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PHILIPPINE BISHOPS PREPARE
FOR GREAT JUBILEE
CBCP

TWO METHODS OF LITURGICAL
INCULTURATION:
CREATIVE ASSIMILATION
AND DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE
Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB

METHODS AND MODELS
OF TRANSLATING LITURGICAL
TEXTS IN THE PHILIPPINES
Moises B. Andrade

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The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

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Philippine Bishops prepare for Great Jubilee

The Philippine Church begins in January 1997 the three year preparation for the Great Jubilee of Redemption in the Year 2000 which marks the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ

In its 73rd plenary assembly held in Tagaytay City on July 5 to 8, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines drew up a program of activities responding to the Holy Father Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter "Tertio Millennio Adveniente."

The Pope in this letter had asked the whole Church to prepare for the Jubilee. In the tradition of the Old Testament, a jubilee speaks of a "time dedicated in a special way to God." According to the Old Testament, the Law of Moses prescribes a jubilee every fifty years, "during which the earth was left fallow and slaves were set free" In recent traditions, a social doctrine for the jubilee has emerged where the "jubilee year was meant to restore (this) social justice." The Holy Father says further that "the two thousand years which have passed since the Birth of Christ... represent an extraordinarily great Jubilee, not only for Christians but indirectly for the whole of humanity, given the prominent role played by Christianity during these two millennia."

Titsoy Angel *gaameo, Chairman of the National Episcopal Committee on the Great Jubilee presented to the bishops the guidelines for the four-year program entitled "A Filipino Vision for the Third Millennium." Anchored on the Pope's apostolic letter and the Acts of

the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, the program will focus on the primary objective of the jubilee which is the strengthening of the faith and christian witnessing.

The Philippine Church devotes 1997 to 1999 as the time for preparation. The focus for each year are: 1997 - Jesus Christ and Faith; 1998 - The Holy Spirit and Hope; 1999 - God the Father and Love. In the year 2000, the celebrations will center on the Blessed Trinity and Peace.

Specific programs to carry out these themes will be developed in parishes in all dioceses of the Philippines and by all Catholic lay organizations. Among these, the bishops said, are activities that will bring about greater awareness and appreciation of the Sacraments of Baptism (1997), Confirmation (1998) and Penance (1999). They also proposed the holding of retreats both for the clergy and Religious and for lay people and the revitalization of cherished religious practices such as the novenas through updating and revising of their prayers in the spirit of the Great Jubilee.

Bishop Lagdameo said that the launching of the preparatory phase of the Jubilee will coincide with the holding of the National Eucharistic Congress in January 1997.

An Open Letter on the Mindanao Peace Process

+ OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D.

To His Excellency Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, the members of the GRP and MNLF Panels

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) gathered for its 23rd Plenary Assembly in Tagaytay City on July 8, 1996.

Your Excellencies:

*Greetings in the name of the God of Love,
Justice, Peace, Mercy and Compassion!*

1. We thank you for the patient and heroic efforts that you have expended through the years to establish a lasting peace in southern Philippines. You have reached a point where peace which has eluded us so painfully and for so long now seems so tantalizingly close. We wish to make our contribution towards that lasting peace we all seek, as it is our duty to do so.
2. In democratic country such as ours, public officials should work for the common good which is usually known by consulting those who are affected by their decision. For this reason, we respectfully but firmly voice out to you in a positive and hopeful manner what has been sadly lacking so far in the dialogue toward peace, namely, the voice of Catholic Christians in southern Philippines.

3. Our purpose is to lend a positive hand to the peace process and to help hold back the increasing discordant chorus of protest and threats that have met the agreements that you have made.
4. For us, the agreements between the GRP and the MNLF are both a source of crisis and hope. Hope, because the concept of a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) is, indeed, a breakthrough in the peace negotiations. Crisis, because not all the specifics are known to us, and, of those we know, some are definitely unacceptable in view of their evident intent or ambiguity.
5. It is to some of these critical specifics that we wish to make our contributions to the dialogue for peace. By this we mean to elaborate on the principles stated by the Mindanao Peace Congress of Catholic Church leaders held on June 24 to 26, 1996. The congress participants saw a ray of hope in the SPCPD as long as the following principles were followed: peace as not only the absence of war but the wholeness of life; peace as a regime of justice and freedom, including religious freedom; peace as integral development; peace as dialogical rather than conflictive; peace as the result of adequate information, transparency and participation.
6. In view of the above, we wish to make a positive contribution to the peace process by addressing some of the specifics regarding the SPCPD that have come to our knowledge.
 - a. On the premise that the SPCPD would deal only with peace and development and that existing government units would remain in place, the powers and functions delegated by the President of the Philippines to the SPCPD should only be concerned with matters of peace and development. SPCPD must not be a political administrative entity and must not have the power to create offices and instrumentalities that compete politically with existing government structures. It should not have any role, except subordinate and auxiliary, regarding elections, referenda, plebiscites and the like. Other consensus points emanating from the 8th GRP-MNLF committee meeting of June 21-23, 1996, that are related to this must be clarified, and if necessary, revised, in the light of this role and function of the SPCPD.

- b. On the premise that SPCPD is a council that deals with 14 provinces and 10 cities of southern Philippines, the ratio of MNLF members to non-MNLF members must be revised so as to respect the present existential composition of the population of southern Philippines.
 - c. On the premise that the SPCPD is a government entity, it should respect Constitutional provisions on the separation of Church and State. Hence, if there is to be any religious advisory body to be set up, it should be outside the formal government structure.
 - d. On the premise that the existential situation of southern Philippines reflects religious pluralism, religious freedom must be respected at all times. Especially should this be observed in the educational system. Education should promote values of our common humanity and not the values peculiar to any set of religious beliefs, be it Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist or Islamic. Thus what we have come to learn about the proposed system of education in the 1995 interim agreement should be revised in order to reflect this fundamental human right to religious freedom.
 - e. On the premise that a plebiscite will be conducted on the regional autonomy after a period of time, we urge that no policies and structures or security system be set up that would effectively prevent the free expression of the people's will.
7. Your Excellencies, glaringly lacking in the peace process so far has been the participation of people. They have not been informed nor consulted on the major aspects of the agreements that have been made. Ultimately, the people bear the burden of sustaining any peace that is established. It is not possible for people to carry a burden that they believe in their hearts has been simply imposed on them. Therefore, we urge you to provide time for informing and consulting the people of all faiths regarding the specifics of the peace talks. Any peace pact that is established in a conflict ridden area is necessarily fragile, but even more so when such peace is not the product of consensus involving the participation of all. Deadlines for peace negotiations are necessary for work to be done.

But we urge you most respectfully to defer the finality of consensus points until the people are in some way consulted.

The seeds of peace take some time to grow and the time for true peace to flourish depends ultimately on the will of God, with us cooperating with such divine will.

For this reason, we offer you our services in informing and consulting the people and relaying their hopes and aspirations to you so as to improve the peace process and its consensus points.

Most of all, please know that we are directing all the members of our faith to dedicate the first Friday of August this year as a day of prayer and fasting, offered to the Lord, to assist your peace efforts. We shall also continue the many areas of dialogue already well underway in Mindanao so that mutual prejudices may be removed.

The journey to peace is the journey of people of different faiths, people who pray to the same almighty God, who for the sake of peace creates in our hearts the attitudes of mutual respect and trust and love for justice, truth and freedom, which are the pillars of a house of peace. To Him we pray so that your efforts for peace will be truly fruitful for all the people of southern Philippines.

Bishops' Plenary Assembly Focuses on Social and Religious Concerns

The peace situation in southern Philippines and other social and religious concerns were put on the bishops agenda as they met for their 73rd Plenary Assembly at the Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay City on July 5 to 8.

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, opened the assembly while Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines presided.

At the close of the meeting on July 8, the bishops released an open letter on the Mindanao peace situation (see separate press release). Four members of Congress made presentations to the bishops on the proposed Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development: Congresswomen Clara Lobregat of Zamboanga, Lualhati Antonino of the 1st district of Cotabato and Daisy Fuentes of the 2nd district of Cotabato and General Eduardo Ermita, member of the GRP panel on the Mindanao Peace Talks.

Former Justice Cecilia Munoz Palma talked to the bishops on the objectives of "Demokrasya Ipagtanggol ang Konstitusyon" which was launched in October this year. While no definite plan of action on the charter change issue was formulated by the bishops, they agreed to encourage Justice Palma's group to intensify their campaign to oppose amendments to the Constitution.

The bishops also approved the setting up of a Committee on Women which will be involved in advocacy and research of women's issues in the light of the Church's teachings.

At the opening of the assembly, Archbishop Cruz presented a new project for the laity. According to Archbishop Cruz, the project dubbed as "CBCP Presents" consists of "periodic proclamations, in a series of catechetical presentations. These could take the form of a forum, symposium or convention open to the public.

The objectives of this project to be directed by the Council of the Laity of the Philippines (CLP) and LAIKO in coordination with the CBCP Secretariat are:

1. To rediscover and reconsolidate, promote and confirm the apostolic mandate and evangelizing potentials of the laity.
2. To inform, form and transform the Christian faithful on questions of faith, issues of the order of nature and in the sphere of grace, and to evangelize Philippine society.
3. To show country to the *laity as committed Catholics, dedicated and capable workers for the apostolate.*

The other sessions of the plenary assembly were devoted to reports from the various episcopal commissions and administrative matters. There are now 121 members of the CBCP: 96 active and 25 honorary. This meeting was attended by 79 active and three honorary members. Four active members sent in their proxies. The 74th CBCP plenary assembly will be held in January 1997.

Role of the Church in Social Transformation: 1946-1996 and Implications for the Future

LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, OP

(Talk delivered by His Grace, Most Rev. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., D.D., Archbishop of Caceres, on the "Role of the Church in Social Transformation (1946-1996): Implications For the Future", during the National Conference on August 1-3, 1996, SEARSOUN, Cagayan de Oro City.)

Permit me to start this talk on our Christian topic on social transformation with an observation from the Zen master Shunryu Suzuki. Before his death in 1971, he talked about the essence of Zen mind which he termed as *"beginner's mind"*. It is a compassionate mind and has no thought of achievement or any other self-centered thoughts which limit our mind. In the words of Suzuki - *"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the experts there are few."*¹

Now, why do I start with this quotation? It is to remind myself and to inform you, my patient listeners, that in this area of social transformation I count myself as beginner. I have no singular achievements or experiences in this sphere. Thus, unlike experts in social transformation, my beginner's talk will range over many reflections. At least, I hope to retain a compassionate mind for viewing and reflecting on the pluralism prevailing in social transformation approaches.

¹Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind. Beginner's Mind (New York: Weatherhill, 1970), pp. 21-22.

Beginner's Mind

There is another characteristic of the beginner's mind which I wish to call to your attention today so that you might be safeguarded from any illusion about my expertise. My reflections on this topic are necessarily interpretative and selective. I interpret events according to my biases and I select within the limits of my perspectives. This means that my talk today lays no claims to being comprehensive nor rigorously objective. Many of you here, far more knowledgeable about this topic, would offer a different and richer interpretation than mine.

What then can I offer you by way of justifying my presence here and respecting your own expectations in coming to this conference? What is my conceptual framework for viewing the reality of social transformation in a historical setting?

Pastoral Discernment

I am treating, this topic from a certain perspective, namely from the standpoint of a pastoral discernment. I am not analyzing it from a technical viewpoint, for example, by dissecting the instrumentalities and methodologies utilized by practitioners in their quest for social transformation. Nor is my chosen approach a confrontational and judgemental one.

My choice of entering this complex topic through the door of a pastoral discernment process arises from my biases which informs me that through discernment we can arrive at a fuller, inner grasp of the reality of social transformation. And here I depend on the Aquiman insight embodied in his statement: "*ubi amor, ibi oculus*" - where there is love, there is vision; where there is compassion, there is insight. I am thus viewing this topic "*con ojos de fe y de amor*."

This history of social transformation in the Philippines is traditionally divided into the three dimensions of welfare in the 1950s, developmental in the 1960s and liberational in the 1970s. To each are attached ideological labels: conservatives for those doing charity and welfare work; moderates for those doing community development projects; progressives for those in structural, liberational issues. Those who take a position to the right or left or center of a political or ideological

spectrum align themselves accordingly, for example, the left with the radicals and the center with the moderates. Here I merely pass on to you for our reflection this opinion of the German theologian Bishop Walter Kasper. He says: *"The centre is not a harmless geometrical point but a field of tension that endures in spite of all that is extreme and in fact can be described only in relation to the extreme. For this reason, it is easier to maintain extreme positions, whereas mediation demands spiritual strength. We need an increase of the strength to fight 'between front-lines....'"*²

I shall now list the events which characterize each of the three historical dimensions. Firstly, the period of welfare programs.

Welfare Period

In the 1950s, the Philippines was still recovering from the devastation wrought by World War II. In the battle of Manila alone, an estimated 100,000 Filipinos died; approximately 11,000 buildings were destroyed or badly damaged. The biggest losses to property outside those of government were sustained by the Catholic Church whose total losses came to about \$125 million (1945 values).³ In such a setting, it was understandable that among the first initiatives of that period was the establishment of the Catholic Welfare Organization (CWO) in 1945. As its name indicated, its thrust was welfare and its objective was to coordinate relief efforts in war-stricken areas.

The problem of categorizing a period with one dominant label is exemplified in the emergence of other initiatives during the 1950s. Examples of these non-welfare types of organizations were the establishment of the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) in 1953, the birth of the Institute of Social Order in 1955. It is interesting to recall that the then Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi who has been criticized as too conservative, was among the foremost supporters of FFW and FFW. It is also another so-called conservative,

²Walter Kasper, An Introduction to Christian Faith (New York: Panlist Press, 1980), p. viii.

