and avoid evil" - or, fight evil! To fight abortion, public immorality, or unjust laws, we have different tactics available, such as prayer rallies, protest marches, boycotts, strikes - including the hunger strike. At times, we are asked by humanity

and Christian faith to fight evil nonviolently (Gandhi defined nonviolence as a constant state of active love): to fight nonviolently through the strategy of *civil disobedience*.

Let me close this important point on advocacy by reading to you two texts from the Magisterium of the Church: "The Church addresses people with full respect for their freedom. Her mission does not restrict freedom but rather promotes it. The *Church proposes; she imposes nothing*. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honors the sanctuary of conscience" (John Paul II, RM, no. 39). "Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1782; cf. Vatican II, DH, no. 3).

3. CONCLUSION: SOME QUESTIONS

I began my reflection by giving you some important preliminary notes that helped us conclude that NFP is an essential theme of the preaching of the Word, catechesis and moral education. Hence, NFP is a significant matter for priests, too, who are shepherds, preachers and teachers of faith and morals.

By way of conclusion, let me pose some questions - some important questions from a concerned priests!

To our Bishops. Do you have and implement a concrete pastoral program of pro-life activities? Are your pastoral letters - and those from your Episcopal Conference, from the Holy Father and the Vatican - known and understood by your flock? Do you have the infrastructure required to carry out the local Church's NFP programs?

To my brother-priests. Are we morally and theologically convinced that NFP methods are the ethical Christian methods? Do we animate - if not personally lead - pro-life activities among the various lay organizations and the family apostolate of the parish? Do we give too much importance to our hurriedly made personal opinions and ideas and not enough to the documents of the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church?

To Pro-Life activists. Are you a consistent pro-lifer, that is, are you, of course, against abortion and euthanasia, and also against the death

penalty? Do you present your pro-life agenda to society not violently, not even, perhaps, confrontationally, but reasonably, respectfully, dialogically and persuasively? (cf. EV, no. 27). Have you tried hard enough to convince, in particular, Christian couples and physicians - most particularly obstetricians and gynecologists -, and also priests, concerning pro-life issues and concerns? Could you try harder to convincing couples who practice NFP to witness the beauty and joy of NFP methods? Are you also strongly pro-poor and against underdevelopment?

To all. Let us try harder to integrate family life, married life, consecrated life, personal and social life, in Christ Jesus. He is the Way - the only way! Let us approach him in prayer, in our families, in the poor ... Above all, let us follow him - always. Reward? Happiness here and hereafter.

In closing, I wish to share two texts that I often consider in my meditation. The first one comes from our Lord. On one occasion, He condemned the hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees, and commented about them: "They bind heavy loads, hard to carry, to lay on other men's shoulders, while they themselves will not lift a finger to budge them" (*Mt* 23:4).

The second text is part of the phrase we priests recite at the Holy Mass, before receiving communion: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Irving God..., by your holy Body and Blood free me from all my sins arid from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching and never let me be parted from you." *Keep me faithful to your teaching!*

Lord, keep us all faithful to your teaching - to your beautiful teaching on the Gospel of Life! Thank you very much.

Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace

JOHN PAUL II

LET US GIVE CHILDREN A FUTURE OF PEACE!

1. At the end of 1994, the International Year of the Family, I wrote a Letter to the children of the whole world, asking them to pray that humanity would increasingly become God's family, living in harmony and peace. I have frequently expressed my heartfelt concern for children who are victims of armed conflicts and other kinds of violence, and I have not failed to call these serious situations to the attention of world public opinion.

At the beginning of this new year, my thoughts turn once again to children and to their legitimate hope for love and peace. I feel bound to mention in a particular way children who are suffering and those who often grow to adulthood without ever having experienced peace. Children's faces should always be happy and trusting, but at times they are full of sadness and fear: how much have these children already seen and suffered in the course of their short lives!

Let us give children a future of peace! This is the confident appeal which I make to men and women of goodwill, and I invite everyone to help children to grow up in an environment of authentic peace. This is their right, and it is our duty.

Children who are victims of war

2. I begin by thinking of the great crowds of children whom I have met during the years of my Pontificate, especially during my Apostolic Visits to every continent: joyful children who are full of happiness. My thoughts turn to them at the beginning of this new year. It is my hope that all children of the world will be able to begin 1996 in happiness and to enjoy a peaceful childhood, with the help of responsible adults.

I pray that everywhere a harmonious relationship between adults and children will promote a climate of peace and authentic well-being. Sadly, many of the world's children are innocent victims of war. In recent years' millions of them have been wounded or killed: a veritable slaughter.

The special protection accorded to children by international law¹ has been widely disregarded, and the dramatic increase of regional and inter-ethnic conflicts has made it difficult to implement the protective measures called for by humanitarian regulations. Children have even become targets of snipers, their schools deliberately destroyed, and the hospitals where they are cared for bombed. In the face of such horrendous misdeeds, how can we fail to speak out with one voice in condemnation? The deliberate killing of a child is one of the most disturbing signs of the breakdown of all respect for human life.²

In addition to the children who have been killed, my thoughts also turn to those who have been maimed during or after these conflicts. I likewise think of young people who are systematically hunted down, raped or killed during so-called "ethnic cleansings".

3. Children are not only victims of the violence of wars; many are forced to take an active part in them. In some countries of the world it has come to the point where even very young boys and girls are compelled to serve in the army of the warring parties. Enticed by the promise of food and schooling, they are confined to remote camps, where they suffer hunger and abuse and are encouraged to kill even people from their own

¹ cf. United Nations Convention of 20 November 1989 on the rights of children, especially Article 38; the *Fourth Geneva Convention* of 12 August 1949 for the protection of civilians in wartime, Article 24; Protocols I and II of 12 December 1977, etc.

² cf. John Paul H, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), 3: AAS 87 (1995), 404.

villages. Often they are sent ahead to clear minefields. Clearly, the life of children has little value for those who use them in this way!

The future of young people who have taken up arms is often compromised. After years of military service, some are simply discharged and sent home, where they often fail to fit into civilian life. Others, ashamed of having survived when their companions have not, frequently end up as criminals or drug addicts. Who knows what nightmares must continue to afflict them! Will their minds ever be free of the memories of violence and death?

The humanitarian and religious organizations which attempt to relieve these inhuman sufferings deserve heartfelt respect. Thanks are also owed to those generous individuals and families who welcome orphans with love, and do everything they can to heal their traumas and to help them to fit once more into the communities from which they came.

4. The memory of the millions of children who have been killed, and the sad faces of so many others who are suffering compel us to take every possible measure to safeguard or re-establish peace, and to bring conflicts and wars to an end.

Before the Fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing last September, I asked Catholic charitable and educational institutions to adopt a coordinated strategy which gives priority to issues concerning children and young women, especially those most in need.³ Now I wish to renew that appeal, and to extend it in a special way to Catholic institutions and organizations which deal with children. I ask them to help girls who have suffered as a result of war and violence, to teach boys to acknowledge and respect the dignity of women, and to help all children to rediscover the tenderness of the love of God who took flesh, and who by dying left the world the gift of his peace (cf. *Jn* 14:27).

I will continue to point out that all, from the most prominent international organizations to local associations, from heads of State to ordinary citizens, in everyday actions and at the most significant moments of life, are called upon to make a contribution to peace and to give no support to war.

³ cf. Message to the Delegation of the Holy See at the Fourth World Conference on Women (29 August 1995): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 30 August 1995, 1.

Children who are victims of various forms of violence

5. Millions of children suffer from other kinds of violence present both in poverty-stricken and in developed societies. These kinds of violence are often less obvious, but they are no less terrible.

The International Summit for Social Development which took place this year in Copenhagen stressed the connection between poverty and violence,⁴ and on that occasion States committed themselves to a greater battle against poverty through initiatives at the national level, beginning in 1996.⁵ Similar suggestions were made by the earlier World Conference of the United Nations on Children, held in New York in 1990. Poverty is indeed the cause of inhuman living and working conditions. In some countries children are forced to work at a tender age and are often badly treated, harshly punished, and paid absurdly low wages. Because they have no way of asserting their rights, they are the easiest to blackmail and exploit.

In other circumstances children are bought and sold,⁶ so that they can be used for begging or, even worse, forced into prostitution, as in the case of so-called "sex tourism". This utterly despicable trade degrades not only those who take part in it but also those who in any way promote it. Some do not hesitate to enlist children in criminal activities, especially the selling of narcotics, thus exposing them to the risk of personal involvement in drug use.

Many children end up with the street as their only home. Having run away, or having been abandoned by their families, or never having known a family environment, these young people live by their wits and in a state of total neglect, and they are considered by many as refuse to be eliminated.

6. Sadly, violence towards children is found even in wealthy and affluent families. Such cases are infrequent, but it is important not to overlook them. Sometimes children are taken advantage of and suffer abuse within the home itself, at the hands of people whom they should be able to trust, to the detriment of their development.

⁴ cf. Copenhagen Declaration, No. 16.

⁵ cf. Programme of Action, Chapter EL

⁶ cf. Programme of Action, No. 39 (e).

Many children are also compelled to endure the trauma caused by fighting between their parents, or by the actual breakup of the family. Concern for the children's welfare does not prevent solutions which are often dictated by the selfishness and hypocrisy of adults. Behind an appearance of normality and peacefulness, masked even further by an abundance of material possessions, children are at times forced to grow up in dismal loneliness, without firm and loving guidance and a suitable moral formation. Left to themselves, such children usually find their main contact with reality in television programmes which often present unreal and immoral situations which they are still too young to assess properly.

It is no wonder if this kind of widespread and pernicious violence also has its effect on their young hearts, changing their natural enthusiasm into disillusionment or cynicism, and their instinctive goodness into indifference or selfishness. When young people chase after false ideals, they can experience bitterness and humiliation, hostility and hatred, absorbing the discontent and emptiness all around them. Everyone is well aware of how childhood experiences can have profound and sometimes irreparable consequences on an individual's whole life.

It can hardly be hoped that children will one day be able to build a better world, unless there is a specific commitment to their education for peace. Children need to "learn peace": it is their right, and one which cannot be disregarded.

Children and hope for peace

7. I have sought to emphasize strongly the often tragic conditions in which many children are living today. I consider this my duty: they will be the adults of the third millennium. But I have no intention of yielding to pessimism or ignoring the signs of hope. How can I fail to mention, for example, the many families in every part of the world in which children grow up in an atmosphere of peace? And how can we not note the efforts being made by so many individuals and organizations to enable children in difficulty to grow up in peace and happiness? Public and private associations, individual families and particular communities have taken initiatives the only purpose of which is to help children who have suffered some traumatic event to return to a normal life. In particular, educational programmes have been developed for encouraging children and young people to use fully their personal talents, in order to become true peacemakers.

There, is also a growing awareness in the international community which, in recent years, despite difficulties and hesitation, has made efforts to deal decisively and systematically with problems connected with childhood.

The results achieved thus far encourage us to continue these praiseworthy endeavours. If children are properly helped and loved, they themselves can become peacemakers, builders of a world of fraternity and solidarity. With their enthusiasm and youthful idealism, young people can become "witnesses" and "teachers" of hope and peace to adults. Lest these possibilities be lost, children should be offered, in a way adapted to their individual needs, every opportunity for a balanced personal growth.

A peaceful childhood will enable boys and girls to face the future with confidence. Let no one stifle their joyful enthusiasm and hope!

Children in the school of peace

8. Little children very soon learn about life. They watch and imitate the behaviour of adults. They rapidly learn love and respect for others, but they also quickly absorb the poison of violence and hatred. Family experiences strongly condition the attitudes which children will assume as adults. Consequently, if the family is the place where children first encounter the world, the family must be for children the first school of peace.

Parents have an extraordinary opportunity to help their sons and daughters to become aware of this great treasure: the witness of their mutual love. It is by loving each other that they enable the child, from the very first moment of its existence, to grow up in peaceful surroundings, imbued with the positive values which make up the family's true heritage: mutual respect and acceptance, listening, sharing, generosity, forgiveness. Thanks to the sense of working together which these values foster, they provide a true education for peace and make the child, from its earliest years, an active builder of peace.

Children share with their parents and brothers and sisters the experience of life and hope. They see how life's inevitable trials are met with humility and courage, and they grow up in an atmosphere of esteem for others and respect for opinions different from their own.

It is above all in the home that, before ever a word is spoken, children should experience God's love in the love which surrounds them. In the family they learn that God wants peace and mutual understanding among all human beings, who are called to be one great family.

9. Besides the basic education provided by the family, children have a right to a specific training for peace at school and in other educational settings. These institutions have a duty to lead children gradually to understand the nature and demands of peace within their world and culture. Children need to learn the history of peace and not simply the history of victory and defeat in war.

Let us show them examples of peace and not just examples of violence! Fortunately many positive examples of this can be found in every culture and period of history. Suitable new educational opportunities must be created, especially in those situations where cultural and moral poverty has been most oppressive. Everything possible should be done to help children to become messengers of peace.

Children are not a burden on society; they are not a means of profit or people without rights. Children are precious members of the human family, for they embody its hopes, its expectations and its potential.

Jesus, the way of peace

10. Peace is a gift of God; but men and women must first accept this gift in order to build a peaceful world. People can do this only if they have a childlike simplicity of heart. This is one of the most profound and paradoxical aspects of the Christian message: to become child-like is more than just a moral requirement but a dimension of the mystery of the Incarnation itself.

The Son of God did not come in power and glory, as he will at the end of the world, but as a child, needy and poor. Fully sharing our human condition in all things but sin (cf. *Heb* 4:15), he also took on the frailty and hope for the future which are part of being a child. After that decisive moment for the history of humanity, to despise childhood means to despise the One who showed the greatness of his love by humbling himself and forsaking all glory in order to redeem mankind.

Jesus identified with the little ones. When the Apostles were arguing about who was the greatest, he "took a child and put him by his side, and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me"" (Lk 9:47-48). The Lord also forcefully warned us against giving scandal to children: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great mill-stone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

Jesus asked the disciples to become "children" again. When they tried to turn away the little ones who were pressing in upon him, he said indignantly: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mk 10:14-15). Jesus thus turned around our way of thinking. Adults need to learn from children the ways of God: seeing children's capacity for complete trust, adults can learn to cry out with true confidence, "Abba, Father!".

11. To become like a little child — with complete trust in the Father and with the meekness taught by the Gospel — is not only an ethical imperative; it is a reason for hope. Even where the difficulties are so great as to lead to discouragement and the power of evil so overwhelming as to dishearten, those who can rediscover the simplicity of a child can begin to hope anew. This is possible above all for those who know they can trust in a God who desires harmony among all people in the peaceful communion of his Kingdom. It is also possible for those who, though not sharing the gift of faith, believe in the values of forgiveness and solidarity and see in them — not without the hidden action of the Spirit — the possibility of renewing the face of the earth.

It is therefore to men and women of good will that I address this confidence appeal. Let us all unite to fight every kind of violence and to conquer war! Let us create the conditions which will ensure that children can receive as the legacy of our generation a more united and fraternal world!

Let us give children a future of peace!

From the Vatican, 8 December 1995.

Joannes Paulus PP U

Cases and Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

MARRIAGE CONVALIDATION

Robert, a Filipino Catholic, married Josephine, validly baptized in the Presbyterian Church, in Hawaii according to the canonical form. After living together a short time they separated and Robert decided to come back to the Philippines. A month after his arrival, he knew Rose in the factory where he got a job. He courted her for half a year. He did not tell her nor anybody else that he was married to Josephine. Following their courtship, they decided to get married in the Catholic chapel of the barrio where the factory is located. The previous investigation conducted by the Assistant parish priest was hurriedly done, thus there was no suspicion that Robert was already married.

Robert and Rose have been living together for seven years. They have four children. Robert, being a Catholic has been troubled all these years by his conscience. He knows his second marriage has been null and void. He has recently received news that Josephine, is dead already, thus he wants to legalize his union with Rose. He wants to know what to do in order to put things in order. The fact that he was married in Hawaii is still unknown to all.

A Priest

Our answer to the present question, as to what should be done after Josephine's death, in order to put things in order is: Albert's union with Rose can and must be legalized. This can be done: a) either by celebrating again their marriage in the usual way, following the canonical form, or

b) by convalidating their invalid marriage. To celebrate again their marriage according to the canonical form has some serious inconveniences that should be avoided. If Robert will have to reveal to Rose that he was already married when he knew her, this might create an unpleasant psychological situation of mistrust between him and Rose and cause surprise and scandal among others, if they come to know it. We sincerely think that the best solution is to convalidate their marriage without further revelation of his previous marriage with Josephine. After all, Robert has been living with Rose for seven years without any suspicion of this fact. What follows explains when and how convalidation of marriage should be done.

The nullity of a marriage may be due to the existence of a diriment impediment at the time of its celebration, or to the lack of consent in one or both contracting parties, or to the fact that marriage was not celebrated according to the canonical form required by the Church's law. The marriage of Robert and Rose was invalid because Robert had already married to Josephine in Hawaii and this marriage was still existing when Robert married Rose in the Philippines. An existing valid marriage is a diriment impediment imposed by divine law (c. 1085), hindering the valid celebration of another.

The concept of convalidation presupposes that the celebration of marriage has taken place although, due to a diriment impediment, its celebration was invalid. In the case of concubinage there is no convalidation possible, since no marriage is celebrated.

Canon 1156 considers the convalidation of a marriage which was invalid by reason of a diriment impediment existing at the time when the invalid marriage to be convalidated was celebrated. It reads as follows:

"1. To convalidate a marriage which is invalid because of a diriment impediment, it is required that the impediment ceases or be dispensed, and that at least the party aware of the impediment renews the consent.

"2. The renewal is required by ecclesiastical law for the validity of its convalidation, even if at the beginning both parties had given consent and had not afterwards withdraw it".

Two different things, necessary for the convalidation of marriage, are indicated in 1:

a) that the impediment causing the invalidity of marriage has disappeared either by cessation or by dispensation. As long as the diriment impediment exists, marriage convalidation is impossible.

b) that the matrimonial consent be renewed. Two questions can be raised regarding this renewal of matrimonial consent, namely what is to be done to convalidate the invalid marriage and how it should be done. Canon 1157 gives us the answer to the first question. It reads as follows: "The renewal of consent must be a new act of the will consenting to a valid marriage, since the renewing party is conscious that the second marriage was invalid from the beginning". It should be noted, therefore, that the renewal of marital consent is a new act of the will to contract a valid marriage. In other words, the renewal of consent, necessary to convalidate the invalid marriage, is not a ratification of the consent given when marriage was invalidly celebrated. It is a really new act of the will consenting in what will be a truly convalidated marriage. Hence, the new consent is formally and positively different from the one given when marriage was invalidly celebrated with the impediment. This means that if this new act of the will is lacking, there will be no convalidation at all and marriage will continue being null and void as before.

As to how this new act of the will should be done, canon 1158 gives us the manner how it should be elicited, as the case may be. It reads as follows:

"1. If the impediment is public, the consent is to be renewed by both parties in the canonical form..."

"2. If the impediment cannot be proven, it is sufficient that the consent be renewed privately and in secret,, specifically by the party who is aware of the impediment, provided that the other party persists in the consent given, or by both parties if the impediment is known to both".

Therefore, if the impediment, which caused the invalidity of the marriage to be convalidated is public (i.e. when it can be proven in the external forum: c.1074), both parties must renew their consent in the prescribed canonical form (c.1108). The concept of public impediment was clarified during the revision of the new Church's Code (see Comm., 10-1978-122), namely, including the possibility of being proven in the external forum (cc. 1074, 1158, 2) and the possibility of being divulged.

If the impediment is occult, i.e. it cannot be proven nor divulged, but it is only known by both parties, the renewal of the consent is -to be done by both parties privately and secretly.

If the impediment is occult and known only by the party affected by the impediment, it will be sufficient that only the party aware of the impediment renews the consent privately and in secret, as long as the other party continues in the consent given at the invalid celebration of marriage.

Hence, when the impediment is occult (i.e. known only by one or both parties), it is not necessary to do the renewal of the marital consent in the presence of the priest and two witnesses. It is enough to do it privately and in secret only, although externally.

The marriage convalidation, as described above, takes place at the precise moment the matrimonial consent is renewed. It is not, therefore, retroactive to the moment the invalid marriage was contracted. Thus, it starts as a valid marriage with all its effects only when the renewal of matrimonial consent takes place.

As we have said before, the easier and better way to solve the case of Robert is to convalidate his union with Rose by renewing privately his marital consent. There is no need to tell anybody, not even Rose whose consent still persists. He alone must now consent secretly in taking her as his lawful wife before God, and start their real and true marital life.

COMPOSURE OF THE PRIEST AT THE MASS

/ am particularly interested in knowing some of the norms or rules concerning the composure of the priest while he is celebrating the Mass, especially his composure of the eye.

A Religious Priest

At the outset of our answer to the request of our Consultant, we would like to say that we have not been able to consult any liturgical manual published after Vatican II and see what the rules are on the matter, as he wants. Since "both texts and rites" of the Holy Mass have been revised, we deem it proper to recall what former liturgists have said on the matter. Thus, it is our opinion that the norms on the composure of the priest's eyes during the Mass are the following.