³Alfonso J. Aluit, By Sword and Fire (Manila: Bookmark, 1994) p. 405.

Archbishop Gabriel Reyes of Manila who supported strikers fired by management for organizing a union.⁴

During this decade, there also occurred on the night of February 24, 1956 a labor conflict that was to have its impact on the social consciousness, if not conscience also, of the Philippine Church. That was the FFW initiated strike against the University of Sto. Tomas hospital management. (No, I was not the Rector of UST then.) This strike would bring about different positions on the natural right of workers to form unions and to choose their representatives. It was to pit the hierarchy represented by the Apostolic Nuncio and the Archbishop of Manila against the FFW and the ISO. It led to Archbishop Santos* decision to forbid Fr. Hogan to preach, to write, to give public conferences including radio broadcasts on social issues within the Archdiocese of Manila. The archbishop also banned individuals from conducting classes at the ISO.

Development Period

Secondly, let us go to the sixties, the period known as the Community Development era.

This period tried to address the growing problem of underdevelopment in the Third World. Denis Goulet, author of *"The Cruel Choice"* starts his essay with an emotionally charged statement:

*"Underdevelopment is shocking: the squalor, disease, unnecessary deaths, the hopelessness of it all! No man understands if underdevelopment remains for him a mere statistic reflecting low income, poor housing, premature mortality or underemployment. The most empathetic observer can speak objectively about underdevelopment only after undergoing, personally or vicariously, the shock of underdevelopment."*⁵

In response, pioneering, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were organized. In Sri Lanka, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

⁴Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and its Social Involvement in the Philippines. 1930-1972* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), pp. 30-53.

⁵Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice* (New York, Atheneum, 1973), p. 23.

spread through over 2,300 villages. Sarvodaya was defined as *"the total awakening of all"* and Shramadana meant *"the sharing of labor."* It owed its origin to the Gandhian Movement in India.

In the Philippines, Dr. James Yen founded the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) based on his experiences in the Mass Education Movement in China. The PRRM worked for the social transformation of society through its teams of rural reconstruction workers trained in its integrated programs of livelihood, education, health and self-government.

The Philippine Church had its own community development projects and once again, the Jesuits were trail blazers in this area. The credit union movement gained momentum in the sixties and the Knights of Columbus actively supported nationwide seminars which led to the establishment of about 75 credit unions.

This period also saw the establishment of key institutions. In 1962 the Asian Social Institute opened its doors to students dedicated to work for social justice. In 1966, the Philippine bishops established its Episcopal Commission on Social Action which in turn set up an executive body known as the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA).

By this time, a kind of paradigm shift was taking place in the concept of development. Fr. Horacio de la Costa, S.J. explains it in this way:

*"We may simply recall the principal stages in the evolution of the concept of development. How development was regarded in the beginning as simply economic growth; how the inadequacy of this equivalence led to the expansion of the concept to include social development; how this in turn led to the conclusion that development can't be real or lasting unless it took into account all the aspects of human life, spiritual as well as material, cultural as well as socio-economic, unless, in short, it became integral human development."*⁶

But while there might have been a conceptual tilt from one-sided economies to a more wholistic framework, there was still a problem of

'Quoted in Wilfredo Fabros, op. Cit. p. 85.

strategy. The preferred approach of Church-related community development projects of this period was to ameliorate the poverty of laborers and peasants but, in the view of church historian, Fr. Wilfredo Fabros, these efforts remained *"within the existing power structure and socio-economic relations between employers and employees, and between landowners and tenants..."*⁷

Before the end of this decade, the Church organized the 1967 National Congress for Rural Development. Its orientation drew insights from the recently concluded Vatican II, in particular *Gaudium et Spes*. Its objective was *"to awaken everyone in the country to the crying needs of the rural population, particularly the farmers and fishermen, so that we may come to concerted action to alleviate these needs and to arrive at immediate solutions..."*⁸

One can sense, therefore, the pragmatic thrust of the National Rural Congress. It did not intend to produce mere deliberations of intent but practical programs linked to the transformation of the social order. This meant the promotion of farmers organizations for increased production; of credit unions and cooperative to make the peasantry more resistant to usury and exploitation.

Liberational Period

We now leave the troubled sixties for the still more troubled seventies. 1970 started dramatically with the First Quarter Storm followed by the bloody battle of Mendiola Bridge. It heralded the end of the community development approach and the emergence of radical options.

Shortly after these bloody confrontations, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) was established. It then sponsored a Conference of Bishops and Businessmen in Baguio City. Some commentators hesitate to call this alliance an appropriate response to the crisis of the time. Its rhetoric condemned both communism and liberal capitalism while proclaiming the birth of a new Filipino businessman

⁷idem p. 91.

⁸Quoted in: Responses to the Sims of the Times, ed. Abdon Ma. C. Josol. CSSE (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1991), p. 41

willing to forego high profits in favor of high social returns. The fact that this alliance of bishops and businessmen has not been complemented by an alliance with laborers and peasants is a factor which continued to make opaque the identity of the Philippine Church as Church of the Poor.

The option for violence was becoming more than just a theoretical alternative for priests, nuns and laypersons. The use of social analysis was intended to help the poor *"come to an understanding of who is exploiting them and how; and to have their consciousness transformed through this process of discovery."** But the use of Marxist social analysis confronted the Christian conscience with the dilemma whether it also meant adopting, marxist philosophy, marxist ideology and politics with its radical theory of antagonism and class struggle. As Paul VI wrote in *Octogesima Adveniens* (n. 34): *"it would be illusory and dangerous to accept the elements of marxist analysis without recognizing their relationships with ideology."* In addition, the bishops of Latin America meeting at Puebla noted that adopting marxist analysis runs the risk of leading to "the total politicization of Christian existence, the disintegration of the language of faith into that of the social sciences, and the draining away of the transcendental dimension of Christian salvation" (Puebla, n. 545). In brief, as the late Jesuit General, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., wrote in 1980 to the Provincials of Latin America - *marxist analysis ... implies in fact a concept of human history in contradiction with the Christian view of men and society and leading to strategies which threaten Christian values and attitudes."*

A historian writing about this period might use this caveat as criteria for assessing the church organizations that were formed, mainly by priests, in order to design programs of social reform.

One controversial organization was the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) which in 1972 openly committed itself to working with the Communist Party of the Philippines. Thus, the CNL effected an

*Donald Dorr, *The Social Justice Agenda* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1993), p. 113.

apertura a la sinistra (opening to the left) which called for a decision from capitalism to socialism, from reformism to revolution.¹⁰

An alternative organization espousing militant but non-violent mass actions was the Lakas ng Diwang Kayumanggi, also known as Lakasdiwa. It is organized in 1970 by two young Jesuit scholastics, Ed Garcia and Antonio J. Ledesma (who had just been appointed coadjutor bishop of Ipil). Lakasdiwa sought to politicize urban and rural communities under the political vision of democratic socialism.

In the 1980s, the differences between the ideologies of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Democratic Socialists sharpened as martial law abuses heightened. The NDF was accused of infiltrating national and diocesan social action centers and siphoning donated funds intended for the poor in order to buy arms. Meanwhile, escalating human rights violations were confronting the "Soc Dems" as the Democratic Socialists were called, to face the issue of the responsible use of force to end suppression and secure justice.¹¹

Undoubtedly, the great watershed of contemporary Philippine history was EDSA of 1986. My cursory review cannot do justice in analyzing the factors and identifying the key actors that converged to bring about the dramatic fall of the regime of President Marcos. In February 1986 the Filipino was in ecstasy, drawn out of his and her confinement into a wholeness of vision and a unity of purpose seldom attained in the past. But the ecstatic state is a momentary one and soon thereafter one must confront reality again.

What made of EDSA such a glorious yet so ephemeral an event in our history? Was it merely a tactical conjunction of irreconcilable factions? Does it have a hindsight message to the Church regarding social movements and alliances led primarily by business and middle-class sectors? What are the truly creative sectors imbued with moral integrity and steadfastness of spiritual vision in our society? Can social

"James Kroeger, M.M. The Philippine Church and Evangelization: 1965-1984 (Rome: unpublished dissertation, 1985), p. 166.

"Pasquale T. Giordano, S.J. Awakening to Mission: The Philippine Catholic Church: 1965-1981 (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), pp. 228-229.

and political reforms which start from the center, from Metro Manila, became rooted in the periphery, in the Visayas and Mindanao?

Whatever be our assessment of the impact of EDSA 1986 in our life, there is one palpable fact we cannot easily ignore - the impulses released by the EDSA event failed to reform our society.

PCP - II

There was yet another pivotal attempt on the part of the Church to bring about a much-needed social transformation. This was the 1991 Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. In my view, PCP - n was the Church's very own concept of what a true EDSA event should have been, namely, a cultural and spiritual revolution. Where EDSA was political, PCP-II was spiritual. Where EDSA was ideological, PCP-II was cultural. Where EDSA mobilized Manila-based business, academic, religious sectors, PCP-II gathered together men and women from every corner and sector of the Philippines. PCP-n reminded the Filipinos that true liberation does not rest on the charisma of any human personality but solely in the action of the Holy Spirit.

The bishops knew that the mere promulgation of the PCP-II decrees was no guarantee that the Church in the Philippines would steadfastly walk the path of renewal. Accordingly, a National Pastoral Plan (NPP) was designed to offer implementing guidelines in operationalizing the decrees of the Council. It encouraged dioceses to formulate their own pastoral plans derived from grassroots consultations and characterized by the widespread participation of every sector of the ecclesial community.

PASTORAL REFLECTION

Let us pause from this impressionistic enumeration of historical highlights and attempt this time to reflect on their significance.

I introduced myself as a beginner in the art and science of analyzing what social transformation implies. A beginner sees everything as new and is therefore led to accept and classify every phenomenon as having equal value. Complexity escapes him, as well as the integrity and unity of historical phenomena. But, as Arnold Toynbee pointed out, "History must aim at preserving the complexity of individual events "while also

constructing them into a design which possesses a certain coherence of meaning.

Let me then attempt, with the limits of a beginner's mind, to find "coherence of meaning" in the events I have recounted.

Our recounting of some of the highlights of the Church's role in social transformation is within the context of a historical process. We saw how this history has stages, arbitrarily labeled as welfare, developmental, liberational. Other perspectives would define these stages differently, for example, in terms of phases of evangelization.

But whatever our perspective, we shall come to the realization that this flow of history is neither absurd nor aimless. It has meaning and direction because God continues to intervene in specific moments of Church history.

It is important for the Church to understand its history because embedded in it are signs pointing to its destiny. The Church will be able to read its history accurately if it possesses a discerning heart.

At the center of its history, the Church finds a Person. It is by encountering Christ that the Church finds its true identity. For at each stage of its history, the Church is confronted by the question of Christ: "Who do you say I am?" (MK 8:29)

The Church in the Philippines gave its reply in PCP-II. Like Peter, it affirmed that He was Christ, the liberating God, the Lord of history. To make its reply meaningful and credible, the Church entered into an act of conversion and change, into a process of becoming more (*magis*) and becoming new (*ecclesia semper reformanda est*).

This process of becoming called for a new identity - that of Church of the Poor and Community of Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. This identity is not yet an achievement. It is a continuing quest. And so there entered into the consciousness of PCP-H that we are a pilgrim Church journeying through history, no longer like scattered "grapes in the wilderness" (Hos. 9:10) but as a united community carrying together promises and commitments to the Lord. In short, we have become a covenant people whose encounters with Christ have led to inner transformation.

"A new heart I will give you, and new spirit I will place within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your being and instead I will give you a heart of flesh ..." (Ez. 36:26-28)

With this as my perspective, I can now propose some reflections on our topic.

1. Social Transformation is the responsibility of the entire Church community, not of alienated activists who are not walking in step with the community.
2. The active presence of the Church in history has two coordinate and complementary attributes - it is a Church of the poor and a Community of Disciples. Social transformation fails to be Christian if, basing its rationale on selective aspects of the Church of the Poor, it adopts strategies such as class warfare which injure the unity and charity basic to the Community of Disciples of Christ. Conversely, those whose stance is the Community of Disciples will fail in their social transformation projects if they ignore the preferential options subscribed to by the Church of the Poor.
3. Social Transformation is a historical process being assumed by a pilgrim Church. In this arduous journey, the Church is accompanied by the Holy Spirit. He is a transforming presence, the change wrought by the Spirit is not so much in a change of plans and projects, nor in a change of methods and techniques, but in an inner transformation in the very depths of one's selfhood. It is a vital and radical change. It is enduring and steadfast. Thus, the decisive moment of change in social transformation begins with the self.
4. An overview of the history of social transformation will show distinct stages, for example, the welfare, developmental, liberation. Given the limitations of human thought, we must remain aware that in dissecting reality, we could misrepresent its essential unity. From the perspective of a Church that journeys through history as a Community, these stages are not totally discrete nor compartmentalized from each other. The welfare experiences enters into the developmental which in turn enriches the liberation approach. They are links in a chain of unity. We know there is that basic unity because the pilgrim Church's history is, at each specific moment, permeated by the Holy Spirit. His presence dynamizes

each stage carrying it forward to fuller realization in the succeeding stages. Thus, previous stages are not destroyed by integrated in a richer more integral context. The unifying thread is the active presence of the Spirit which is always formative of community.

5. Social transformation calls for a spirituality where theory and praxis, contemplation and activity interact. It is a spirituality grounded in humility since it realizes that its analysis and programs are but partial and limited expressions. It is a Christ-centered spirituality because its work draws sustenance from encountering Christ. It is a spirituality of the people, rooted in that *sensus fidelium* based on the people's acts of worship and witness. Without a spirituality, social transformation is reduced to social work.

In conclusion, I ask the question: have we reached the end of the road as far as social transformation is concerned? Is it an already exhausted approach waiting for the advent of a new stage? I do not know how to answer this. Perhaps, social transformation is meant to clothed and sheltered, the last thirsty and hungry person shall have been satisfied, the last victim of injustice shall have been liberated.

Be that as it may, still wish to consider a possible next stage - that of culture, the forgotten dimension in our search for transformative approaches.

The modern Filipino, especially our youth, are living out their lives within the dictates of a culture where Christian values have minimal influence. Today's evangelizers face a challenge as formidable and disheartening as that faced by the first missionaries. Both were facing a pagan culture. Yesterday's ancestral idols were grouped around *Bathala* and his guardian *anitos*; today's sophisticated idols are house in the corridors of power and wealth. Yet our first evangelizers succeeded to a great extent in incarnating the Christian life and message in our pre-Magellanic culture. Today, we the second evangelizers seem to be engaged in a Sisyphean struggle to Christianize the neo-pagans of our modern culture.

Therefore I ask, is cultural transformation the next stage after social transformation? In social transformation we became ardent advocates of macro situations - the global economy, the global debt, the regional

trade, the national politics. And these activities bore good results. But perhaps we have now to re-focus our concerns on micro-situations - on the rituals and beliefs that govern the daily life of our families, the clusters of symbols which influence our social practices and which "synthesize a people's ethos."¹³ In this setting, the role of the Basic Ecclesial Communities as carriers of a new culture will come to the fore.

My dear friends, I hope my beginner's mind did not trivialize this important topic. I pray that I treated it with a compassionate mind. For if there is any one activity of the Church in recent times which has produced a host of dedicated workers, steadfast in their quest for justice - it is in the arena of social transformation.

My beginner's talk provides me with an opportunity to pay tribute to them.

Thank you

"Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History (New York: Weatherline Books. 1972). p. 485.

³Clifford Geertz as quoted in Carl F. Starkloff, S.J. "Inculturation and Cultural Systems" Theological Studies. 55 (1994), p. 75

Vatican II called liturgy 'source and summit' of the Christian life

JOHN PAUL II

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. We still have vivid memories of the great impression caused by the *liturgical changes* introduced by the Council. Christians and non-Christians alike first felt the impact of the Council's updating precisely through the reform of the rites.

The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Liturgy, approved on 4 December 1963, was in a certain sense the "first fruits" of the Second Vatican Council. More than providing for a merely external reform of worship, it wished to imbue the Christian community with a new awareness of the liturgy as "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed" and "the fount from which all her power flows" (n. 10).

Certainly — as the Council itself recalled — the liturgy is not everything, (cf. n. 9). It belongs among the numerous dimensions of ecclesial life, while in Christians it presupposes and requires a constant *process of conversion, formation, consistency* and witness. However within these individual and community co-ordinates, we cannot fail to recognize that the liturgy has a truly central value.

2. The reason for this centrality is clearly explained by the Constitution, which places it within the framework of *the history of salvation*. Liturgical prayer, in comparison with the many other forms

of prayer, has a status all its own, not only because it is the public prayer of the Church, but above all because it is a *true actualization*, and in a certain sense continuation, by means of signs, of the *marvels wrought by God* for man's salvation. This is particularly true in the sacraments, and most especially in the Eucharist, where Christ himself becomes present as High Priest and Victim of the New Covenant. What happened once and for all in his death and Resurrection is sacramentally represented and relived in the rite. In this way the celebrating Church becomes *the recipient of grace as well as its vehicle*, and all those who approach the sacraments with the proper dispositions receive from them fruits of sanctification and salvation.

The Council's directives to make the liturgy ever more meaningful and effective were truly wise. It made the rites correspond to their doctrinal meaning, imbuing the proclamation of God's Word with renewed vigour, encouraging a more active participation by the faithful and promoting those different forms of ministry which, while expressing the richness of charisms and ecclesial services, eloquently show how the liturgy is at the same time *an action of Christ and of the Church*. Moreover, the impetus given to adapting the rites to the various languages and cultures, so that in the liturgy too the Church could give complete expression to her universal character, was decisive. With these innovations the Church *did not cut herself off from her tradition*, but on the contrary, fully interpreted its riches and its demands.

3. Let us look to the Blessed Virgin, who lived at the very source of the New Covenant, participating in the new form of worship "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23). May Mary help us live the liturgy in all its meaning, in harmony with the heavenly liturgy. May she spur us above all to celebrate it with interior participation, so that our life may be illumined with holiness and the face of the whole Church may be transfigured.¹

'JOHN PAUL n. *Angelus*, 12 November 1995, 1, 12: *L'Osservatore Romano* (English-language), 15 November 1995.

Two Methods of Liturgical Inculturation: Creative Assimilation and Dynamic Equivalence

ANSCAR J. CHUPUNGCO, OSB

Introduction

The inculturation of Christian worship is a subject that requires a sound working definition of both culture and liturgy as well as the parameter of relationship that should exist between them. But in order to make that definition work concretely, methods are necessary. This paper proposes two, though obviously there can be several others. These are creative assimilation and dynamic equivalence.

It might be useful, before we engage in an analysis of these methods, to review briefly the definition of liturgical inculturation.¹ It is a process whereby pertinent elements of a local culture are integrated into the worship of a local Church. Integration means that culture influences the way prayer formularies are composed and proclaimed, ritual actions are performed, and the message expressed in art forms. Integration can also mean that local rites, symbols, and festivals, after due critique and Christian reinterpretation, become part of the liturgical worship of a local Church.

One result of inculturation is that the liturgical texts, symbols, gestures, and feasts evoke something from the people's history, traditions,

¹For a fuller explanation of inculturation and related terms, see A. Chupungco: *Liturgical Inculturation. Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (Collegeville 1992) pp. 13-36.

cultural patterns, and artistic genius. We might say that the power of the liturgy to evoke local culture is a sign that inculturation has taken place.

The immediate aim of inculturation is to create a form of worship which is culturally suited to the local people, so that they can claim it as their own. Its ultimate aim, on the other hand, is active and intelligent participation which springs from the people's conviction of faith. Inculturation properly understood and rightly executed should lead the assembly to a more profound appreciation of Christ's mystery made present in the celebration by the dynamic mediation of cultural signs and symbols. Inculturation, in other words, should aim to deepen the spiritual life of the assembly through a fuller experience of Christ who reveals himself in the people's language, rites, arts, and symbols. If inculturation does not do this, it remains a futile exercise.

Historical models of inculturation are not lacking. And they are always useful references, especially in the area of baptism, eucharist, architecture, and music.² But it is necessary to know how to handle them. One aspect of this question is learning to identify the cultural components that are present in Christian worship and to explain how and when they got there. The history of the liturgy teaches us that Christian worship, whose origin dates from the time of Christ and the apostles, has in the course of centuries integrated the culture of Greeks and Romans, of the Franco-Germanics, and of the people of the late middle ages in Europe. With such models history challenges us, as it were, to imitate the good things our ancestors in the faith accomplished, while avoiding the errors that seem to mark inevitably any human enterprise.

This brings us to the next step. How do we go about inculturating Christian worship? The question is one of methodology. Correct method is the key to correct inculturation. An examination of historical and contemporary models of inculturation shows that there are several methods one could possibly use. Two of these are what we might call

²See different articles on these topics by G. Lathrop, A. Chupungco, and A. Stauffer in *Worship and Culture in Dialogue*, LWF Studies (Geneva 1994).

creative assimilation and dynamic equivalence. In many ways these methods interlap.

The Method of Creative Assimilation

During the age of patristic creativity, especially in the time of writers like Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Ambrose, inculturation often came about through the integration of pertinent rites, symbols, and linguistic expressions, religious or otherwise, into the liturgy. Examples are anointing at baptism, the giving of the cup of milk and honey, and the footwashing of neophytes. We should include the type of ritual language Christian writers had introduced into the liturgy.³

These rites had been commonly practised by Greeks and Romans during the first four centuries. Some of them belonged to household rites, others to religious acts like the mystery rites. But by the method of creative assimilation they become part of Christian worship. They elaborated the core of the liturgical rite; they developed the shape of the liturgy. For example, the rite of baptism developed from the apostolic "washing in water with the word" (Eph 5:26) to a full liturgical celebration which included, after the fourth century, a prebaptismal anointing, act of renunciation toward the west and profession of faith toward the east, blessing of baptismal water, and postbaptismal rites like footwashing, anointing with chrism, clothing in white robes, and giving a lighted candle.

It is useful to mention here that those who applied the method of creative assimilation often made recourse to biblical typology. This means that cultural elements, such as the people's rites, symbols, and institutions are reinterpreted in the context of biblical personages and events. We can recall the ancient Roman practice of feeding the newly born infant with milk and honey, which could have been the origin of a similar rite for initiates of some mystery religions. The author of the third-century *Apostolic Tradition* reinterpreted this practice in the light of God's promise that he would lead the chosen people into a land flowing with milk and honey. When creatively assimilated into the rite of communion, the cup of milk and honey assured the Church's new-born sons and

³See: A. Chupungco: "Baptism in the Early Church and its Cultural Settings", *Worship and Culture in Dialogue*, pp. 39-56.

daughters or neophytes that by passing through the waters of baptism they had crossed over to the new land of promise.

This method offers a wide range of possibilities and hence a wild range as well. One can easily abuse the method. With little effort one can discover similarities between the liturgical rites and those of one's own culture, between liturgical symbolism and the local system of symbols, between liturgical language and the ritual language of a people. Encouraged by similarities, one might even make use of biblical types in an attempt to incorporate such cultural elements into the history of salvation.

But certain questions must be asked. First, supposing the newly added cultural elements possess what one can call "connaturalness" with the Christian liturgy, have they duly undergone the process of doctrinal purification? Similarly is not always a gauge of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Second, are the biblical types used appropriate? It is possible that violence is done to the biblical text in order to accommodate culture. The opposite is violence as well. Third, do the local elements enhance the theological understanding of the Christian rite? It can happen that they divert attention from the Christian rite by overly evoking their cultural provenance or worse send a wholly different message. Fourth, do they harmonize with the other elements of the rite and are they sufficiently integrated with them? Perhaps they are no more than useless decorative appendices or cultural tokens with little or no role to play in the unfolding of the rite. And fifth, we need to ask a question too easily forgotten by people who engage in projects of inculturation: do people accept them as authentic contribution of their culture to the enrichment of Christian worship?

The method of creative assimilation can be a useful reference when one intends to develop or expand the shape of a given ritual for use in a local church. Certain parts of the eucharistic celebration, such as the rite of gathering and the preaching of the word, can be developed by appropriate rites borrowed from the local culture after due process of purification.⁴ The rite of baptism can also be enriched by suitable

⁴A. Chupungco: *Liturgies of the Future. The Process and Methods of Inculturation* (New York 1989) pp. 56-101

rites of initiation which are found in people's traditions.⁵ The rite of marriage is another instance where ritual and linguistic elaboration can be made on the basis of local marriage rites.⁶ Likewise the institution of new liturgical feasts inspired by traditional and contemporary festivals can be an area where the method of creative assimilation may prove to be useful.⁷ Through this method the liturgical year is able to imbue with the mystery of Christ the various seasons of the year, traditional feasts, cycle of human work, and political systems of nations.

The method of creative assimilation is ideal in those instances where the liturgical rite is too austere or sober, if not impoverished. In the liturgy people need to see, feel, touch, taste, act. Sometimes their culture drives them to want to be impressed by the solemnity of a rite, to experience a dramatic effect that they can relish for a long period of time. Creative assimilation can bring these things about by enriching the liturgical rite with people's own rites. In other instances, however, where there is a fully developed liturgical rite, this method carries the danger of overloading the rite with secondary and peripheral elements or of courting repetitiousness. In such cases the method of dynamic equivalence is the right option. But there can also be instances when both methods can fruitfully be used hand in hand.

The Method of Dynamic Equivalence

Dynamic equivalence differs from the first. While creative assimilation starts with what culture can offer and hence what can be added to Christian liturgy, dynamic equivalence starts with what exists in Christian liturgy and how culture can further develop its *ordo* or shape. Dynamic equivalence, in other words, is a type of translation. It reexpresses the liturgical *ordo* in the living language, rites, and symbols of a local community. Concretely, dynamic equivalence consists of replacing elements of the liturgical *ordo* with something that has an equal meaning or value in the culture of the people, and hence can suitably transmit the message intended by the *ordo*. Because dynamic equivalence

⁵Tbid, pp. 125-139.

⁶R. Serrano: *Towards a Cultural Adaptation of the Rite of Marriage* (Rome 1987).

⁷A. Adam: *The Liturgical Year* (New York 1981).

draws its elements from people's culture and traditions, the liturgy is able to evoke life experiences and paint vivid images rooted in the people's history, traditions, and values.

At this juncture it might be useful to develop some of the aspects of the concept of dynamic equivalence. In his book *Christianity in Culture*, C. Kraft describes the elements which make up the concept of dynamic equivalence. Although his book deals directly with the problem of biblical translation, it sheds light on the method of dynamic equivalence. First, according to him, each language has its own genius and special character. Second, to communicate effectively in another language one must respect this uniqueness of any given language and work in terms of it. He informs us that attempts to "remake" languages to conform to other languages have been monumentally unsuccessful. Third, to preserve the content of the message the form must be changed.