1. The celebrating priest's eyes are to be momentarily raised at the following instances:

a) at the Offertory, when he raises the paten with the bread and the chalice with the wine, saying: "Blessed are You, Lord of all creation..."; b) at the beginning of the Preface, when he says: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God"; c) at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer proper, when he says: "We come to You Father..." (first Eucharistic Prayer), "Lord (Father), You are Holy indeed..." (2nd and 3rd), "Father, we acknowledge Your greatness..." (4th); d) before the Consecration, when he says: "He took bread...", "He took the cup..."; e) at the end of the Mass, when he blesses the Congregation, saying: "May the almighty God bless you..."

2. The celebrating priest raises his eyes steadily at the Holy Sacrament:

a) when he elevates and shows the consecrated Host and chalice with the Sanguis to the people after the Consecration; b) when, taking the paten with the Host and the chalice, he lifts them up and says: "Through Him, with Him, in Him..."; c) when, raising the Host over the paten "This is the Lamb of God..."

3. During the commemoration of the dead, the "Our Father" and the three prayers to be said before the Holy Communion, the priest's eyes should be fixed at the Sacred Species upon the altar, unless he needs to look at the Missal.'

4. The priest's eyes should be kept low when he enters the sanctuary to begin the Mass and when he returns to the sacristy after the Mass is ended.

Obviously, the recollection and devotion of the celebration priest should be reflected and seen in the composure of his eyes. They should be fixed on what is done during the Mass.

Allow' me to say again that, having not been able to consult any liturgical manual dealing with this matter after the liturgical renewal, we have to rely on what former liturgists have said before Vatican n. We would be grateful indeed if any of our readers offers us more updated information on this matter.

Message for Lent 1996

JOHN PAUL II

"Give them something to eat" (Mt 14:16)

1. The Lord is once again calling us to journey with Him this Lent to respond anew to our baptismal vocation and to bear fruits of conversion. This is a journey which inspires penance and renews our commitment to follow the Gospel. It is also a journey of love which opens our hearts to our brothers and sisters in order to live and radiate charity, a demand of the law of God. Each day we encounter people who are hungry, thirsty or sick, people who are outcasts or migrants. We are called to pay greater heed to the suffering written on their faces that challenge us to acknowledge poverty that continues in our time.

2. The Gospel is clear that the Redeemer is compassionate especially to those in difficulty. He speaks to them of the Kingdom of God and heals their body and spirit. He tells his disciples, "Give them something to eat" even when they only have five loaves of bread and two fish. Our resources today are limited to meet the needs of eight hundred million hungry and malnourished as we approach the Year 2000. What can we do? Do we remain silent and helpless about the situation of these starving people - children, women, the elderly, immigrants, refugees, the unemployed? They implore us with their cry of suffering, hoping to be heard. How can we not open our ears and our hearts and make available the five loaves and two fish that the Lord has put into our hands? This requires sacrifices, which call for a deep inner conversion. Certainly it will involve changing

our exaggerated consumeristic behaviour, combating hedonism, resisting attitudes of indifference and the tendency to disregard our personal responsibilities.

3. Hunger is a great tragedy afflicting humanity and all concerned need to fight against it by narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. The earth has the resources to feed all humanity and this could be done by turning to the Gospel way of sharing, fairness, justice and solidarity.

4. Even as we witness the destruction of products necessary for human life, we still find long lines of people waiting for food and some resort to being scavengers. As we note these profound contradictions, how can our hearts fail to rebel against them and be moved to Christian charity? Authentic Christian solidarity, is not a passing feeling, it has to be a fundamental personal attitude. A process of consciousness raising involving the whole of society is needed. The Catholic Church has to work in full cooperation with other religious denominations in this fundamental work of human promotion and of fraternal sharing that involves the participation of the poor themselves.

5. Dear Brothers and Sisters! I entrust to you these Lenten reflections, to ponder on these as individuals and as a community under the guidance of your Pastors. I urge you to take significant practical steps to multiply the few loaves and fish at our disposal. This will be our way to address hunger and will thus be an authentic way of living out Lent, a season of conversion and reconciliation.

As you carry out these demanding resolutions, I impart my Apostolic blessings. May the Lord grant us the grace to set out generously, in prayer and penance, on the path towards the celebration of Easter.

Joannes Paulus PP II

Statement of the Lahar Victims of the Mt. Pinatubo Eruption

CBCP

Dear People of God;

Mt. Pinatubo erupted in 1991. Year after year since then, with each rainy season, the lahar spewed by the volcano has continued to cascade down the mountain sides. A number of barrios have already been lost, totally covered by the still unmitigated flow of lahar.

Now the historic town of Bacolor threatens to disappear completely, and in the years to come, unless the flow stops-or is somehow brought under control other towns of Zambales and Tarlac, of Pampanga especially, will also go under.

These last four years have been a time of unallowed suffering for the people affected by the recurring disaster that is Mt. Pinatubo. But always-and firmly-they have held on to a hope that their suffering will come to an end, their once flourishing land spared further devastation.

With this year's ravaging floods-fresh flows of lahar relentlessly piling up on past deposits in an ever rising tide-the people who live along the Pasig-Potrero river are now being forced to the bleak realization that they will have to hang their hope on something other than the final cessation of the lahar flow. Already they are beginning, however reluctantly, to look elsewhere for their salvation.

We, their brothers and sisters in the more fortunate parts of the islands, have to be, simply because we are Christians, part of their salvation. In the years to come, even now in fact, they will need our helping hand more than ever-our support, our sympathy, our concern.

All that let us give to them in generous measure. Let us share with them whatever we can of the blessings we ourselves have received from the hands of our compassionate Father in Heaven. Let us be in solidarity with them as the Holy Father himself has shown himself to be in the help he has extended to them as they continue to suffer and to strive for a better future for themselves and their children.

Towards this end, we are asking our diocesan Social Action Centers to put themselves and their facilities at the disposal of you, the People of God.

The Lord's merciful love be with you always.

For the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of the Philippines,

MOST REV. OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D.
CBCP President
December 1, 1995

Statement on the Proposed Magna Carta of Students

CBCP

"Where the Spirit of the Lord, is, there is freedom" (2 Co 3:17).

For the growth of the people of God and of society, education plays an absolutely vital and indispensable role. This is why the Church is deeply and extensively involved in education. And we are proud that Catholic schools are among the best in the country.

But today the future of our schools is at stake. Their nature as private and Catholic and even their very existence are seriously threatened.

The source of this grave threat is the proposed Magna Carta of Students, House Bill No. 1378.

Let it be clear to all that we as Bishops on many occasions, especially during Martial Law, the darkest period of our recent history, have defended and promoted basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. We still continue to do so.

Therefore, we are certainly for a Magna Carta of Students for we are for the authentic empowerment of youth, including students. But we are unequivocally against the proposed Magna Carta in its present form. We strongly oppose it by virtue of those same basic freedoms and rights that we have consistently defended.

Our reflection in faith affirms that the most fundamental freedom of the human person is a gift of the Spirit of the Lord. We believe that 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'

But we hold that this proposed Magna Carta, instead of being infused with God's Spirit, stifles that same Spirit by its negation of basic rights and its dismissal of wisdom and common sense. This is the fundamental reason for our opposition.

1. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it rejects the "natural and primary right of parents" to educate their children as guaranteed by our Constitution, Art. H, Section 121. Parents entrust their children to school authorities and teachers, but the bill effectively negates this by practically allowing student governments to run the schools.

2. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it undermines the religious nature of our schools. For the bill allows any organization - including those that contradict the school's philosophy, mission, and objectives-to operate on campus.

3. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it destroys the very nature of private schools. The proposed bill treats private schools as though they were public schools and properties of the State. It utterly disregards the basic philosophy, mission, goals, and objectives of Catholic private schools and makes the confiscatory move of assigning a seat in the governing boards to a student.

4. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it disregards common sense principles of governance. It practically hands over to the students government, already subject to the changing, even ideological, currents of student politics, control of the school by giving the students the power to veto through a referendum the decisions made by administration. It likewise transfers from the school administration to the student government, a body again subject to the vagaries of student politics, the authority to approve and supervise student organizations.

5. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it subverts simple and tried wisdom by undermining the financial stability of the school and the authority of the governing board. The proposed bill establishes a school fee board where students are represented, a board that becomes the highest body in the school on the matter of tuition fees,

thus creating two parallel and independent "highest" bodies in the same school, namely the school governing board and the school fee board.

6. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because it imposes on schools a false philosophy of education which promotes unwarranted freedom and right at the expense of human responsibility, of a morally guided search for truth, of the spirit of mutual cooperation, and finally at the expense of quality education itself.

7. God's Spirit is not in this proposed Magna Carta because by laying aside the religious Catholic goals and objectives of our schools, the proposed bill thwarts the ultimate good of students themselves in the name of a false understanding of freedom and right.

For such reasons as the above, we vigorously oppose the proposed Magna Carta of Students.

As Bishops we have been entrusted by the Lord to teach on matters that affect the living of Christian freedom and responsibility in accord with the Spirit of God. We hereby teach and declare that the proposed bill is inimical to true freedom and responsibility.

We, therefore, urge legislators to listen to the voice of parents and teachers all over the country regarding this insidious bill. They have submitted many proposals to our legislators to improve the bill and promote authentic empowerment of students. Approving the bill in its present form would surely be catastrophic to the nature and very existence of all private schools, Catholic or otherwise, and to the good of students themselves.

Ultimately, by ignoring the rights of parents and of private schools, the proposed Magna Carta is contrary to the very aim of national development itself, namely, the common good of all.

To our honorable legislators then we say: *Reject this proposed Magna Carta.* Legislate a better one, based on a true concept of freedom and right, in accord with the Spirit of God. Where the Spirit is present, there, indeed, is true and responsible freedom.

For and in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines:

+OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D.
Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan
President, CBCP

January 27, 1996

Development-The Fruit of Justice and Peace (on the Expanded Value Added Tax, Gambling and Criminality)

CBCP

Beloved People of God:

At our most recent meeting (January 24-29) we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). Our Conference started as the Catholic Welfare Organization 50 years ago, after the end of World War n, to respond to the devastation wrought by the war. It was born out of a desire to give a concerned Church response to the bad plight of our people.

Since then, the CBCP has continued in the tradition of giving a ready Christian response to our people's needs and sufferings resulting from natural and man-made disasters. Or so at least we feel we have tried to do, with God's Grace.

The grateful recalling of past graces and of CBCP history has clearly shown us that from the simple charitable work of meeting the immediate welfare needs of people, our pastoral teaching and work in the social field have gone beyond welfare to development, justice and peace. All for the sake of social renewal in the light of our faith in the Lord Jesus and His Gospel.

From such a pastoral perspective we continue to examine how political, economic, social and cultural events contribute to the total well being of people, build them up, or destroy them.