In the liturgy we speak of "content" to refer to the meaning intended by the text or rite. "Form", on the other hand, refers to the outward shape made up of words, gestures, and sometimes material things, whereby the content is expressed. The *ordo* is the content and form combined. Kraft notes that different languages express quite similar concepts in very different ways and that no concepts are expressed in exactly the same ways. He concludes with a firm conviction that "the faithful translator, in attempting to convey an equivalent message in terms of the genius of the receptor language, must alter the form in which the message was expressed in the original language".* We should note at this point that Kraft's affirmation regarding the necessity to alter the form of the biblical message does not apply to some forms of the liturgy. To convey the message of baptism in terms of the genius of the receptor culture, we must not alter the original baptismal form of washing in water with invocation of the Holy Trinity. One should, however, allow the possibility of reexpressing the trinitarian formula and the manner of washing (immersion, infusion, sprinkling) in ways that are congenial to the local culture.

*C. Kraft *Christianity in Culture. A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-cultural Perspective* (New York 1979/1994) p. 272-73; see entire chapters 13-15, pp. 261-312.

The components of culture, such as rites, symbols, gestures, and the arts, have their own genius and special character. Hence it is necessary to respect their uniqueness and work in terms of it. We cannot overstress that culture has its own identity and laws and that these need to be taken into serious consideration. We should not deal with culture in a frivolous way. Furthermore, following the thinking of Kraft, we may say that certain components of culture have a universal dimension, that is, they are transcultural. Though different in their outward shape because of their provenance or *sitzim-leben*, some cultural components express concepts similar to the concepts articulated in the liturgy. The method of dynamic equivalence works on the premise that there are cultural elements which possess connaturality with the Christian liturgy. Though outwardly different, they are able to transmit the content of the liturgical *ordo*.

The opposite of dynamic equivalence is formal correspondence. It is called "formal", because it remains on the level of form or shape or external appearance. It does not take into consideration the cultural patterns, history, and life experience of the local Church. In the area of language formal correspondence tends to be no more than a literal, word-for-word or phrase-by-phrase, translation to the point of ignoring the linguistic characteristics of the audience. Thus, while it may appear "faithful" to the original, it fails to communicate the message effectively. According to Kraft, formal correspondence "aims to be faithful to the original documents". But he explains that this "faithfulness" to the original language centers almost exclusively on the literal transference of the original into the corresponding receptor language.⁹

Examples of formal correspondence in the liturgy are those translations that try to account for every word found in the original Greek or Latin formulary. According to proponents of formal equivalence, no word, even if it is merely a rhetorical device peculiar to the Latin oration like the word *quaesumus*, may be dropped in the receptor language.

Some formal translations are no more than mere transliterations, as for example, mystery for *mysterion* and sacrament for *sacramentum*. Such

Ibid, p. 265.

transliterations, though they are doctrinally safe, do not enrich the assembly's understanding of what the liturgy is talking about. Others are literal equivalents which do not take into account the socio-cultural or religious context of the receptor languages. For example, "in memory of" as a translation of *anamnesis* does not consider the receptor's use of the phrase "in memory of" in connection with tombstones. Hence to speak of the eucharist as an *ordo* "in memory" of Jesus can create in some cultural contexts the image of, the dead more than of the risen.

Not only the liturgical *ordo* but also the cultural components need to be examined. In this connection let us review briefly the components of culture.¹⁰ These are values, patterns, and institutions. They are the cultural components which enter effectively into dialogue with the liturgy. Dynamic equivalence deals not only with the liturgical *ordo* but also with the components of culture, in order to lead them to dialogue with each other.

Values are those principles that influence and give direction to the life and activities of a community. They are formative of the community's attitude or behavior toward social, religious, political, and ethical realities. Examples of values which have a special bearing on the liturgical *ordo* are hospitality, family ties or community spirit, and leadership.

The liturgy has also its set of values. These are parallel to human values, although they are obviously seen in a Christian perspective. Thus the liturgical *ordo* necessarily includes such values as hospitality, community spirit, and leadership. Indeed without these three values our liturgical celebrations lose their ecclesial dimension. The method of dynamic equivalence looks for parallel expressions of human values which can suitably restate the liturgical values.

Institutions, on the other hand, are society's traditional practices which celebrate significant phases of human life from birth to death, from one season to another, from one socio-political event to another. Liturgical calendar feasts and such rites as initiation, marriage, and

"A. Chupungco: "Liturgy and the Components of Culture", *Worship and Culture in Dialogue*, pp. 153-166.

funerals are equivalent to cultural institutions. As one can easily perceive, there is much that the method of dynamic equivalence can pursue in the area of institutions.

Cultural patterns refer to the typical way members of a society form concepts and express themselves in language, rituals, and art forms. We can thus identify thought, language, ritual, and art patterns. These are at the root of social and racial identities. At this point it is useful to remember that cultural patterns give external shape to values and institutions. Hospitality is expressed in language, rituals, and art forms; festivals are celebrated according to some defined ritual patterns of the community.

The liturgy too, in its western form, has cultural patterns, inherited from the Jewish, ancient Rome and Greece, and medieval Europe. The method of dynamic equivalence, after a study of these patterns, examines the possibility of reexpressing them in the cultural patterns of the local Church.

Application and Challenges

To help our reflection let us focus on the eucharistic *ordo*. Let us consider those moments in the *ordo* where values, patterns, and institutions appear prominently.

In the rite of gathering, for example, we are able to identify the values of hospitality and community spirit. Hospitality is expressed by the openness with which visitors and strangers are welcomed by community leaders to the eucharistic table. The Sunday ministers of hospitality welcome back members of the parish community and lead them to their seats. In the usage of the Roman Church the purpose of the rite of gathering, also called entrance rite, "is that the faithful coming together take on the form of a community".¹¹ The entrance song, which accompanies the procession of the ministers to the sanctuary, is also intended to enhance the community spirit. Singing together in assembly creates this bond. Indeed, the entire celebration should be a musical

"General instruction on the Roman Missal, Chapter 2, no. 21 (Vatican City 1975) p. 32.

liturgy.¹² Other traditional elements like the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and Collect foster the spirit of worship as a community act.

The challenges of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation are many. In some communities there might be a need to bring to greater consciousness some of the elements of the eucharistic gathering. Who welcomes whom to the celebration? How is hospitality made to interplay with leadership and ministeriality? What role does the procession of ministers play at this point? Does the entrance song create community spirit? Is the seating arrangement indicative of equality and mutual respect among members of the assembly? As one writer has impressively put it, "a special welcome is to be given to the poor, even if the bishop has to surrender his chair and sit on the floor".¹³ Is the rite of gathering confined to words and songs, or are gestures and material things also used to signify the meaning of eucharistic gathering? What impact does the traditional greeting, "The Lord be with you", have on the assembly's perception of Christ's presence among his people?

In the traditional eucharistic *ordo* the structure of the liturgy of the word consists of biblical readings, psalmody and alleluia, homily, and intercessions. As a unit they appear as a dialogue between God who proclaims the word and the community which listens and responds to the word. The liturgy of the word can be described as the word of God proclaimed in the readings, explained by the homily, and responded to in the recitation of the Creed and in the intercessory prayer. In this part of the *ordo* the community leader occupies the presider's chair and breaks the word of God through the ministry of preaching. The assembly listens as the word of God is proclaimed and explained, and thereafter utters or sings words of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication. For the word of God is addressed to the assembly as a community, and the response which the assembly makes through supplications is the prayer of every person in the gathered community for every person in the human community of the world.

¹⁷The Roman musical tradition for the eucharist consisted of singing the liturgical texts; it meant singing the liturgy more than singing hymns, for example, in the liturgy. Today the option exists of singing entrance, offertory, and communion hymns in place of the assigned liturgical text

"R. Cate: "The Eucharist", *The Church at Prayer* II (Collegeville 1986) p. 39.

Here again the methods of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation present challenges to local Churches. Some liturgical assemblies will need a more solemn, perhaps even dramatic, presentation of the book of Scriptures. It should be noted that the Roman tradition has no special introduction to the liturgy of the word; this begins quite abruptly with the first reading. There are cultural groups which feel uneasy about this system. Another challenge is the formation of readers who will combine the nature and qualities of liturgical reading with the cultural pattern of public proclamation with attention to voice pitch, rhythmic cadence, and public presence. The posture of the assembly during the readings has also a cultural significance which should not be ignored. Liturgical tradition tells the assembly to sit at the readings, except at the gospel when the assembly stands to listen in silent respect. However, in some cultures the posture of standing while someone of authority is speaking is considered disrespectful, an indication of boredom or of an eagerness to take leave.

The presider too is challenged to preach on the basis of the word that has been proclaimed. To do otherwise can be as culturally shocking as ignoring an official message addressed to the assembly. In the middle ages, when the sermon had lost any relation to the reading, pulpits were build in the center of the church, thus aggravating the problem between the homily and the proclaimed word of God. The idea of having a homiletic book independently of the lectionary disrupts the flow of liturgical dialogue between God and the assembly.

The intercessions should likewise be inspired by the word proclaimed and explained. If the concept of dialogue is taken seriously, the intercessions as the assembly's response cannot entirely ignore the proclaimed word. Unrelated intercessions bring to mind the image of two deaf people trying to engage in a conversation. The challenge also includes the formulation of intercessions, using the local community's language pattern. Lastly, it might be useful to note that the traditional Roman posture during the intercessions is standing, perhaps a reference to the priestly character of the assembly, to the *Ecclesia orans*. In some cultural situations, however, kneeling might express more convincingly an aspect of the intercessions, namely humble petition.

The two methods of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation challenge us as well in the area of liturgical space and furnishings.¹⁴ For example, the lectern and the eucharistic table should symbolize the unity between the word and Christ's body. This will be more clearly manifested if the material and decoration (which are hopefully of local inspiration) of the lectern are identical with those of the eucharistic table. There is indeed one table: the table of God's word and Christ's sacrament. Furthermore, where should these furnishings, together with the chairs of the presider and ministers, be located in relation to the assembly? What cultural pattern is followed by the community in the use of space? Does it correspond to the special feature of liturgical space which expresses simultaneously both community spirit and leadership?

Local culture can contribute much to make the liturgy of the word a living experience of God's presence in the assembly through the word proclaimed, explained, and responded to. The methods of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation, properly applied, can help the assembly to focus attention on the word through patterns and institutions with which everyone is familiar. There will be no need to get to the word of God through cultural patterns that are foreign to the community.

The meal of thanksgiving, also called liturgy of the eucharist, has a plan whose essential elements can be traced from a report of Justin Martyr (+ 165 A.D.).¹⁵ Bread and wine (mixed with water) were presented to the presider. He recited a lengthy prayer of thanksgiving over these elements; at the end the people shouted out "Amen" to express assent to the prayer made in their name. The eucharistic elements were then distributed to the assembly and to those who could not be present. Justin mentions that collection is made for widows and orphans and for the sustenance of the guests of the community. In the Roman liturgy revised by Vatican II these various elements are represented by the preparation of the gifts, the eucharistic prayer, and communion.

¹⁴C. Valenziano: *Architetti di chiese* (Palermo 1995) pp. 167-266; A. Stauffen "Inculturation and Church Architecture", *Studia Liturgica* 20:1 (1990) pp. 70-80.

¹⁵Justin Martyr: *I Apology*, c. 65 and 67, L. Pautigny, ed. (Paris 1904); partial English translation: W. Jurgens: *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (CoUegeville 1970) p. 57.

The various elements of the eucharistic liturgy project the values of community spirit, leadership, and hospitality. In the ancient *ordo* observed in Rome and North Africa bread and wine were offered by the community for the community's communion. What was superfluous, and we can presume that there was much, was distributed to the needy members of the Church. The eucharist became an occasion to be generous to the poor; communion became like a token meal, in order to have enough to give to the hungry. We can, to some extent, understand the stern words addressed by Cyprian of Carthage to a wealthy woman who Sunday after Sunday came to church bringing no gifts for the community yet "dared to eat", he said, "the bread offered by the poor". The eucharist urges the rich and the poor alike to share their possessions with the members of the community. It is through this generous sharing of goods that the community spirit is fostered.

The challenge here is to find appropriate rites to present the gifts to the community. What are the words exchanged at this moment between the offerer and the receiver? What gestures are involved? At what time of the celebration is the presentation of the gifts most appropriate: at the rite of gathering or at this part of the celebration? What type of gifts, other than the accepted tradition of bread and wine, can be brought to the community for its needs and the need of the poor?

In the recitation of the eucharistic prayer the role of the presider as leader has been evident from as far back as the second century. Witnesses are Justin Martyr in the second half of the second century and Hippolytus of Rome in the third century.¹⁶ It is worthy of note that this long and solemn prayer was recited by "the one who presides", the *proestds*, in the name of the assembly. That is why Justin remarks that the assembly shouted out its "Amen" to signify that it consented to what the presider had prayed in every one's name. We can say that during the eucharistic prayer the values of leadership and community interplay. In the liturgical thinking of the third and fourth century Christian writers the two fundamental roles of the presider at the eucharist consisted of the homily and the eucharistic prayer. In the tradition of the Roman Church the collect, prayer over the gifts, and prayer after communion are also called presidential prayers.

•Ibid.; see also Hippolytus: *Traditio Apostolica* 9, B. Botte, ed. (Mtaster 1989) p. 28.