Hence, our concern for the burning issues of the day such as EVAT, rampant organized gambling, rising criminality, and anti-terrorism bills. And in our examination of these specific individual issues, we see an underlying common thread. They are all issues of development, justice and peace that in one way or another, positively or negatively, affect the common good of all.

Development, Justice and Peace

By development we mean the development of every person and of the whole person, of all people, especially the poor by reason of the evangelical option for the poor. (cf. *Lk* 6:18) Several UN "Decades of Development" have come and gone, and still we witness increasing poverty and the widening of the gap between rich and poor.

The causes can be analyzed to death. Often we hear the facile attribution of our situation of poverty and underdevelopment to the many natural disasters that we have suffered and continue to suffer. They do have something to do with our poverty. But we cannot ignore the part human responsibility plays, (cf. *Am* 1:6) The unrestrained polluting of air and water resources through power plants and factories and the abusive exploitation of our natural resources through, for instance, irresponsible mining and logging, geothermal plants and dams, etc. continue unabated in many parts of our country, slowly destroying for the sake of short term financial gains for the few and powerful elite the very life system of our environment: We live under a social structure in which graft and corruption have been deeply inbedded.

Our impoverishment, we see, are due to many factors. But greed for power and wealth is today, more than ever it seems, the greatest contributing factor. It has led to the worsened deprivation of many, to the exodus of men and women in quest of work abroad, to the gaining of easy money through criminality and exploitive vice.

More than ever, we are keenly aware that criminality and development are antithetical, and so are poverty on the one hand, and justice and peace on the other. There is an intimate linkage between the one and the other. The enduring solution to criminality and vice is thus not simply the imposition of quick justice, sadly lacking as it is, but more basically the genuine equitable development of every person in civil society. The ultimate solution to poverty is not simply economic development but even

more basically, justice and peace-justice to address the inequitable structures of society which beget poverty; peace to provide the conditions under which we can work out our development. On justice and peace, then, true human development is based. From justice and peace, development is begotten.

And it is good to recall here what the Holy Father said at Malacañang at his first visit to the Philippines in 1981, namely, that governments cannot sacrifice the human rights of its citizens in the name of economic development.

This deeper perspective of today's social and economic issues compounds our concern about the directions that economic development is taking in our country and the roles that the various branches of our government are playing, whether collaborative or antagonistic vis-a-vis one another. Their roles must be based firstly and firmly on the good of all and not on allegiances or alliances for self-interest, and certainly not on political grandstanding.

In this perspective, we direct our attention and teaching to some burning issues that vex our people today.

The Expanded Value Added Tax.

It is claimed that the Expanded Value Added Tax (EVAT) serves as one component of a package of economic reforms in order, for instance, to restructure our tax system for the sake, of the poor, to bridge the gap between rich and poor, to lighten the burden of the poor by having the rich carry a heavier one, to close the windows of opportunity for graft and corruption, and thus to promote the development of our people.

Clearly the objectives are laudable. But likewise clearly, too many aspects of EVAT are regressive and thus, far from lightening the burden of the poor, EVAT seems to strengthen the bias of the tax structure against the poor. We cannot close our eyes to the domino effect of price increases caused by EVAT.

Many enlightened people can surely see some progressive aspects of EVAT. We do not contest such perception. But we deplore the failure of properly educating our people regarding EVAT, its chaotic unguided implementation without the proper safeguard against abuse. We are moreover concerned about the deeper question that perhaps EVAT may

not be the tax reform measure that it is claimed to be, even as economists and technocrats, professionals and peasants debate about it

Therefore, in the light of the economic unrest and confusion that EVAT has created and on the basis of our own pastoral perspective regarding development, justice and peace we propose the following:

1. That abuses in the pricing of goods resulting from the first attempts at implementing EVAT be more expeditiously corrected;
2. That the implementation of EVAT be deferred for at least another year,
3. That the provisions that are anti-poor be struck out;
4. That widespread education all the way to the grassroots regarding the nature and the implementation of EVAT by systematically and adequately conducted;
5. That, failing the introduction of necessary amendments on behalf of the poor, the EVAT be repealed, and a more just tax structure be established after consultation with different sectors of our society; and
6. That the collection of taxes be more rigorous, the moneys collected spent with greater transparency.

Organized Rampant Gambling

True human development requires the development of authentic human values. This truth has something to say to the current debate about lotto and casinos and the investigation, apparently and sadly waning, of gambling lords.

In our Filipino context, we as Pastors cannot but strongly reprobate the circumstances and even the motives by which rampant, illegal organized gambling, such as *jueteng*, is operated, maintained and protected.

Such gambling in whatever form is immoral, given our particular socio-economic, cultural and religious situation. Its very illegality breeds corruption among officials, police, and military officers, the manner and frequency of illegal gambling systematically fleece the poor of hard earned money, so necessary for their families, feeding as it does, on the penchant

of the Filipino for risk-taking, often irrational, on the basis of *swerte* or of *bahala ha*, and resulting in the loss of money for the greatest majority of gamblers.

Without doubt rampant illegal gambling is but one manifestation of organized criminality, opened by syndicates, ending up in the corruption of many and the loss of incredible amounts of personal and public money.

Many attempts are being made to legalize all forms of gambling, even as lotto and casinos are legal. But again for us as pastors, given the fatal lure of gambling to the Filipino psyche, the legalization of organized gambling in order to raise funds, even for development, is a form of *demoralization* - the gradual erosion of moral values necessary to a development-oriented work ethics, such as diligence and industry, accountability and transparency.

The poor and the needy are victimized the most. They are often the most prone to gambling addiction, as the deadly attraction of easy and quick riches beckons them to disaster. Therefore, the legalization and proliferation of gambling establishments are nothing more than an abject surrender to a morally debilitating vice.

For reasons like the above we strongly oppose rampant gambling, be it legal or illegal. Our development as a people is not merely economic. It has to be more. It must be moral and spiritual as well. We therefore, strongly urge that the investigations now going on against gambling lords be pursued relentlessly until these are brought to justice and the complicity of government officials, police and military officers be brought out into the open and punished.

On Rising Criminality and the Anti-Terrorism Bill

It is absolutely impossible for justice, peace and development to flourish in a climate of violence and criminality. But daily through mass media we learn of killings and robberies, kidnappings and rapes, and of many other crimes. In our country human life seems to cheap. The dignity of the human person is violated easily and wantonly - although, it must be said, criminality is not on the rise everywhere: In the countryside, more than not, lawlessness is by no means the norm.

More alarming than the increase in crimes in the urban areas is the apparent incapacity of government authorities to prevent them or to punish the perpetrators. And worse, we read newspaper stories reporting that, not infrequently, the supposed guardians of the law are themselves the criminals.

To deter and detect crime, our legislators have proposed various bills. Doubtless their intentions are laudable-at face value. But we strongly reject proposed provisions that threaten the basic liberties of our people such as tapping wire and cable communications, prying into bank deposits and financial papers, arresting and detaining people without any warrant-all on the basis of suspected terrorist intent or of committed crime.

Such measures give the distinct impression that the very means supposedly intended to curb terrorism will be used to terrorize citizens themselves or curtail legitimate dissent.

Instead of such measures, laws already in place against criminality need only be faithfully and rigorously implemented, without fear or favor. We further urgently require:

1. The proper coordination of all government agencies in the war against crime and criminals;
2. The swift but just resolution of cases of crime by our courts of justice-which themselves must be above suspicion of collusion with or leniency towards crime lords;
3. The speedy removal of notorious violators of human and civil rights from the ranks of the police and military;
4. The strict and thorough screening of applicants to the police force and the military and their continuing value formation;
5. The provision of sufficient personnel and material resources to all government agencies involved in the prevention and punishment of crimes;
6. The solid cooperation of all the citizenry and of all media of social communication in the campaign against crime; and
7. The ban on the bearing of firearms in public by persons other than accredited officers of the law and army personnel be enforced.

In all these we must have recourse to prayer: for the protection and guidance of the Lord, for the conversion of criminals, for the courage to speak up and be counted toward the prosecution of crimes, for the reign of justice and peace. We pray that the Word of the Lord may make progress and be hailed by many others; for it is the Lord who will strengthen us and guard us against all evil. (cf. 2 *Th* 3:1-3).

Conclusion

As the CBCP celebrates its 50th anniversary, we have become more than ever aware of our country's poverty and underdevelopment, the great imbalances in its economic and political structures, the negative aspects of our culture that reinforce and highlight the dark shadows of our landscape.

Our need as a people is not only for development, justice, and peace in the economic and political fields. These, admittedly, are absolutely imperative. But at the very origin, center and apex of true development is a religious and spiritual dimension. For there is no true human progress when there is no spiritual development, (cf. *Am* 6:4-6) This is a non-negotiable dimension.

This is why, in the context of the day's burning economic and social issues, we have to point out what we have already recommended in 1991 at the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II)-the need for all of us to have a eucharistic spirituality. For it is Jesus in the Eucharist who exemplifies for us what it means to give life, to promote and develop life-and have it abundantly, (cf. *Jn* 10:10) It is by eucharistic acts of loving and serving, of sharing and self-offering, generously and unselfishly, that true human development can be achieved, that justice and peace can reign. In a certain sense then we can say that the fruit of the Eucharist is development, justice and peace.

As we thank the Lord for 50 years of CBCP service, we ask you to be in solidarity with us: that we may respond to the critical challenge of development in our society with courage and wisdom; that we may face the mystery of God's future-which is also ours-with hope and trust in his justice, love and peace.

Trusting in the powerful intercession of Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, to help us in our common striving for the good of our people

and nation, we end with her exultant hymn of gratitude: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior for He has done great things for me." (*Lk* 1:46-49)

For and in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

+ OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D.
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ARCHDIOCESE OF NUEVA CACERES

Pontifical Bull

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI dilecto filio Emmanueli de los Santos, sacerdoti archdiocesis Cacerenais at que curioni paroeciae sancti Antonii loco Irriga, electo Episcopo Viracensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum aptum sacrorum Antistitem tradere velimus cathedrali ecclesiae Viracensi, vacanti post translationem Venerabilis Fratris Josephi Sorra ad aliam sedem, mentem Nostram ad Te, dilecte fili, convertimus; in Te enim virtutes animi ingenilique idoneae inspiciuntur rerumque pastoralium usus ad Episcopis, te nominamus diocesis Viracensis Episcopum, debitis datis iuribus congrisque impositis obligationibus. Fidei professionem rite absolves atque fidelitatis erga Nos Nostrosque Successores ius iurandum nuncupabis ad statutae formulas, quas de more signatas sigilloque impressas ad Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes; ordinationem tandem episcopalem ubivis accipies, servatis praescriptionibus liturgicis. Volumus insuper ut.hae Litterae Nostrae clero ac populo in cathedrali templo diocesis Viracensis publice legantur. Quos dliectos filios paterne hortamur, ut te libenti animo accipiant atque pareant tuis mandatis Christi nomine et auctoritate datis. Te ipsum, dilecte Fili, peculiaribus precibus prosequimur, ut Dominus noster te confirmet in omni opere et sermone bono, Cfr. 2 thess 2, 16-17. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duodecimo mensis Augusti, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo nonagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri decimo sexto.

Joannes Paulus n

Franciscus Chiaurri, Proton. Apost.

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MOST REV. MANOLO A. DE LOS SANTOS, D.D.



MOST REV. HONESTO C. PACANA, D.D.

Curriculum Vitae

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Ordained Bishop of Malaybalay and Installation: March 24, 1994, San Isidro Cathedral, Malaybalay

The Eucharist in the Life of the Priest

PEDRO G. TEJERO, O.P.

Vatican II, in the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, states emphatically that priests should achieve Christian perfection by means of the sacred functions they perform in their apostolic ministry. Three special functions are pointed out by Vatican II, namely: a) the preaching of the Word of God; b) the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; and c) the pastoral care of the People of God.

The following reflections center mainly on the celebration of the Holy Eucharist which is the first and foremost function of the priest. As Vatican II says: "The Eucharist shows itself to be the source and the apex (*"fons et culmen"*) of the whole work of preaching" (n. 5). The entire action of the priestly activity, therefore, flows mightily from the Eucharistic Sacrifice, "the root and center" of all priestly spirituality. In consonance with this, the priest must celebrate the Holy Eucharist as the work and action of our redemption. If in the case that no faithful are present, even then the Eucharist should be offered as the action of Christ and of his Church.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist marks the most solemn and profound moment in the life of the priest. United, then, with Christ, the head and source of all priesthood, the minister should feel, in the very depths of his whole being, his absolute dependence on and support from Christ.

The re-enactment of the sacrifice of Jesus on Mount Calvary by means of the Eucharist brings home the thought that the priest should likewise accept his own cross in the total commitment to the service of others. The Eucharist is a constant reminder of the life of the priest that he is a sign of unity and charity for the community he presides. In no way is he allowed to create conflicts, disobedience and disunity.

St. Thomas Aquinas writing on the various effects of the Eucharist on man, underscores the fact that all men, including the priests, are on a constant process of deterioration and waste in regard to their spiritual lives. The Eucharist has among its purposes to restore the damage suffered in the soul, and to confer to it new vigor and strength.

Similar considerations could be made in regard to the celebration of the other sacraments. When a priest, acting in the person of Christ, baptizes or hears confessions, he is not doing those functions on his own accord or power. These sacramental operations are done by him being an instrument of Christ. Because of Christ he is able to perform the tremendous realities of curing the souls from the would of sin and conferring the divine grace. At this point the only attitude for the priest is to be humble and docile to the plans of God.

Experience shows that in some cases the priests are afflicted by routine and lack of sensitivity to the supernatural mysteries they perform. This is a lamentable situation. The faithful can hardly understand why the sacraments are to be celebrated mechanically, like robots, without response to the sacredness of what is being done. In this case, the priest has lost the idea that he is the instrument in the hands of Christ. God only knows how much damage is done to the People of God because of this attitude.

It follows necessarily that the life of the priest ought to be in a constant mood of renewal and reconstruction. That explains why the Church is recommending updating in doctrinal formation, annual retreats, frequent reception of the sacrament of penance, faithful recitation of the Divine Office, mental meditation, friendship with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and loving devotion to Virgin Mary.

We conclude with these words of Cardinal Suhard: "If the priest is not a contemplative, he turns to be an actor raising his voice and moving his hands to call the attention of the people."

Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers

May-June 1996

by FR. EFREN O. RIVERA, O.P.

May 5, 1996

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, Cycle A

JOHN 14:1-12 I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Four weeks have passed since Easter and Christ's Ascension is now just two weeks away. For this reason the Liturgy, using John 14:1-12 as the Gospel Reading, recalls how Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure, in the biblical context, a) this departure comprises his death and resurrection as well as his ascension; and b) it is not a total departure because in a very real way Jesus will remain with his disciples. Jesus in fact ended his earthly life through his death on the cross, but through his resurrection - which was not a return to earthly life but the inauguration of his glorious life - he was empowered to remain "mysteriously" with his disciples unto the end of time. The time between the resurrection and the ascension was still part of Christ's mission on earth, and through his appearances he did not yet totally withdraw his visible presence. This, however, is what will be taken away by the ascension.

Focus Points. (1) Verse 1. Jesus urges his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled. For them to have peace in their hearts he recommends that they have faith not only in God but also in himself.

(2) Verse 2. Jesus is going to heaven, his Father's house. Once there, a) he will prepare "rooms" for his disciples (verse 3) and b) he will empower them to do "greater works" than he himself had done on earth (see verse 12)

(3) Verse 6. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. When we know him, we know the Father (verse 7) because Jesus is the Father's terrestrial dwelling place (see verse 10-11).

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. We live in troubled times, but as Christians we must believe that the Prince of Peace has already come to us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. If our faith in him is authentic, we will, as the poem "Desiderata" says, "go placidly" amid the strife and noise and haste of people who make this world their home.

How do we make sure our faith in Jesus Christ is authentic? We must believe, as a song says, that "he has the whole world in his hands." As Filipinos, we should look at the Sto. Niflo and see that indeed, the whole world is in his hand.

He who believes in Jesus will not only have a peaceful heart. He will, in addition, a) be able to do the works Jesus does and b) will be able to do even greater works because Jesus, having gone to his Father in heaven, will empower his disciples.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Recall a time in your life when your union with Christ gave you much peace while others were troubled.

2. Just as Jesus, the Father's "terrestrial abode" while he was on earth, is not a place, *heaven is also not a place but a perfect life not enjoyed by anyone bound by earthly limitations.* The "rooms" Jesus will prepare for his disciples are not made of some kind of floor, walls and roof. They are varying degrees of bliss to be granted to each disciple.

Possibly, the degree of bliss a disciple will attain in heaven will correspond to one's actualization of the "empowerment" to do the "works" Jesus wants his disciples to do in his name here on earth.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing To be able to avail of the "rooms" Jesus has prepared for us, we must first actualize the "empowerment" he has granted to us. Such empowerment can take the form of victory over anger, hatred, sexual immorality, drug abuse, alcoholism, use of tobacco, gambling, etc. Can you share an experience along this line?

3. The "way" to the Father is not some kind of doctrine like Gnosticism or some kind of philosophy or ideology, nor is it a method of keeping oneself physically fit, or of prayer or of Bible study, nor is it a form of devotion or apostolate. Much less is it some kind of popular movement or association. *The Way to the Father is Jesus.* To travel on this way, locomotion is not needed. But one needs to *know, love and obey Jesus more and more each day.*

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. Have you ever neglected cultivating a personal relationship with Jesus and instead became too involved in an ideology, a method of prayer or Bible study, a devotion, apostolate, movement, or association?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? Sharing, in group dynamics, is a revelation of oneself to a trustworthy small group. We see this in Jn 14:1-12. Jesus reveals himself as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and as the Father's abode on earth. The disciples to whom he reveals himself form an intimate group of friends who are not afraid to ask him questions. We must strive to make our Basic Ecclesial Community or our Small Group more and more like the "community of disciples" centered on Jesus at the Cenacle after the Last Supper.

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? Our pericope shows how Jesus cared for the spiritual needs of his disciples. First, they needed to cast off anxiety from their hearts. Responding to this need, Jesus urges them to have faith in him and he promises to always care for them. Moreover, their lack of understanding about his teachings needed to be remedied. Jesus therefore uses plain language for his self-revelation. Each of us is bound to show to others the caring that Jesus has shown to us.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? Jesus affirmed his disciples a) by implying that each of them is worthy of a room in his Father's house, and b) by openly telling them that they will be able to do the works he has been doing, and indeed "greater works." Do we see the worth of our sisters and brothers as heirs of heaven? In particular, husbands should remember the prayer made during the nuptial blessing of the marriage ceremony (immediately after the Our Father): "may her husband put his trust in her and recognize that she is the equal and the heir with him to the life of grace."

4. FORGIVENESS. Jesus forgave Thomas and Philip for not understanding his teaching.

5. THE GOOD NEWS. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

C. STORY: FOLLOW THE WAY

A teenaged boy was going to the basketball game with his uncle, who was a wise, aging parish priest taking his vacation at the boy's home in the province. The game was to take place in the town plaza, which was not very far from the boy's house. The priest thought it would be a good exercise to walk. The boy struck a conversation with his uncle, and he thought it was his opportunity to voice out a problem he and his classmates were discussing in school.

"Father," the boy said, "a fellow like me hates to have a 'shall' and 'shall not' flung at him everywhere he turns. There is no freedom in this."

The priest did not say a word. Shortly, they came to a signpost pointing the way to the plaza. The priest ignored the sign. The boy exclaimed, "We're going the wrong way! You missed the sign back there, Father."

The priest calmly replied, "I saw the sign all right, but I thought this looked like a better road, and I hate to be told to go this way and that way by an old signpost. It doesn't give me much freedom of action."

The boy got the point, and he and his uncle turned around to follow the way to the plaza.

May 12,1996

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, Cycle A

JOHN 14:15-21 A NOTHER ADVOCATE FOR THE DISCIPLES

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. This Sunday immediately precedes the Feast of the Ascension and the Gospel Reading is continuation of the Cenacle Discourse used last Sunday. Its use is most appropriate because it touches on the giving of "another Advocate" to help the disciples - a theme to be taken up on Pentecost - and it also reaches about the indwelling of the Trinity in the believer - a theme to be taken up three Sundays from now.

Focus Points. (1) Verses 15 and 21. Jesus clearly teaches the close connection between love and obedience. (2) Then he promises to give the disciples "another Advocate," verses 16-17). (3) Finally he says that he will not leave his disciples "orphans" but will come back to live in them, bringing with him the Father and the other Advocate, verses 18-20.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. the love that Jesus wants us to have for him is not a kind of "romantic love" but the love for a Teacher whose teaching and example we have adopted as our way of life, and for a Master who has served us and whom we now want to serve in return. To be able to obey Jesus Christ, we must first have the spiritual strength that comes from the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and *Lave*.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Many people make the mistake of trying to obey the commandments before learning to love Jesus Christ. Maybe in the past you yourself made this mistake. Then you learned to love Jesus and it became easy for you to obey. For example, there was a couple that was not too rich nor to poor either. They were struggling to make ends meet. They already had one child and wanted to wait for about five

years before having another. But after one year the wife got pregnant again. They want to abort the baby, but someone advised them to take a Marriage Encounter Seminar first. After the Seminar, where they learned to love Jesus, they decided not to abort the baby but to make sacrifices for its sake and for love of Jesus. Maybe you have a similar experience. Share it with your small group.