The challenge regarding the eucharistic prayer is the composition of eucharistic prayer, which are not only integral (dialogue, preface, narration of the institution, prayer of anamnesis and epiclesis, intercessions for the Church and the world, and final doxology), but also local in its language and use of images.¹⁷ Language is not only a compendium of words and phrases; it is above all a mirror of the people's thinking and values. That is why, liturgical language, especially for this central prayer of the eucharist, should assimilate the linguistic qualities of the assembly: noble and beautiful, but accessible; prayerful and uplifting, but rhetorical employing what is proper to the local language like idioms, proverbs, and maxims.¹⁸ Failure to use the literary qualities of a language produces prosaic prayers, failing to impress on the hearers anything memorable, anything that can accompany them through life.

Another challenge is the manner of pronouncing the eucharistic prayer and the rites that should accompany it. How are solemn orations proclaimed by a leader in a given culture, and what are the traditional gestures or postures assumed by the assembly to express the attitude of reverence and communion with the leader: bowed heads, hands lifted up, standing, kneeling?

The rite of communion has much to say about community spirit. The common recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the sign of peace, if it is done at this moment, are some of the more significant expressions of community spirit. Originally, as we find in Justin Martyr, the sign of peace was placed after the intercessions, thus acquiring in the writings of Tertullian the name of *sigillum orationis* or seal of prayer. Pope Gregory I transferred it at this point as a *sigillum communionis* or sign of communion.

The central and eloquent symbol of community is, of course, the New Testament "breaking of bread" whereby the eucharist is called in Acts 2:42. The one bread must be broken, like the body of Christ

"For the Roman tradition, see E. Mazza: *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite* (New York 1986).

"P. De Clerck: "Le langage liturgique: sa nécessité et ses traits spécifiques", *Questions Liturgiques* 73:1-2 (1992) pp. 15-34; see A. Echegu: *Translating the Collects of the "SoUemnitates Domini" of the "Missale Romanum" of Paul VI in the Language of the African* (Munster 1984).

"broken" violently on the cross, in order to be shared. For there is no sharing, unless there is a breaking; and there is no eucharist, unless there is a sharing. Likewise the communal cup mentioned in 1 Cor 10:16-17 suggests unity among the members of the assembly. The principle of a communal cup would make us believe that before the age of the basilicas the size of the cup was determined by the size of the community.¹⁹ The later practice of pre-broken bread might have come about as a practical solution to the large number of communicants or, what seems a more likely explanation, as a consequence of the use of thin wafers called hosts. At the seventh-century papal Mass recorded by *Roman Ordo I*, a "main cup" was used, thus implying that there were other cups, probably for the communion of the assembly.²⁰ These practical solutions should not make us forget the basic value of community spirit expressed by the one bread that is broken and the one cup that is shared.

The methods of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation present cultural challenges in connection with communion. For example, the appropriate manner of giving the sign of peace is a question that torments both ecclesiastical authorities and liturgists alike, and probably it will take several more years before a suitable cultural sign can satisfy each member of a local community. There is also a need to study the ritual pattern of sharing food and drink in community. Who offers them? How are they presented to the people, what words are used by the one who offers and what response is given by the one who receives? What gestures accompany the reception of food and drink? At this point it is important to note that the eucharistic communion does not tolerate cultural patterns where a distinction is made between races, sexes, and social positions. To affirm the nature of Christian service, it might even be helpful if the leader receives communion last. In some cultures, in fact, parents eat after feeding the children and hosts eat after ministering to their guests.

The values of leadership and community spirit surface again at the concluding rite, sometimes strangely called "rite of dismissal". The

¹⁹See E. Foley: *From Age to Age: How Christians Celebrated the Eucharist* (Chicago 1991).

²⁰*Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen age*, vol. 2, ed. M. Andrieu (Louvain 1971) p. 104.

presider, in the capacity of community leader, invokes God's blessing on the assembly before sending them off. Something of the parents' action of blessing their children as these leave the house seems to be evoked by this gesture. The practice of some presiders to see off the assembly at the door of the church heightens this sense of family.

It has become fashionable nowadays to stress the aspect of mission on the basis of the words *he, missa est*. Although such connection does not enjoy etymological and historical support, one cannot deny that the dynamism of the eucharist is such that it compels the assembly to be preachers and doers of the word and sharers of Christ's gift of himself.

The challenge presented by dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation is to examine the local pattern for ending a gathering. Do people say, politely and in so many words, "go" at the end of a meeting or a visit, or do they normally say "come back soon"? But words at this point can be deceiving. In some cultures it is possible to say "you go now, while I stay here" to mean "I am sorry to see you go". What gestures are performed by people as they take leave of each other, even if for a short period of time?

Methodological Steps

The final phase of work on inculturation involves some methodological steps. The first requires that we examine closely the liturgical *ordo*: its history and theology, structure, fundamental elements, and cultural background. It is obvious that we should not institute modifications or alterations on any system unless we are thoroughly informed of its nature and component parts. Furthermore we need to determine how the liturgical *ordo* expresses cultural values, patterns, and institutions, or in other words, an analysis of the cultural patterns used by the *ordo*. Although we can ultimately trace our liturgical origins to the Jewish tradition, we have to accept the fact that in the west the Christian liturgy has been ulteriorly influenced by Roman cultural patterns. And even after other European cultural patterns, like the Franco-Germanic, had modified the Western liturgy, the style of its formulary and its ritual traits continued to retain Roman characteristics: sober, concise, direct, and practical. In other words, our eucharistic *ordo* has, by and large, still shaped by the Roman cultural patterns, even if medieval Europe has added its own contributions and the Reformation amended it

Having defined the *ordo*, we come to the second step. We need to determine which of its elements may or should be reexpressed in the culture of the people, without prejudice to its original meaning or intention. Like any structure, the liturgy possesses elements that are not subject to change: food and drink for the eucharist (tradition speaks of bread that is broken and cup of wine that is shared), water for baptism (tradition speaks of natural water, while giving preference to flowing water), and so on. This goes hand in hand with the study of one's own culture. We, each in one's own cultural ambit, need to enter into a process of introspection in order to define the cultural patterns at play in such values as hospitality, community spirit, and leadership. What images arise in our minds when we speak of these values? What are the words, phrases, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and maxims which we associate them with? Are we able to identify the rites, symbols, and institutions with which our society signifies these values?²¹ In short, we need to study those components of culture that possess a connaturality with the liturgical *ordo* and are able to reexpress it adequately.

The third step consists of comparing the patterns of the liturgical *ordo* with the cultural patterns of a local community. This step aims to establish the similarities and differences that exist between the two patterns. Does a particular linguistic expression, for example, convey the same sense as a liturgical anamnesis or epiclesis? Does a local ritual gesture correspond to the liturgical handlaying? Does orange color or technicolor say the same thing as the liturgical white? Does the practice that the host eats last express the same value as its opposite in the traditional rite of communion? And the questions can be as numerous as the elements of celebration? And the questions can be as numerous as the elements of celebration. If we are able to establish such similarities and differences, we can begin to apply the method of dynamic equivalence by replacing parts of the liturgy with equivalent cultural components.

In the process we shall need to remember the cautions concerning doctrinal and moral critique that leads to purification. Certain cultural "values" like polygamy and abortion of female offspring, to give extreme

²¹A. Chupungco: "Liturgy and the Components of Culture", pp. 153-166.

examples, are diametrically opposed to Christian values and can in no way influence the liturgical *ordo*.

On the other hand, we might in some instances make recourse to biblical types in order to ensure that the cultural equivalents are suitably integrated into the Christian *ordo*. Or in other words, that they are assumed into the history of salvation.

Lastly, we should not lose sight of the pastoral and spiritual benefits our people should derive from the changes. The old adage *sacramenta sunt propter homines*, sacraments are for the good of the people, should be the ultimate aim of inculturation.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed two methods of liturgical inculturation, namely creative assimilation and dynamic equivalence. Both can be useful, depending upon the local situation. Creative assimilation starts from what there is in culture, while dynamic equivalence from what there is in liturgy. Creative assimilation tends to introduce new elements, while dynamic equivalence, which is a type of translation, confines itself to transmitting the content of a liturgical rite in a new cultural pattern. One thing to remember is that these two methods can overlap and need each other for a fuller effect.

This exposition has many loose ends. The method of dynamic equivalence can be quite complicated and requires much effort, when taken seriously. For some Churches the basic questions still revolve around the concept of a liturgical *ordo*, which is in a fluid state because of the lack of a typical edition. For others the problem is how to define their own cultural patterns. It is to be hoped that by engaging in the work of inculturation local Churches will uncover the riches of a common liturgical tradition and effectively and faithfully transmit such riches to every generation.

Methods and Models of Inculturating Liturgical Rites

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INTRODUCTION

Rituals are part and parcel of the religious expressions of humanity. They manifest the relationship between God and human persons, in the ancient societies no one thought of religion as something to which some one joins or belongs to. It is part of one's way of being human. One becomes religious the moment he or she is born. Rituals are the natural expressions of this religiosity. When religiosity is expressed collectively rituals acquire certain official character. Understood in this sense can we ask: are there rituals in Christianity in the way in which they are understood in other religions? In Heb. 10, S-10, it would appear that Christ abolished all the existing rituals of the Jewish religion and instituted another manner of expressing religiosity. This consisted in doing the will of the Father through the offering of his body which took place on the Cross. The early Christian community remembered Christ's self-gift through the breaking of the bread in a fellowship meal. This was not understood as rituals neither by the Jews nor by the pagans of the time. In fact the Christians were considered atheists by them precisely because they lacked the religious rituals as understood by them. In the course of time, however, the Christians gradually transformed their fellowship meal into a ritual action. In doing this they incorporated many rituals from both the Jewish and also from the pagan rituals. In fact the universal character of Christian faith made it possible to adopt into its religious symbol system many elements even from other religions. Of course, in doing that they were very careful to avoid all types of syncretism and

mere material imitation. They interpreted their faith using the symbol system that were found in the cultures of the people where the Gospel was proclaimed. What we want to see here is the method and dynamics followed by the Christian communities in doing this.

I. DYNAMICS OF INCULTURATION OF RITUALS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

a) The Church was born Jewish. Hence in the beginning neither the apostles nor the others distinguished the Christians from the Jews. They considered themselves as Jews and followed the Jewish practices in everything: habit of prayer, celebration of feasts etc. With the entrance of the gentiles into the Church, it was felt that the Church should break away from her Jewish mould. This took place at the Council of Jerusalem. However maintained many elements from the Jewish practices in her Christian worship, such as the recitation of psalms, the style of the Eucharistic Prayer etc. Here we find a principle of continuity in operation.

b) When she entered fully into the Graeco-Roman world, she had to maintain her identity as the disciples of Christ in the midst of the rest of the community, while at the same time she had to be in relationship with the milieu. Here we find her operating on two principles:

i) refusal to accept any ritual or practice that would have the semblance of renouncing the Lordship of Christ. She thus adamantly rejects some of the pagan practices such as the offering of incense.

ii) substitution of some of the pagan feasts and their rituals with celebrations that would affirm the Lordship of Christ. The adoption of the feast of Christmas is a good example in the case.

c) The Church also seemed to have taken elements from the living religions provided her faith in Christ was in no way compromised: Clement of Alexandria says: "The same World manifests itself anew in Christ. The revelation of Christ takes the forms of appropriate to the various cultures. If Christianity spreads in the Greek world, it must doff its semetic form and put on a hellenistic form; it must speak of

Plato and Homer and take the attitudes of hermes and Ulysses"¹. Rites were taken from the fertility cult in the blessing of the water on Easter night; the priestly vestments were modelled on the Roman tunic etc.

d) In the middle ages the feudal system very much influenced the worship of the Church. Similarly the mentality and attitudes of the Germanic peoples with regard to the popular piety and the stress on the verticality of worship also affected the liturgical rites of the Church.

H. CRITERIA TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE INCULTURATION OF RITES ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIVES OF THE CHURCH

a) Participation of the faithful

The core of the liturgical renewal of Vatican II, consists, I believe, in making the symbols more meaningful and relevant to the community with a view to elicit the full participation of the faithful in the celebration. This is stated very clearly by the Liturgical Constitution: "In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother church desired to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made of the unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of the elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable. In this restoration both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as a community."²

b) Continuity with the tradition

One of the principles of the reform of the sacred Liturgy according to Vatican II is that sound tradition may be retained. "Care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing."³

¹J. Danielou-Henry Marroy, *The Christian Centuries*, vol. 1, pp. 128 ff).

²SC21.

³SC23.

c) Maintaining **the unchangeable element of liturgy**

Liturgical changes should not in any way deprive the rites of their role to signify what Christ has intended to communicate. 'To break the link that the sacraments have with Christ who instituted them, and with the very beginning of the Church, would no longer be to inculturate them, but to empty them of their substance'⁴.

d) Maintenance of the faith of the Church

The liturgy is the celebration of our faith. Care should be taken "not only to avoid error, but also to pass on faith in its integrity so that the rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church may correspond to rule of faith (*lex credendi*)"⁵.

e) Communion with the Universal Church

Liturgy reveals the true nature of the Church. In every particular Church the whole mystery of the Church is made present. In the light of this principle "every particular Church must be united with the universal Church not only in belief and sacraments, but also in those practices received through the Church, as part of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition"⁶. This includes also the liturgy.

m. **CRITERIA FOR THE RITUAL CHANGES IN INCULTURATION**

Having before us the tradition and the teachings of the Church we can now proceed to formulate a few criteria to be followed in our effort to inculturate the liturgical rites.

a) The change of symbols should not be understood as mere substitution of one symbol with another; a symbol is something that emerges from the experience of the community. The symbol cannot be imposed by another person or body that is alien to the existential situation of that community; a symbol, therefore cannot be prescribed for the universal Church. If the implications of the principles enunciated by the Council

The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, The IVTV Instruction for the right application of the Conciliar Constitution on Liturgy (n. 37-40), no. 25.