2. No matter how much we love Jesus, sometimes this love is not enough for us to fight a hostile world that constantly tells us lies. For example, so many lies are being told about population control and about the advantages of divorce, no inhibition in sex, pornography, euthanasia, etc. To resist these lies and triumph over their evil effects, ***we need the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.***

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. To rich countries of Europe and America wasnt to perpetuate their dominance over the emerging countries of the "Third World," and some organizations in these countries spend millions of dollars to "keep the Third World people in their place" lest they gain ascendancy. For this reason so many lies are being propagated as absolute truth about population control, economics, racism, modern technology, etc. Maybe in the past you were also fooled by such lies, but you were eventually enlightened. For example, some people claim that during the first three months of pregnancy, the fetus is not yet truly human. This was countered by a video documentary entitled, "The Silent Scream." Besides, as the Pope argues, if the fertilized human ovum is not yet human, where will its humanity come from? Perhaps you have some experiences along these lines worth sharing with others.

3. The treatise on the Trinity is one of the most profound theological concerns. However, from the beginning of Christianity, it was already perceived that, *substantially*, the Father and the Son are equal, and the same is true of the Holy Spirit. Later, the medieval scholastics said that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit differ in their *internal relationships* but all the three persons are involved in external actions like creation and indwelling in people.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. Spiritual life becomes profound when one realizes that the whole blessed Trinity dwells in one's being as in a Temple. Perhaps you have experiences about progress in the spiritual life due to your awareness of being a Temple of the Most Holy Trinity.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* The Most Holy Trinity share divine life with us because we are disciples of Jesus Christ. This indeed is a most enriching form of sharing. In a Christian Community, we should aim not only to share goods, ideas and experiences, but in the measure attainable, also to share life. Think of how it can be done.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Being present to people is one of the most important forms of caring. Jesus taught this to us by his words and his example. He has not left us orphans, he is with us. We, too, must try our very best to be present to one another as much as we can.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* The Holy Spirit is our Advocate because he is our Affirmator. With his help we should affirm one another, especially in the pursuit of Truth.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* In John 14:15-21 we find promises of favors that Jesus will give his disciples after his resurrection, he makes these promises although he knows that his disciples will abandon him in his hour of trial. It is therefore implied that he will forgive them their cowardice. This attitude of forgiving even before a shortcoming is manifested, is a greater pillar of community that we must try to develop.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* Jesus has not left us orphans. He has come to dwell in us, bringing with him the Father and "another Advocate."

C. STORY: ST DOMINIC'S LEGACY

Dominicans have a beautiful prayer addressed to their Founder, St. Dominic, entitled "*O Spent Miram*" (*O Marvelous Hope*). It recalls the time when St. Dominic was dying and his brethren were weeping because of their imminent loss of their beloved leader. Mustering his remaining strength, Dominic said, "Don't weep for me, brothers. I will be of greater help to you after my death than ever before." The prayer asks St. Dominic to fulfill his promise.

History has shown that St. Dominic has been answering the prayer of his followers. The Dominicans have flourished more after Dominic's death than during his lifetime. As missionaries they evangelized more peoples than Dominic, the preacher, ever dreamed of. As Theologians,

Philosophers and Canon Lawyers, they occupied leading positions in the universities of Europe within a century after his death. St. Dominic himself refused to become a Bishop, but from among his sons we have holy bishops like St. Albert the Great of Saxony, St. Antoninus of Florence, and the missionary bishop who was martyred in Viet Nam, St. Sanjurjo.

The Pope of the Rosary, St. Pius V, was a Dominican, and it was especially because of his approval that the rosary devotion, attributed to St. Dominic, was propagated throughout the world and continues to be a favorite until now.

May 19, 1996

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION, Cycle A

MATTHEW 28:16-20 ALL AUTHORITY
HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Although the text does not tell us about the ascension of Christ in the same way as Lk 24:50-51, Acts 1:9 and Mk 16:19 do, it is most appropriate for the liturgical feast. The ascension is not just the cessation of Christ's visible presence on earth but, more profoundly, the "sitting" of Christ "at the right hand of God" (Mk 16:19). In non-figurative terms this is expressed in Mt 28:18 thus: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Focus Points. (1) Verse 16-17 describe the post-resurrectional but pre-pentecostal situation of the disciples. They "worship" Christ in a physical way by prostrating themselves before him. Their "doubt" (v. 17b), however, is a sign that this is not yet the "worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23) that will be made possible by the coming of the Holy Spirit. (2) The profound meaning of Christ's ascension is that "all power in heaven and on earth" has been given to Jesus, head of the new human race, and the disciples are commissioned to exercise this power until Jesus comes again (v. 18-20a). The commissioning is done through words spoken by Jesus. We have here something akin to the words which, in scholastic sacramentology, constitute the "form" or animating force of sacrament. In a sense, by these words *Jesus makes the Church - his disciples - the "Sacrament of his continuing mission in the world.* (3) Verse 20b. While

the Lucan tradition of the ascension focuses our attention to the end of Jesus' visible presence on earth, Matthew underlines Jesus' abiding presence in the world through his disciples "until the end of time" when he will come again.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. Some religions and sects venerate Christ but fall short of recognizing him as Savior and Lord, the "Son" equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit in whose name people are to be baptized. They are like the disciples who physically prostrated themselves before Christ and yet "doubted" in their hearts.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. As long as people think of Christ merely as a Sto. Nino who will help bring more money to one's business, or as a Jesus Nazareno who will solve some pressing problems, they are in the same situation as the post resurrectional but pre-pentecostal disciples. Were you like this before? What helped you get into a more personal relationship with Christ and recognize him as the Lord of your life. If you share such a conversion, maybe you can help other people get converted too.

2. Post-Vatican II theologians tell us that aside from the Seven Sacraments, there are other "*Sacraments*" in the Christian religion. The most foundational or basic sacrament is *Jesus Christ himself* since, through his *Incarnation* he made God visibly present to all men and has therefore helped them attain salvation more easily. At a higher level in the sacramental pyramid is *the Church - the community of disciples that Christ founded*. After Christ's ascension, they take his place in making it easier for people to attain salvation. Christ commanded them to do three things: (a) to make disciples of all nations, b) to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and c) to teach (baptized people) to observe all that he has commanded. Only at the top of the pyramid do we have the Seven Sacraments which are rites or ceremonies that empower people to live by the teachings of Christ and thereby keep themselves united to him.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing Have you ever thought of yourself as a "sacrament" for making Christ present to other people and making it easier for them to be saved? This is true for all Christians, but in a special way it is applicable to people in a position of authority. A matron, for example, can see to it that the household help get a truly Christian formation. A Manager can set aside some time for the employees to do a weekly Bible study.

3. Most Catholics spontaneously think of Christ's presence - identified with the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist - as something to be adored or enjoyed as a reward for being good or at least for making a visit to the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel. However, in the Bible, God assures people of his abiding presence when he commands them to do something in his name. This presence, then, is an *empowering presence*. It is the kind of presence Jesus promises as his gift to his disciples until he comes again.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing Have you ever experienced doing something because you were convinced that "God is with me," and this led to very good results? Why not share this experience?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* Jesus Christ shared his "Vision - Mission" with his disciples. Let us participate in this sharing.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Christ's caring for his disciples led him to promise them that he will be with them until the end of time. If we really care for our sisters and brothers in the community, we will try to be with them as much as we can. And we will see to it that our presence is that kind of presence that empowers people.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* By commissioning his disciples, Christ affirmed them as people worthy of his trust. Let us also affirm our sisters and brothers by delegating important matters to them.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* Although the disciples "doubted" Jesus went ahead to give them a great and delicate responsibility. It is implied that he forgave and healed their doubt.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* Jesus has made us sharers in his great salvific mission and he empowers us to fulfill this mission through his abiding presence.

C. STORY: DOUBLING FOR JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

In every risky action movie, the star is provided with a double who must do the stunts and hard parts the main actor or actress should not take the risk of doing, like jumping from the top of one building to another across the street, darting across a burning field, driving a car over a cliff, and so on.

The double must study the hero very closely and intimately, sometimes to the extent of living with him for some time, so as to imitate him so closely in speech and action and movement and attire that no ordinary outsider could tell the two of them apart. When one takes the place of the other in a film, no one knows the difference.

Jesus Christ, Superstar, needs doubles here today. He is no longer on earth visibly. He needs people like us so that others will get to know, love and obey him. The more Christ-like we are, the better we can do the job of doubling for him.

May 26,1996
PENTECOST

JOHN 20:19-23 RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. In John's Gospel Jesus does not wait until Pentecost to give the Holy Spirit to his disciples, but does it on the evening of the day of his resurrection (v. 19). The bestowal is not accompanied by anything more dramatic than the breathing of Jesus on his disciples (v. 22). The main characteristic of the disciples who receive the Holy Spirit is that they have the power to forgive or not to forgive sins (v.23). This giving of the Holy Spirit for the internal sanctification of people is in fact different from the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost which led to the release of charisms like speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, and so on, which are for the outward building up of the Church. But

by using Jn 20:19-23 as the Gospel Reading for the Feast of Pentecost, the liturgy wants us to know that there is a very close connection between the two types of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

Focus Points. (1) Twice in the pericope, Jesus gives his Peace (v. 19 and 21). (2) "At the sight of the Lord the disciples rejoiced" (v. 20). (3) There is a connection between the sending of the disciples and their need for the Holy Spirit (v. 21b-23).

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. It has been said that the Christian Pentecostal Event is Babel in reverse. At Babel people spoke in different tongues which made it impossible for them to understand one another and so they parted ways. At Pentecost, people from all parts of the world, speaking different tongues, heard the apostles speaking in diverse tongues, and this led them to join them to become members of one community believing in one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is the Lucan way of expounding the Christian Pentecostal Event (see Acts 2:1-41). If we look at the heart of the matter, what was achieved on Pentecost is the Unity of diverse peoples coming from "the whole known world" of that time. Putting this in a Johannine perspective, we can say that the Peace Christ gave to his apostles on resurrection day was shared to others coming from different parts of the world through the Christian Pentecostal Event.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Have you experienced Peace coming to your life because you were renewed by the Catholic Charismatic movement?

2. Luke, the Evangelist of the Holy Spirit, is also the Evangelist of *Joy*. The presence of the Holy Spirit brings joy. In Jn 20:19-23, joy comes to the apostles because they saw the Lord (v. 20). Surely they experienced a similar joy when they saw Jesus, through the Holy Spirit and his charisms, touching the lives of people and making them his disciples. Luke and John touch on the same themes, although in a different way.

2.1 *Pointer for Sharing* "The joy of the Lord is our strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Have you experienced the truth of this statement in your life?

3. Jesus sent his disciples to bring people to the forgiveness of their sins. This is why, upon sending them, he also gave them power to forgive sins by breathing on them and giving them the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:21b-23). Acts 2:38 bears this out and adds that after the forgiveness of their sins, people will also receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit."