⁵*ibid* no. 27.

^{*}*ibid* no. 26.

are taken seriously, the liturgical symbols will have to be formulated by the local church. But the very same Constitution seems to contradict this principle when it gives the norms for the inculturation of liturgy: "Provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved, provision shall be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries. This should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and determining rubrics."⁷ While it is legitimate that our liturgical celebrations express our communion with the Universal Church, it is not possible to maintain this unity through a conformity with the Roman rite because then we shall not have symbols but mere signs that express a common meaning without any emotional involvement; and there cannot be any genuine participation in a celebration where the emotional element is not adequately expressed. Therefore, the provision that substantial unity of the Roman rite should be maintained in implementing the liturgical renewal cuts at the very root of the process of inculturation which is so essential for a liturgy that can elicit genuine participation of the faithful. The liturgical renewal will have to look forward to a genuine inculturated liturgies and not to a mere adaption of the Roman rite.

b) It should be admitted that the symbols taken from the cultures of the people will be at times ambiguous. They may not express the faith that we want to express. For this reason, it is necessary to subject these symbols to a prophetic critique. This means a reinterpretation of the symbols. In doing this, care should be taken that all misunderstandings on the part of the faithful are avoided. This will also make us reject certain symbols because they not only do not express what we want to express, but they may even distort the content of our faith.

c) Continuity with tradition should be maintained. Here we must distinguish tradition from traditions. The latter is the expression of the former. It is very true that traditions are the carriers and conveyers of the tradition; but they are also particularized expressions of the tradition. Therefore, we should be able to discover what they really convey and express them through the symbols that are capable of expressing them in our culture.

⁷SC38.

d) Communion with the Universal Church should take place through the liturgy. But this communion cannot be always on the level of ritual expressions. When we all express the same Mystery in different ways, we unfold its riches and in that process we are in a richer communion than if we were to repeat the same ritual all over the world.

IV. THE INDIAN EXPERIMENT IN INCULTURATING LITURGICAL RITES

The church in India took the implementation of the Vatican renewal very seriously and considered inculturation of worship as one of the immediate priorities in the liturgical renewal as can be seen from the declarations of the CBCI at the General Body meeting of 1966 held at New Delhi in October 1966*. It was also accepted by the Roman authorities enthusiastically at its initial stages as can be seen from the ready approval of the so-called 12 points of adaption proposed by the CBCI in 1969⁹. But things began to take a new turn when efforts were made to make liturgy genuinely Indian through the composition of texts and rites that did not have reference to the official liturgical books published by Rome. The progress of liturgical inculturation in India has suffered a set back when the Indian Church, in fidelity to the Spirit and in the spirit of Vatican II renewal began to evolve its own symbol system. I shall try to trace the story of this struggle between the need of an authentic inculturated liturgy for India and the effort of Rome to foster an Indian liturgy which preserves the substantial unity of the Roman rite. In this context, I would like to note that the protagonists of this ritual Roman unity are not only those who are in charge of the Congregations in Vatican, but also many of those who preside over the particular Churches in India as well as people who are quite satisfied with the impersonal character of the pre-Vatican liturgy.

1. The struggle towards the inculturation of liturgy

Although many institutions and organizations took up the challenge posed by Vatican II in this field, I think it is right to say that the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre set up by the CBCI at

•Report of the General Meeting of the CBCI, Delhi, 1966.
»Notitiae 48 (1969) pp. 365-374.

Bangalore has played a unique role in this area. A brief survey of the efforts of NBCLC will enable us to understand the journey that the Indian Church has made in order to create a liturgy for our land with its variety of cultural expressions and spiritual, ethos.

The task of liturgical inculturation in India followed a phased programme thoroughly planned and to be gradually implemented¹⁰. The first phase of it consisted in the efforts to create an Indian atmosphere of worship: gestures, postures, forms of homage, objects and elements, silence and interiority. In order to effect this, the liturgical commission prepared a document that contained twelve points of adaptation to be introduced into the liturgy of the Eucharist. These were approved by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in April 1969. Later on, the whole Order of the Mass was rearranged in order to integrate these twelve points of adaptation into the celebration in such a way as to lead to an orderly flow and harmony in the conducting of the liturgical action. Thus, a process was initiated towards the evolution of an Order of the Mass for India.

The second stage of our movement towards an indigenous liturgy for India consisted of some major adaptations such as the composition of prayer formulas, including the Eucharistic prayer, preparation of rituals for the celebration of the sacraments and the celebrations of Indian festivals. An Indian anaphora was composed with a view to proclaim the marvel done by God not only in Israel, but also in India and in the whole world, taking into account the language and the manner of praying specific to India. The text of the anaphora was circulated for experimentation and comments and was proposed for approbation to the CBCI in 1972". But it was not declared passed due to a dispute over the majority of votes required; hence it was not officially forwarded to the Congregation for Divine Worship. It was however used in many institutions and by many groups by way of experimentation with the authorization of the Bishops. In 1975, through a letter of the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, this experimentation was stopped and the use of the Indian anaphora as well as its circulation in the meeting of the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) - Latin, a

¹⁰D.S. Amalopavadass, Towards indigenisation in the Liturgy, Bangalore, p. 26ff.

••Report of the General Meeting of the CBCI - Madras 1972.

revised text of the same anaphora was presented and approved. This text has been forwarded to Rome for approval. No reply has yet been received from the Roman Congregation.

The work of adapting the sacramental rites has been undertaken by various subcommissions and is still going on in various parts of the country. The plan of adapting Indian feasts has been implemented to some extent. Masses were composed for the celebration of certain religious feasts such as Divali, Saraswathi Puja and some social festivities like the harvest festivals and national celebrations like the Independence day and the Republic day. A commission was also set up in order to work out a draft for an indigenized form of the Liturgy of the Hours.

The third stage of inculturation of liturgy in India was concerned with the use of the Scriptures of other religions in the Christian liturgy. In 1973, the NBCLC published *Pro manuscripto* - a collection of texts from the Scriptures of other religions for personal reading and meditation. It was also proposed as a possible text for the Office of Readings for the eventual Indian edition of the Liturgy of the Hours.. In this collection, together with the biblical and patristic texts from the typical edition of the liturgy of the hours, an optional reading taken from the Hindu and other religious literature was introduced. It was, however, very strongly felt that the use of non-Christian literature in the liturgy needed further and deeper study and reflection. A research seminar on non-biblical Scriptures was conducted in 1974 in which the question was thoroughly examined by the scholars in various disciplines¹². The pastoral proposals based on theological and liturgical principles regarding the use of non-biblical Scriptures in the Christian liturgy were submitted to the hierarchy for its consideration and decision. In the meantime, the same letter of the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1975, mentioned above, forbade the use and circulation of these texts for the Office of Readings.

2. Policy of inculturation followed by NBCLC

The inculturation of liturgy in India could not be done without taking into account the socio-ecclesial and cultural situation of the

¹²D.S. Amalopavadass, *Research seminar on non-biblical Scriptures*, Bangalore, 1974.

country. There exists three different rites in India: Roman Rite, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rite. Although all three of them have been existing in this country for centuries, none of them reflects the cultural reality of the nation. In this sense we may say that all need to be inculturated. Hence all the three rites are to take up the task of renewing their respective liturgies without sacrificing their specific ecclesial identity, and at the same time work towards the creation of authentic Indian forms of worship. Perhaps in this process they might arrive at something common, since the human elements or the cultural reality is the same for all in spite of their particular ecclesiastical traditions.

Besides the ritual differences, India is a country of regional diversity. The plurality of Indian cultural and religious traditions requires that the indigenized liturgy should not be rigidly uniform. Each group ought to develop its own forms of worship, thus working towards an authentic form of worship. This will result in the creation of liturgies in India that are pluriform, but at the same time having many elements in common, since there is a basic cultural unity in the country in spite of the differences in expressions.

Our effort towards an authentic Indian liturgy have also an ecumenical dimension. The other Christian Churches are also invited to work towards the evolution of an authentic Indian liturgy within their own ecclesial traditions. Thus the policy of liturgical inculturation is an all round ecclesial initiative having as its goal not a uniform Indian liturgy, but authentic Indian liturgies with varieties of forms and expressions, manifesting the richness of the mystery of Christ in the rich cultural context of the nation.

3. The difficulties encountered in the implementation.

We can find in this matter a double attitude both on the part of the people and ecclesiastical authorities: in principle all accept it; but when it comes to implementation there seems to be many practical difficulties. Some of these have their roots in the very understanding of being Christian and Catholic, while the others stem from the unwillingness to change the status quo. We shall try to analyze them.

For some, inculturation would lead towards hinduisation. The method of evangelization followed in India, especially during the colonial

period is partly responsible for it; it was based on a negative approach to other religions and cultures. To become a Christian meant to accept the Christian faith in a particular cultural form in which it was presented by the missionaries. In the process of inculturation we introduce many forms of worship which are in common with the other religions. These were rejected by the Christians as evil at the moment of their conversion to Christianity; to accept them now would amount, at least for some, to return to what they rejected as evil and erroneous. It is not very easy to overcome this emotional block, even for people who are intellectually convinced about the need of inculturation.

Another difficulty is found in the misunderstanding of ecclesial communion and catholicity. This is very often explained and understood as dependence on Rome. We find this dependence both in the people and in the leadership. The idea of a genuine local Church as a community of faith gathered together in a particular place, trying to express its faith through symbols taken from its life and culture, is not fully understood by all. In the mind of many, the Indian Church is a branch of the Universal Church, or rather, of the Roman Church.

In the third place, our Bishops need to become aware of their role as leaders of their Christian communities. The consciousness that they, as leaders of their liturgical communities, are the first ones responsible for the creation of an authentic liturgy that expresses the faith of their communities through symbols taken from the culture and life **of their** people is an absolutely needed condition for the fulfillment of their **role** as leaders and animators of their liturgical assemblies. It is necessary for them to realize that liturgical celebration is primarily the action of the local community and as animators of their communities, they have the duty to make liturgy relevant to their people and not merely implement literally some Roman documents. In fact, even the new liturgical rites prescribe that there should be necessary adaptations before implementing them in their dioceses.

Finally, we see that a major obstacle to inculturation has been the lack of catechesis. The new liturgy demands changes of attitude and understanding on the part of the faithful and pastors. This calls for an effective pastoral action on the part of the bishops, priests and lay-leaders. In spite of the fact that we have been working at the implementation

of inculturation in India for the last 25 years, one of the reason why we have not achieved the desired result is the lack of catechizers.

4, The practice of inculturation in the life of the Church.

Now we come to the practice of inculturation in liturgy in the life of the Christian communities in India. Wherever the indigenized liturgy was introduced with the appropriate instruction and initiation, the acceptance on the part of the people has been almost total. The experiential character of the celebration has touched the emotional life of the Christians to such an extent that faith has begun to become more and more meaningful. This is noticed in a special way in the widespread use of Indian forms of singing and in the use of Indian symbols and expressions of homage such as *arati* etc. during worship. Participants who have had an experience of the indigenized liturgical celebrations attest that this way of worshipping has given them a taste for prayer, a sense of belonging to the church that is their own, has created a greater awareness of God's presence in their lives, a greater appreciation of the cultural heritage of the nation as a gift of the creator, a strong commitment to the Gospel, a more profound sense of respect for people who belong to other religions and readiness to join them in the common quest for fullness and fulfillment, a more experiential awareness of the mysteries of Christian faith and a deep-felt need to live a more authentic Christian life.

5. The future of inculturation of liturgy in India

In what sense can we speak of an inculturated liturgy in India? For many, this is a problem: given the fact that India is a country of cultural pluralism and that liturgy is Christian worship, how can we justify the borrowing of symbols from the other religions? The basis on which the whole process of inculturation rests is the reality of incarnation. It is the emergence of the divine from within the human reality; every human reality can serve as the ground of this emergence. "Incarnation is the dynamic and most personal encounter between God and man. This dynamic event of God-man encounter took place in the very dynamics of human existence and world history, and in the heart of a changing world, in the midst of a socio-cultural milieu. It also set in a dynamic

process, and interaction and transformation in each man, in the entire human community and in the whole cosmos"¹³.

The resurrection of the Jesus Christ is the beginning of this process on the cosmic level. The church is the manifestation of this dynamism. Hence there is no Church unless it emerges from within the human community; it is for this reason that we can say that there is no Church without being localized, concretized, visibilized in a particular culture milieu. The Church is therefore a mystery that happens and not an institution that is transplanted. It has for its humus the religious, cultural and social reality of the particular area. Christ has given it no structures, and much less any rituals; the only gift of Christ to the Church is His Spirit which has to incarnate and acquire visibility through the human reality wherever and whenever the Gospel is preached. Once we accept this principle of emergence from below as the starting point of the ecclesial reality, inculturation becomes an absolute necessity for the very historical existence of the Church. We have to situate the liturgical inculturation within this theological perspective.

In India, the process of evangelization has consisted very much in the changing of religion rather than in the conversion of heart. As a consequence, becoming a Christian meant to renounce Hinduism as a religion with all its symbolic system. In the bargain a very important element of Indian religiosity has been overlooked, namely the role of Hinduism as an expression of the spiritual quest of the human being in India. The religious and cultic symbols are expressions of this quest. Pope Paul VI on the occasion of his visit to India asked the people of this country to "express their faith and devotion in harmony with the civilization of India and in truly Indian forms" and added that if efforts were made in that direction the Church, having gathered the varied treasures of many cultures of East and West, would "be further enriched by the contribution of her Indian sons, drawn from their country's rich and ancient cultural traditions"¹⁴. While religion tends to reduce God to an idol, spirituality is oriented to an unconditional search for God on the part of man. What we need to eliminate is the defects of the former and maintain the dynamism of the latter. Then the adoption of

^DD.S. Amaloiavadass, *Gospel and Culture*, Bangalore, p. 21.

¹⁴Jacob Mananathodath, *Culture, Dialogue and the Church*, New Delhi 1990, p. 145.

symbols from the Indian religious and spiritual tradition will not only be relevant, but will become an absolute necessity for initiating a process of meaningful encounter between the human and the divine, namely the incarnational movement.

The other major problem seems to be the plurality of cultures. In reality this is a problem only for those who hold a monocultural view of human society. The Indian perception of reality is based on experience and not on abstraction. In a descriptive approach the one is the combination of the many and not the result of the elimination of the many. India, in fact is a mosaic of cultural expressions. The plurality of cultural expressions is a constitutive element of our cultural reality. In the light of this, we can never envisage a monolithic Indian liturgy. Every region, every particular group will have to work towards the inculturation of liturgy from within its life situation. This will result in many Indian liturgies. The policy adopted by the Indian Bishops, namely, regionalization, with regard to inculturation, is certainly a correct direction, provided they are seriously committed to it.

No one can think of liturgy as a formula that emerges from committees and commissions. In fact no liturgies have come from the expertise of the liturgists. The liturgical experts are the attentive listeners and participants of community that is living its faith. Spontaneity has a very important role to play here. Precisely because of this spontaneous character of liturgy, liturgical change will be on-going process. We can never have a liturgy that is made once-for-all. For this reason the true liturgist is the one who is celebrating liturgy and not a scholar who studies the rituals even if he does it with sound theological principles.

Conclusion

We cannot build up an authentic Church and consequently an authentic liturgy unless we take seriously truth of the resurrection of Christ by which he did not simply come out alive from the tomb but became present in the whole world. He is deeply involved, therefore, in our reality. He is proclaiming the gospel and challenging our society continually. As disciples of the Lord we need to acquire the sensitivity to listen to him and respond to him from within our history and struggles of life. This is the real test of the quality of our faith and not merely repeating the formulation of faith made elsewhere and imitating the ritual

in books published in a far away place. Inculturation of liturgy is not therefore, a mere cultural expression of our faith, but the manifestation of our readiness to respond courageously to Christ who continues his mission in our world.

Methods and Models of Translating Liturgical Texts in the Philippines

MOISES B. ANDRADE

Filipino religious culture ranges "from the simplest family rituals to the most elaborate town processions, religious dances and theatrical religious presentations" and "the people perform them with a characteristic flair for drama and colorful festivity, abandon and spontaneity."¹ In this context, the texts of the books for the celebration of the sacred liturgy translated for the Filipinos are envisioned as ensemble of evocative statements addressed to God and people, strong enough to awaken the hearts and minds of the whole assembled community, shaped by the appealing expressions of regular family rituals and occasional town or village festivities during thanksgiving for harvest or to commemorate some religious or national events.

This is the implication of the "1969 Instruction on Translation of Liturgical Texts":

It is not sufficient that a liturgical translation merely reproduce the expressions and ideas of the liturgical text ... a faithful translation cannot be judged on the basis of individual words: The total context of this specific act of communication must be kept in mind, as well as the literary form proper to the respective language.²

¹A. CHUPUNGCO, *Towards A Filipino Liturgy*, Manila, 1976, p. 84.

²*Comme leprevoit, 6 Documents on Liturgy*, Collegeville, 1982, p. 284.

Culture and language have one common denominator, namely, experiences of people embodied in spoken and written form. How the experiences of the Filipinos in Tagalog speaking provinces came to be expressed in biblical and liturgical passages employed in Church's celebrations is now the focus of our observation.

1. Biblical Passages

In 1968, as the four hundredth anniversary of the beginning of Christianization of the Philippines was being celebrated and the last session of the Second Vatican Council was taking place, Cardinal Rufino Santos of Manila entered into formal agreement to undertake the project of interconfessional translation of the whole Bible in Tagalog through the joint effort of officially appointed Catholic representatives and corresponding Protestant delegates coordinated by the Philippine Bible Society which enjoyed full support of the United Bible Societies. Cardinal Santos, in effect, provided both personnel and financial assistance.

In 1970, the sample of a finished portion - the Gospel according to Saint Mark - was presented to Pope Paul VI when he came to Manila to grace the inauguration of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences on November 28 of that year. In 1981, the complete Bible, the first interconfessional version in the Philippines, was presented to Pope John Paul II when he came to Manila to beatify the first Filipino saint, Lorenzo Ruiz de Binondo, on February 18 of that year. In 1984, the Sunday Tagalog Lectionary was made available on the basis of the interconfessional version and in 1993, the whole Tagalog Lectionary according to the specification of the 1980 Second Typical Edition of the *Or do Lectionum Missae* was published.

1.a. Method of Biblical Translation

Guided by the efforts of Dr. Eugene Nida who since 1963 worked hand in hand with Cardinal Carlo Martini even as the latter was still teaching Scriptures at the Biblical Institute in Rome, in the capacity of the former as the official expert and coordinator of the United Bible Societies towards the realization of the Good News Bible or Today's

English Version, the whole enterprise was known as "dynamic equivalence" method.³ This entails translating the poetic passages in accordance with the current literary counterpart available in the receptor language, rendering the narratives in a way corresponding to story-telling styles, and presenting the proverbs and maxims of the wisdom writings in the approximate equivalents in the native sayings.⁴ This effort was totally in line with 1969 Instruction on Translation that "*individual words*" should not be rendered as slavishly faithful as possible but rather the focus should be on the "*total context*" of communication and on the "*literary form*" proper to Tagalog. Thus, the psalmist, the prophets, the wise teachers and the apostles became Tagalog poets declaiming their verses while the narrators became grandparents and other Filipino elders telling the accounts of God's acts.

To both Catholics and Protestants, the effects of the dynamic equivalence were shock and surprise. They were looking for some favorite lines employed for polemics against one another and these

³E. NIDA, *Towards A Science of Translating* (Leuven: E.J. Brill, 1964) 171: "In view of the fact that Formal-Equivalence and Dynamic-Equivalence translations represent polar distinctions, it is quite understandable that there are certain areas of tension between them. The problems are not too acute in dealing with distinctly contrastive types of translations, but when the principles governing some particular translations are about halfway between the extremes, the conflicting factors produce real difficulties. Under such circumstances the three principal areas of tension may be described as: (1) formal and functional equivalents, (2) optional and obligatory equivalents, and (3) rate of decidability."

⁴*Ibid.*, 176: "The translation of a poem in a verse really involves 'composing another poem' (Matthews, Jackson 1959, *Third Thoughts on Translating Poetry*, p. 67). When one must organize a message into periodic units, as the composition of poetry requires (Stankiewicz, Edward, 1960, *Linguistics and the Study of Poetic Language*, p. 77), only rarely can the content be translated by the customary equivalents. Horace sensed this problem centuries ago and warned translators against any word-for-word kind of rendering (*Nee verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus interpres*).

passages became no longer judgemental and condemnatory but rather pleasant literary forms. They were amazed to hear God's oracles in more familiar and assuaging poetic declamations.⁵

Both sides had to adjust to the new yet old language; new in being employed in Scripture translation, old in being the familiar medium of communication during the past three centuries. In the process of adjustment, both sides discovered the joy of celebrating liturgy as unitive and non-polemic service as well as the new feeling of being in communion with one another despite the still remaining divergences. It eventually surfaced that these divergences had been employed by ministers of both sides to gain their additional financial bonus to the great detriment of the communal oneness desired by all* congregations.

1.b. Models of Biblical Translation

While the dynamic equivalence method is somewhat undefined, the models here on the other hand are clear and precise. Poets during festivities, story tellers during reunions of families and communities are very much familiar. The question now is whether they could enter the sacred celebrations previously dominated by preachers who were apologists, polemicists, dogmatists, and moralists as well as by ministers who thrived in their religious racket (unwittingly at times) through their sanctimoniousness. These clerical obstacles which prevented the joy of celebration from permeating the liturgical services were eventually overpowered by the responsiveness of the congregations who began to be able to read their lives in the Biblical passages being proclaimed instead of being previously treated to doctrinal and moral invectives forced upon the texts. This situation did not lead to polarization but to the welcomed respite provided by the inroad of pentecostal style of celebration wherein faith, hope and love were nourished by singing biblical passages amidst some vestiges of alienating clerical performances.

⁵E. NIDA and C. TABER, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1982) 31-32: "The Scriptures must be intelligible to non-Christians, and if they are, they will also be intelligible to Christians. Not only is this principle important in making the translation of the Bible effective as an instrument of evangelism, but is also necessary if the language of the Church is to be kept from becoming an esoteric dialect - a symbol of belonging and identification or a semimagical means of imploring God."

Poems, stories and songs are engaging experiences providing liberating relief now for both congregations and ministers. The surprising discovery was, for the ministers, that they would not lost but increase their collections if they lead meaningfully the services in exuberant style which accords with the dynamic equivalence method employed in the rendition of biblical passages.

2. Liturgical Passages

In 1973, Cardinal Santos died and was succeeded in 1974 by Cardinal Jaime Sin. This time the translation of liturgical passages was tackled with determination. In 1975, Cardinal Sin convened the bishops of the Tagalog region to form the committee for translation of the liturgical books. Every diocese sent a representative and the goal was set: the availability of the whole Missal in Tagalog in 1979 for the celebration of the Synod of Manila. The Order of Mass was finished in 1978 but the whole Missal was completed only in 1981.

Inasmuch as the project of cultural adaptation of the Rite of Eucharistic Celebration in Filipino was already submitted to the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship since 1976, Cardinal Virgilio Noe made a very practical suggestion that while waiting for the confirmation of the project, some elements of idiomatic formulation of liturgical texts could be applied to all instances appropriate in the official Tagalog translation of the Roman Missal. The result was the arrival of lines and passages from the Filipino Mass into the Tagalog Missal. Still, the rite and the total make up of the Tagalog Missal is Roman so its title bears this undeniable situation: *AKLAT NG PAGMIMISA SA ROMA* - The Book of Celebrating Mass in Rome. This title surprised many who thought that the Roman Rite is a universal manner of celebrating the Eucharist. But it revealed the limitation of the translation work, namely, unless we have a rite of our own we cannot really claim to be celebrating a truly Filipino Mass. What we have is a translation, albeit a commendable one inasmuch as the Institute of Tagalog Language awarded it with a plaque of commendation on Easter Sunday of 1982. Still it could very well be celebrated in Rome and everybody can find all the Roman items there except the language.

2.a. Method of Liturgical Translation

Inasmuch as the translation of the Bible in Tagalog employed the dynamic equivalence, the same method found its way in the rendition of liturgical passages in Tagalog. This time, however, some given materials were calling for employment as points of references and working patterns. Going back to what Fr. Chupungco suggested as range of Filipino religious culture "from the simplest family rituals to the most elaborate town processions, religious dances, and theatrical presentations," the translators were faced with enormous materials which were also pointed out by Fr. Chupungco.

The simplest family rituals consisted of praying the Rosary before the house altar, the successive days of prayer for departed members of the family, the engagement and marriage of family members and the visit of a pilgrim image. The regular family rituals provide the patterns of prayer: Father-Son-Holy Spirit, Our Father, Hail Mary and Creed.

Presidential prayers of the Missal and, eventually, the ritual assumed the structure of (1) address to the Father with appropriate title based on his acts proclaimed by the biblical passages, (2) the *anamnesis* and its echo in the petition, (3) the conclusion articulating the mediation of the Son in cooperation of the Holy Spirit

The Tagalog "Our Father" offers the model for the basic and frequently recurring petitions.⁶ The Tagalog "Hail Mary" serves as source of laudatory acclamations.⁷ The Tagalog Creed supplies the articulations of events of salvation.*

The "town processions" and "religious theatrical presentations" supply the materials to render in an appealing way the principal expressions for the Christmas-Epiphany and Lent-Holy Week-Easter celebrations. The search for an inn during the Christmas Eve is a procession and dramatic event setting the outlook of people in welcoming

«M. ANDRADE, *The Institution Narrative's Consecration of the Bread in the Eucharistic Prayer of the Filipino Mass: Example of liturgical Acculturation in the Roman Rite*, Paul VI Institute of Liturgy, 1992, 100-101.

mid.. 7. 67.