3.1 *Pointer for Sharing.* People are sometimes held captive by sins like anger, hatred, drunkenness, immorality, and so on. When, through repentance and the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (sacramental absolution), they obtain forgiveness, they also experience the coming of the Holy Spirit. Can you share something along this line?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* Jesus shared his Peace with his disciples. Let's make sure we do this in a meaningful way when, at Mass the priest says, "Let us give one another a sign of Peace."

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Jesus showed his caring for his disciples and for us all when he empowered them to forgive sins so that they could fulfill their salvific mission. Our caring for sinners should be strong enough to lead them out of their sins.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* Jesus affirmed his disciples when he pronounced them worthy to take his place as missionary to all people.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* It was an earth-shaking moment when Christ empowered the apostles to forgive or not forgive sins.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* Christian Pentecost is a feast of Unity, Peace, and Joy, centered in the forgiveness of sins.

C. STORY: A DUET ON ONE PIANO

The pianist, Ignace Paderewski became so well known that folklore has colored his life. One story says that once, a mother, wishing to

encourage her son's progress **at** the piano, bought tickets for **a** Paderewski performance.

Mother and son had seats near the front of the concert hall. Soon, **the** mother found **a** friend to talk to and was to engrossed in her conversation **that** she did **not** notice her son slip away. When the time for Paderewski's performance arrived, the spotlights came on, and only then did the mother realize that her son was the little boy sitting at the piano bench who, at that point, started giving his undivided attention to playing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

The master appeared on stage and quickly moved to the keyboard, to whisper to the little boy, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Then, leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side, encircling the child, to add a running obbligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the audience spellbound.

Without the Holy Spirit, we are like the little boy playing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." With the Holy Spirit helping us, our little piece becomes **a** marvelous art work that can hold an audience spellbound.

JUNE 2,1996

FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, Cycle A

JOHN 3:16-18 GOD, HIS SON AND HIS LOVE

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. John 3:16-18, which speaks of God's love for the world to the extent of giving his only Son so that people might be saved, is a Trinitarian text only in a veiled way, inasmuch as God's LOVE can be understood to mean the HOLY SPIRIT. Seen in this perspective the text speaks of the Father ("God"), the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Love).

Focus Points. (1) God loved... God gave. As a response, people are expected to believe in the Son (v. 16a). (2) Those who respond to God's gift and believe in the Son: a) will not die but will have eternal life; b) will not be condemned and instead will be saved (v. 16b-17) (3) Salvation and condemnation happen here and now (v. 18).

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. The Bible does not tell us about the intimate internal life of the Most Holy Trinity, leaving this to the speculation of philosopher-theologians and to our beatific vision when we get to heaven. What the Bible does tell us is how the whole Trinity works for our salvation. Our text points out that the *initiative* regarding our salvation comes from God. Even before we have done anything that might call forth God's love, God already loved us. His love for us is so great that it is in fact the same force that, at the level of infinity, generated the Son. As the Father is a Person, so too, the Son is a Person, and so too, the love that generated him is a Person whom we call the Holy Spirit. We cannot, out of our finite being, by ourselves, reciprocate God's love. But our finite being can participate in the greatness of God by *the belief by which we attach ourselves to the Son. By believing in the Son* we enter into the life of the Most Holy Trinity.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Do you allow yourself to be "mystified" by the Trinity leading you to dismiss it as something irrelevant to your life, or do you rather let the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit work on you for your salvation? You might want to share an experience related to this question.

2. To die, in the Johannine perspective, is to lead an existence without meaning, and to have eternal life is to attain, even here on earth, a fulfillment of self perceived as a spark of divine life and therefore destined for eternity. To be condemned is to be found deficient, as when a product is rejected by the quality controller. To be saved is to be allowed to participate, even while on earth, in the life of love that characterizes the Trinity.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. The story is told of a successful fashion designer, who was asked one day, if she found any meaning in her life. Concretely, she was asked to read the Gospels and find out for herself if she is doing what God wants her to do. She took time out to read and reflect, and ended by being convicted, by her own conscience, that she was leading a meaningless life. She decided to turn to the Lord, give up her lucrative fashion business, and use her wealth and time to help the poor. She now lives comfortably and happily, serving the Lord and the poor.

3. Salvation and condemnation will eventually take an eternally permanent character. What concerns us now, however, is to avoid meaninglessness in our lives and instead find harmony within ourselves, with the Triune God and with the created universe.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. It can be said that when we experience harmony we experience salvation.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* The more we share, the more we become like the Blessed Trinity.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* God saw our need to have someone who will open the door to participation in the life of the Blessed Trinity. He sent His greatest gift, Jesus His Son. When we give gifts, we must also see to it that they respond to a need in the receiver.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* God did not want to condemn but to save. Let us imitate God by also not wanting to condemn but to save our fellow human beings.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* To save the world, God had to forgive our sins.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* The following acronym shows how Jn 3:16 can be taken as a summary of the Gospel:

God so loved the world that He gave His
Only Son
So that those who believe in him may not
Perish but have
Eternal
Life.

C. STORY: TRY MULTIPLICATION

A non-believer was taunting a Catholic apologist for defending the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

Non-believer: "The doctrine of the Trinity is contradicted by the exact science of mathematics which says that one plus one plus one equals three, not one."

Catholic apologist. "Why not try multiplication? It is also a mathematical exercise as exact as addition and according to it, one times one times one is ONE, not three!"

JUNE 9,1996

CORPUS CHRISTI, Cycle A

JOHN 6:51-581 AM THE LIVING BREAD

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Jesus' discourse on the Bread of Life begins at Jn 6:26 and ends at verse 58, hence only part of it is used in the Corpus Christi liturgy. And rightly so, because in the first part of the discourse, verses 26 to 50, the Bread of Life is not the sacrament of the Eucharist which is taken at the Communion part of the Holy Mass, but the person of Christ himself, who is "eaten" for the nourishment of spiritual life when a person believes in him.

Focus Points. (1) Jesus will give his flesh for people to eat and his **blood** for people to drink (v. 51b & ff.) (2) "He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal and I will raise him up of the last day" (v. 54). (3) "The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him... (he) will have life because of me" (v. 56 & 57b)

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. It is clear from the context, namely, from the aversion aroused among the Jewish audience, that Jesus meant a material eating and drinking, not something to be done only mentally or imaginatively. What the audience did not grasp was that Jesus was using the *future tense*. This makes a big difference, since the flesh and blood of Christ *after the resurrection* will no longer be earthly but heavenly. The *material or physical* eating and drinking of heavenly flesh and blood is made possible by the **SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST** wherein the flesh and blood of Christ are post-resurrectional and therefore heavenly — hence

communicants are not cannibals — but they are given in material forms, that is, bread and wine, which can truly be eaten and drank.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Taking the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is like touching him after his Resurrection. Yet so many Christian fail to relate this to the mystery of Christ's Resurrection. Are you among them?

2. Our future resurrection has been tied up by Christ with our sacramental eating and drinking of his body and blood.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Quite often people go to Holy Communion when they feel "worthy" of it. What we should encourage is for people to go to Holy Communion because they feel they need to be nourished by the Bread of Life.

3. To have life to the full should be our motive for approaching the altar of Holy Communion. We should be thinking of approaching our Good Shepherd who came "so that they may have life, life in all its fullness" (Jn 10:10).

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. Every Communion should be a step towards a better Christian life. Have you experienced spiritual growth due to more frequent Communion?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? Jesus shared himself by "coming down" from heaven. Our sharing, too, should be an exercise in humility.

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? The caring that Jesus shows for our total life should help us be more caring both for the material and spiritual life of our underprivileged fellow human beings.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? Every time we partake of the altar of Communion we get an affirmation from the Lord because he said, "He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." This should help us be more affirming toward our fellow human beings.

4. **FORGIVENESS.** Spiritual masters teach that a fervent Communion effects the forgiveness of sins that are not "mortal."

5. **THE GOOD NEWS.** "Whoever feeds on this bread shall live forever" (v. 58)

C. STORY: **SERVE BY LIVING**

During the American Civil War, President Lincoln had a strapping athletic young man as his secretary. In those days before office machinery, such a man would literally be pushing a pen or pencil. This particular man was not happy about it. He wanted to get out where the action was on the battlefield. He wanted to go and do great things for his country. He was quite willing to die, if necessary.

He kept complaining to Lincoln about the women's work he was doing, when he could be in uniform confronting the enemy. After hearing this usual complaint one day, Lincoln stared at him, rubbed his hands in his beard and said in his philosophical way, "Young man, as I see it, you are quite willing to die for your country, but you are not willing to live for it."

Not all Christians are asked to die for their faith. But everyone, without exception, is required to live for it and by it. That is why everyone needs the Bread of Life.

JUNE 16,1996

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

**MATTHEW 9:36-10:8 PRELUDE OF THE INSTRUCTION
TO MISSIONARIES**

A. **STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3**

Use in the Liturgy. We are back **to** the Sundays in Ordinary Time, the Ninth and the Tenth having been edged out by the Feasts of the Blessed Trinity and Corpus Christi. With the Eleventh Sunday in cycle A, we **are** at the end of the second narrative section of Matthew's five booklets (not counting the Infancy Narratives nor the Passion-Resurrection Story) **and** at the first lines of the "Missionary Discourse" which begins at ch. 10v. 5.

Focus Points. (1) Jesus takes stock of the situation of the crowds. They are like sheep without a shepherd. They are like a bountiful harvest with few laborers to gather them in. They need to be delivered from unclean spirits and healed from various diseases. (2) Jesus chose Twelve Apostles to be sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (3) Their assignment was to announce. "The reign of God is at hand!"

B. REFLECTION POINTS

BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN & SHARE

1. The people to whom Jesus preached and to whom he will soon send missionaries have been neglected by their pastors for about two centuries already. The fault lay in the Pharisees who thought they alone were the people of God, and they alone were to be served by the priests. For them, the people who did not observe the law strictly as they did can go to the dogs, and they don't care.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. The poor and less privileged people are actually the ones most receptive to the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you have experiences that bear this out? It might open the eyes of some people if you share them.

2. In the historical setting of Jesus' Galilean career, the mission of the Twelve apostles is only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is an apprenticeship and a preparation for the definitive mission which they will receive after the resurrection, when they will be sent to the whole world.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Have you experienced the need for training and apprenticeship before embarking on greater apostolic endeavor?

3. The mission of the Twelve Apostles - as that of any disciple of Christ - is the same as that of Jesus: to preach the Good News of the Kingdom and to give witness to it by signs such as curing the sick, raising the dead, healing the leprosy, expelling demons.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. There was a time when people thought that being a missionary, and especially being a person with charisms was something reserved to the original Twelve Apostles, and people today can not expect to be like them. Fortunately, this has been reversed, and we

now meet many lay missionaries who exercise manifold charisms **to build up** the Church. Have you may experiences connected with the **old** or **the** new viewpoint, or with both? It might be good for others **if you share** them.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? Let us keep in mind **the last** line of today's Gospel Reading: "The gift you **received**, **give as a gift**"

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? Christ's caring for the crowds, which "moved his heart with pity" stands in stark contrast **with the** lack of caring manifested by the Pharisees and other religious leaders of Israel. Let us imitate Christ, not the Pharisees.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? By sending the Twelve Apostles to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" Jesus was affirming the privelege of the Jews as the Chosen People of the **Old** Testament.

4. FORGIVENESS. The forgiveness of sins is **a greater grace than** being cured of a disease. Although from the outset Jesus gave **his** Apostles the power to cure diseases, only later will he give them **the power to forgive** sins.

5. THE GOOD NEWS. "The reign of God is **at hand**" (Mt. 10:7).

C. STORY: THE SMALL LIGHT THAT BECAME A GIANT BEAM

One evening a man took a small candle from **a box** and **began to** climb **a long** winding stairway. "Where are we going?" asked the **candle**. "We're going up higher than the house to show ships **the way to the harbor**," answered the man. Surprised, the candle said, "But no ship in **the harbor could** ever see my light, since it is so small." Without missing a step going up, the man said, "If your light is small, just keep burning brightly and leave the rest to me."

When they reached the top of the long steps, they came to a large lamp. Then the man took the little candle and lit the lamp. Soon the great polished reflectors behind the lamp sent beams of light out across

kilometers of sea.

The Apostles, like you and me, were little candles when Jesus chose them to be missionaries. As with them, so with us. Jesus will find a way to transform our little light into a giant beam.

JUNE 23,1996

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

MATTHEW 10:26-33 MISSIONARIES MUST BOLD

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy: Chapter 10 verses 26-33 is still part of the Missionary Discourse in Matthew. This was originally addressed to the Twelve Apostles but the early Church understood its application to every Christian because every Christian is, by vocation, a missionary. What is pity that, in our days, the majority of Christians do not think of themselves as missionaries. The use of Mt 10:26-33 in the liturgy is an opportunity for preachers to remind the faithful about their missionary vocation.

Focus Points. (1) The Christian message, although originally communicated to a few, is meant for the whole world; although the Master taught it in private places, the disciples are to proclaim it in public places and wherever they can attract an audience. For this reason, Christian missionaries have to be bold (with the boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit). (2) In times of persecution, Christian missionaries must not lose faith in God's special and loving care for them.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

**BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 7 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN
& SHARE**

1. TV antennas on housetops (see v. 27) should remind us of the need to avail of mass media - print, radio, TV, computer networks - to proclaim the Good News. This is a highly competitive field, where one has to be aggressive to succeed.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Has Mass Media helped or hindered you to know and live the Good News?

2. According to commentators, the one who "can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (v. 28b) is no other than God himself. He is to be feared by apostles - the people who deny their faith because of persecution. To avoid becoming an apostolate, Christians under persecution should cling to the truth that God is a loving and caring God who will enable them to overcome all difficulties.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. There are a number of Christian churches who undertake great missionary works although they have very limited resources. They cling to the belief that, since missionary work is God's own work, he may allow his servants to be tested by trials including lack of material means, but in the crucial moments, he will always provide for their needs. Maybe you have some experiences along this line.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* The preaching of the Twelve Apostles Was a sharing in public of what Jesus had taught them in private. Nowadays, too, we have to share in public what God teaches us in the events of our day-to-day private lives.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* It is God's own caring that we bring to others when we provide them with their needs for keeping body and soul together.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* We must affirm a person so that he or she will not be afraid of persecution. This is the meaning of v. 31, "Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

4. *FORGIVENESS.* Like the "sin against the Holy Spirit," the sin of "denying" Christ (see v. 33) cannot be forgiven.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* The Christian Message is like the underground force that seeks release in volcanoes. It is a secret that cannot remain hidden. It is a whisper that is heard around the world (see v. 26-27).

C. STORY: THREE MISSIONARIES

A man was walking along and fell into such a deep manhole that he could not get out. so he began to shout very loudly for help.

A missionary came along and found him. He looked down into the hole and lectured the unfortunate man: "Why were you so foolish as to fall down there in the first place? You should be more careful. If you ever get out again, watch your step." And with that he took off.

A second missionary came along. He looked down into the hole and told the man, "I'll try to reach down as far as I can, and you reach up as far as you can. If I can grab your hand, I'll pull you out." So they tried but it did not work. The hole was too deep. So the second missionary said he was sorry and left the man to his fate.

A third missionary came along. He sees the man's problem and without asking him any questions, he just jumps down into the hole to be beside the man. Then he lets the man climb onto his shoulders and even onto his outstretched arms and the man gets out.

Which of the three missionaries was most Christ-like?

JUNE 30, 1996

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

**MATTHEW 10:37-42 A MISSIONARY
MUST TAKE UP THE CROSS**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Mt. 10:37-40 is the concluding section of the Missionary Discourse. It reminds church-goers that, if they cannot be missionaries venturing forth to bring the Good News to far-away places, they can join the support-groups that keep the missionaries going.

Focus Points. (1) Every missionary of Christ must be like him, hence he must take up his cross and follow after Christ. (2) Anyone who gives a missionary "on the job" even just a cup of cold water will receive a meaningful reward from the Lord.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

**BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN
& SHARE**

1. Not all are asked to choose between one's parents and Christ, or

between one's children and Christ because in a Christian society, one's parents or one's children are normally also in the side of Christ. But if a situation of conflict arises, it is clear that one has the duty to follow Christ. Following Christ, by the way, is not a joy-ride but a cross-carrying.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Quite often, priests and religious Sisters carry a lighter cross on the way to heaven than some married people who experiences hell on earth because of marital problems, problem children, financial disasters, and so on. Maybe you can share something along this line.

2. Verse 41, "Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward," is well illustrated by the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17:7-16. The widow at the town of Zarephath to whom Elijah was sent received him as a prophet and believed in his promise. Because of this, not only Elijah but the widow herself and her son were provided with food until the drought ended.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Maybe you can share an experience of being rewarded for helping a missionary get an evangelistic job done.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. **CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?** Verses 40-42, which assures us that favors, even small ones, shown to evangelizers, will be amply rewarded, encourage us to welcome missionaries and share with them even our meager material resources.

2. **CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?** To be a "righteous" person (v.41), one has to care. When we welcome a caring person, we, too, become more caring.

3. **CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?** Sometimes a "cup of cold water" is enough to affirm an unappreciated missionary.

4. **FORGIVENESS.** Small acts of kindness or charity, like giving a missionary a cup of cold water 9v. 42)" cover a multitude of sins" 1 Peter 4:8.

5. **THE GOOD NEWS.** As Christians we serve a generous Master who gives us meaningful rewards. He is never outdone in generosity.

C. STORY: TWO LADDERS TO HEAVEN

A woman who was a retired Christian lay missionary was having a reunion with her two grown-up daughters. Martha was an active Lay Missionary who was home on vacation. Mary was a housewife who helped missionaries whether they are priests, Brothers, religious Sisters of lay people.

One morning at breakfast the mother told her daughters, "Last night I dreamed about the three of us." Excitedly, the two daughters exclaimed, "Tell us about it."

"I dreamt that I saw two ladders going up to heaven," said the mother. "I could not see how long they were because just a few rungs from the mountain ground on which they rested they were already covered by clouds. One ladder was for missionaries, the other was for people who helped missionaries."

More interested than ever, the two daughters urged their mother to go on telling them about her dream. "There were pieces of chalk at the foot of the ladders., Anyone going up had to get a chalk. When going up the missionary ladder, one had to put a chalk mark on each rung for each time one had been discouraged because of the difficulties of missionary life. In my dream, I saw Martha going up the missionary ladder. When she was already in the clouds, she saw me coming down, so she said, "What for are you coming down?" I said, "More chalk."

"What about the second ladder?" the daughters asked. The mother said, "Those who went up the second ladder had to put a chalk mark on each rung for every time they could have helped a missionary but didn't. Mary went up that ladder and when she was already in the clouds, she saw me coming down. "Are you coming down for more chalk?" she asked. "No," I said. "I already reached heaven. But I saw you coming up and I had some chalk to spare. Here, take it, because I think you'll be needing it."

Dominican Province of the Philippines

PRAYER OF BLESSING DURING THE JUBILEE YEAR

O God the Father who blesses us with life
you have called us to be one in mind and heart.

As you've blessed our 25 years
of being together as a Province,
bless our living, our praying, our preaching together,
that we may be a sacrament of your Presence
and a witness to your love and solidarity with us.

O God the Son who gives life,
you have embraced our humanity,
infusing into the pangs of our birth
and the pains of our growth,
the grace that makes us whole.

Heal us from wounds that have lingered,
from hurts laid bare and faults hidden,
from burdens endured and bruises inflicted,
that our brokenness may bind us
and bear fruit in compassion.

O God the Holy spirit who inspires our life,
you dwell in us and make all things new.

Guide us as we set our sights
to realize our vision,
set our ears
to listen to the voices of our times,
set our hands
to work for the reign of God,
set our feet
to move to the frontiers of our missions,
and set our mouth
to proclaim your Good News.

And may the angel of your peace
minister to us,
to people we keep in holy memory,
to the families we cherish,
to them we call friends and companions,
to people we are called from
and people we are sent to,
and lead us all
to the Lord's gift of life made full.

With Mary our Mother, St. Dominic, and all your saints,
we praise, we bless, we preach your glory,
now and forever, Amen.

25TH FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY
DOMINICAN PROVINCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
DECEMBER 8, 1996

PRAYER FOR THE SECOND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF MANILA 1996

Almighty Father, you who have gathered your people at every crucial times and every significant turns in their pilgrimage, send your Holy Spirit upon the ecclesiastical province of Manila as it prepares for the celebration of the Second Provincial Council in August 1996.

Bless the faithful of the Archdiocese of Manila, the Dioceses of Malolos, Antipolo, Imus, and San Pablo and the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan. Inspire the bishops, together with the clergy, the laity and the religious in deliberating for the pastoral good of various communities. Make every member of these particular churches responsive to your guidance and to the promptings of your Spirit.

May this provincial Council help us to understand better the challenges set forth by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines and the various diocesan synods. Through it, may your Spirit further direct us towards the integral renewal of our faith and in living up to your mandate to "make disciples of all nations." (Mt 28:19).

With the intercessions of Mary, Mother of the Church, our guide in this voyage of life and faith, may we move on to the next millennium with fervent hope in "JESUS CHRIST: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER" (Heb 13:8).

We ask this through the same Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.