**Ibid.*, 75.

the Lord's coming. In its title *Panuluyan* and in its other significant terms, the appropriate expressions to meaningfully articulate the people's perception of the Christmas-Epiphany texts can be found.' The Lent-Holy Week-Easter celebrations in the Philippines have been shaped by the poetic verses sung as popular devotion of families, neighborhood and communities engaging in proclaiming the Lord's passion and victory. These verses supply the greatest bulk of materials for adequate expressions of the Paschal Mystery in Tagalog.¹⁰

2.b. Models of Liturgical Translation

The concrete models for the liturgical celebrations consist of family prayer gatherings, the Christmas *PANULUYAN* and Lenten verses wherein the roles of the participants range from leading and carrying on the prayers, articulating the poetical dialogues, and narrating the events ecstatically. Thus the liturgical ministers and the community are prayer-leaders and respondents, poets and narrators or story-tellers. Rather than being simply involved in the former model of incarnating the Latin texts, now the liturgical celebrants, namely, the people and their ordained servants are truly involved in joyful and meaningful services to build up the Body of Christ, the Church of the locality.¹¹

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the remarks of Dr. Eugene Nida regarding the reactions to the development consequent to the use of dynamic equivalence method and its corresponding appeal to clear and familiar local models can sum up the resistance of persons obsessed with "a desire to preserve the mystery of the language":

Some persons, both national and foreign, genuinely fear that if the Scriptures are made fully clear, something of the mystery of religion will be lost. In a sense this is true, if one conceives of "mystery" in a strictly non-Biblical sense, but in the Bible "mystery" identifies something which was not

88. »A. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Renewal in the Philippines*, Manila, 1980, 71-

"Ibid., 89-99.

¹¹*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, articles 1140-1142.

formerly known but which has been revealed to the initiated. There is a vast difference between (1) the mystery of the Christian faith, e.g., the incarnation, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world, and the will of God in history, and (2) the confusion which results from people not understanding what is perfectly clear in Scriptures themselves, i.e., in the original writings. To substitute a sort of false mystery (based on unintelligibility of translation) for the true mystery of Christian faith is a total debasing of religion, and may be merely an excuse for ignorance.

At the same time one reason for not wanting to remove something of "mystery of words" is derived from the fact that in some instances Christian scholars have a certain professionalism about their task and feel that to make the Bible too clear would be to eliminate their distinctive function as chief expositors and explainers of the message. In fact, when one committee was asked to adopt some translations which were in perfectly clear, understandable language, the reactions of its members were, "But if all the laymen can understand the Bible, what will the preachers have to do?"¹²

By way of reply, the preachers and liturgical ministers are now to proclaim, through adequately translated texts, the principal and basic mystery of the Lord's presence in the community that celebrates and engages in the building up of Christ's Body, the Church, who is no other than their very selves incorporated in the Lord's own person.

¹²E. NIDA, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 101.

Cases and Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

SIMONY

Our Congregation runs a religious store. We sell religious statues, sacred vessels (chalices and ciboria), sacred vestments, rosaries, medals, candles, and religious reading materials like books, booklets, novenas, etc. In order to help our customers we have always a few articles that have been previously blessed, like rosaries and medals so that those who want to buy them they will not have to look for a priest to bless them later. However, some young priests and seminarians keep telling us that we cannot do this. "To sell blessed religious articles is prohibited by the Church as a simoniacal deal", they say. Would you mind to enlighten us about this question:

A Religious Sister

This is not the first time that we have been asked similar questions. It shows that there is no accurate concept of what simony is, as in the present case. Thus, we are willing to answer the Religious Sister's question by briefly elaborating on the notion and nature of simony, in order to determine when simony exists. Any Manual of Theology or Canon Law gives the main elements of simony as well as the penalties imposed by the Church on those who commit this crime.

Etymological Definition. The term simony comes for the delict committed by Simon Magus, related in the Acts of Apostles, chapter VUL

9-24. We read in verses 18-24 of chapter VIII: "Simon Magus observed that it was through the laying of the hands that the Apostles Peter and John conferred the Spirit, and he made them an offer of money with the request: 'Give me that power too, so that if I place my hands on anyone, he will receive the Holy Spirit.'"

"Peter said in answer: 'May you and your money rot, thinking that God's gift can be bought. You can have no portion or lot in this affair. Your heart is not steadfastly set on God. Reform your evil ways. Pray that the Lord may pardon you for thinking the way you have. I see your poisoned will gall and caught in the grip of sin'. Simon responded: 'I need the prayers of all of you to the Lord, so that what you have said may never happen to me'."

Because of this, the sin or crime of buying or selling spiritual things or something temporal attached to a spiritual one for any temporal price has been qualified as simoniacal.

Notion. Simony is defined by St. Thomas Aquinas as "a will or eagerness to buy or sell something spiritual or connected with a spiritual thing". (S. Theol. 2, 2, 100, a.1).

Division and description. Canon 727 of the 1917 Code dealt with simony at length. It divided simony into simony prohibited by divine law and simony prohibited by the Church's law. The former was described in 1: "Simony prohibited by divine law is the deliberate will or eagerness to buy or sell for a temporal price something which is intrinsically spiritual, as sacraments, ecclesiastical jurisdiction, consecration, indulgences, etc.; or something temporal attached to something which is spiritual in such a way that the temporal thing cannot exist without the spiritual one, as an ecclesiastical benefice; or the spiritual element is the object, though partially only, Of the bargain, as the consecration of a chalice."

2. "Simony prohibited by the Church's law is to give temporal objects attached to a spiritual element for other temporal objects attached also to a spiritual element; or to give spiritual things for another spiritual ones; or to give temporal things for other temporal things, when this is forbidden by the Church on account of the danger of irreverence for spiritual things."

Simony either prohibited by divine or by ecclesiastical law can be **internal** or **external**. It is only internal when the deliberate will or eagerness of buying or selling spiritual things is not shown externally, but remains as an internal intention or desire only. This is what we call simoniacal sin. In **external** simony the simoniacal will or desire can be seen through acts or signs. **External** simony is subdivided into: a) **mental**, when the simoniacal intention is not explicitly manifested through any pact, tacit or express, but can be gathered from the circumstances of the case; b) conventional, when a pact exists between the buyer and seller, although the object of the transaction and the price might not yet have been exchanged; c) real, when the object of the stipulation and the price have been exchanged by both parties.

Obviously simony can be only a sin without its being a delict or crime penalized by law. This happens when the external element of a crime is lacking. And this is probably the reason why the 1917 Code dealt at length with the simony's nature and malice at the beginning of book II, not V. The legislator deemed it proper to prevent the commission of this sacrilegious sin both in the administration and reception of the sacraments and sacramentals.

Elements of Simony. Three elements are essential in the juridical figure of simony subject to the penalties of law, namely:

1) the eagerness or deliberate will to transact simoniacally with spiritual things should be externally manifested. Its malice as a sin against the virtue of religion being internal is not enough. Unless simony is external, it can be neither proven nor punished. However, although **mental** simony alone cannot be punished, that state of mind which prompts a person to give or offer something temporal as a motive for attaining something spiritual, or if the spiritual is given by way of gratuitous compensation, or vice versa can be penalized. This may happen when a gift is offered or given as just a remuneration, but the real motive is to obtain a spiritual favor. However, if there is no intention whatsoever to commit simony but only to show one's gratitude, there is no simony at all.

2) the second element of simony is sale or purchase. There must be a pact or agreement between two parties, taking these terms in a **wide sense**, as hiring, borrowing, debt, etc. It is not required that the pact

be carried out In simony forbidden by divine law the object of the sacrilegious pact can be threefold: a) things that are intrinsically spiritual, like sacraments, consecration, jurisdiction, indulgences, etc.; b) temporal things necessarily attached to a spiritual element in such a way that they cannot be separated, like an ecclesiastical benefice; c) temporal things that have attached to it a spiritual element and by reason of this spiritual element they are sold for a higher price, like a consecrated chalice, a blessed rosary, etc.

In simony forbidden by the Church's law, both the object of the transaction and the price given for it are equivalent or similar: material things are changed for material things, spiritual for spiritual ones. Although there is no intrinsic disparity between them, however, the Church prohibits that they be considered as objects of any transaction, because it may lead to irreverence toward sacred things.

3) The third element of simony is temporal price. These words should be understood in their wider meaning, comprising whatever is valued in money or material utility. Three kinds of things are mentioned in the Decree of Gratian as equivalent to temporal price:

a) *munus a manu*, having a pecuniary advantage, like money and other movable as well as immovable things, the remission of a debt, etc.;

b) *munus a lingua*, like recommendations, praise, adulation, flattery, etc.;

c) *munus ab obsequio*, which involves service of any kind, rendered in view of a spiritual favor. However, free and voluntary service although rendered in the hope of obtaining a spiritual favor, is not a simony.

Prescriptions of the New Code. The new code does not deal *ex professo* with simony like the 1917 Code did. It has, however, some prescriptions to prevent some abuses on the matter. Thus, canon 848 reads: "For the administration of the sacraments the minister may not ask for anything beyond the offerings which are determined by the competent authority, and he must always ensure that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments by reason of poverty." Note that it is prohibited to ask for anything beyond the offerings established by the competent authority; it is not prohibited to accept whatever the faithful

may spontaneously offer on the occasion of receiving the sacraments. Canon 947 states also: "Even the semblance of trafficking or trading is to be entirely excluded from Mass offerings." Therefore, it is not lawful for a person to collect stipends offered by the faithful and then to enter into an agreement with priests to celebrate Masses for any kind of goods, by which the collector of stipends makes a gain; or to give the priest a smaller amount of money than the one collected; or to use the collected money in the black market; or, in promising the priest the collected amount with the collector's intention to entice the priest to make other business deals with him. Violators of this law are penalized with censure or other just penalty in the Church's Code. Canon 138S reads: "A person who unlawfully trafficks in Mass offerings is to be punished with a censure or other just penalty." Canon 1380 penalizes the crime of simony committed in the administration or reception of the Sacraments by saying: "A person who through simony celebrates or receives a sacrament, is to be punished with an interdict or suspension." In this case not only real simony, but also conventional simony is to be understood. Note that in conventional simony the consummation of the simoniacal agreement or pact is not required, as explained above. The only thing required here is that the administration or reception of the sacrament took place by virtue of the simoniacal agreement.

When there is no simony. There are cases where at first sight it seems that simoniacal malice exists. Canon 730 of the 1917 Code told us how they should be interpreted. It said: "There is no simony if a temporal object is given not as an equivalent for a spiritual thing, but on the occasion therein for a reason acknowledged as just by either canon law or custom." Decent support of the clergy who administer spiritual things to the faithful and receive temporal things in return does not involve any simoniacal malice. The laborer is worthy of his hire. The temporal assistance they receive from the faithful is not given as a temporal equivalent for their spiritual ministry. Likewise, Mass stipends are not given as the price for the celebration of Holy Mass, but as an offering to contribute to the necessary support of the sacred ministers.

Moreover, the same canon of 1917 Code added: "There is no simony involved when a temporal object is given for another temporal object which has some spiritual benefit attached to it, as long as its price does not become higher for reason of the spiritual element." The material

and workmanship of the object has a price in itself independent of the spiritual element attached to it. Thus, churches, sacred vessels, rosaries may be materially valued, provided the consecration or blessing attached to them is not prized, nor the price is augmented on account of the spiritual element.

Bearing in mind everything we have explained, most specially considering the norm given in canon 730 of the 1917 Code, it is obvious that the one in charge of the religious store mentioned by our Consultant is not committing any kind of simony. Religious articles are sold, yes; but the sale of these religious articles is not for gain or the advantage of the owner of the store. Religious articles which are blessed are not prized or valued more than articles of the same which are not blessed. Where is then the simoniacal will? Religious articles which are blessed can still be valued and prized as such, since their material element can appraise without prejudice to the spiritual element

Curriculum Vitae

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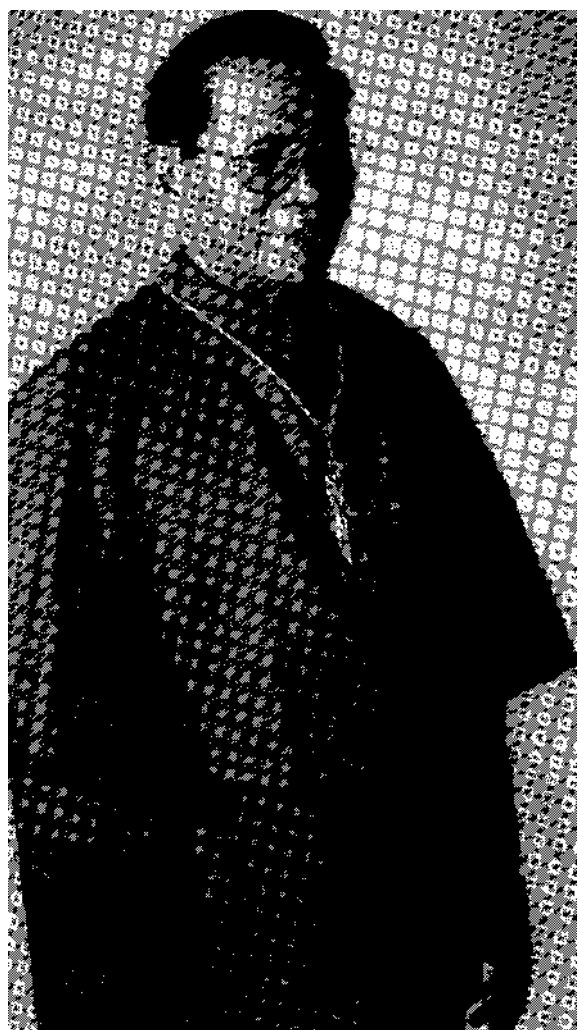
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Assistant Parish Priest of the Santisimo Rosario Parish (UST)	1969
Professor of the Aquinas University & Director of the Elementary & High School Departments (Legaspi City, Albay)	1970
Director of the Holy Rosary Academy then appointed First Filipino Dominican Parish Priest of the Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag	1973
Prior of the Dominican, then, House of Formation, Holy Rosary Convent (Iloilo City)	1975
First Dominican Parish Priest of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Maco Tagum	1978
Diocese of Davao del Norte; also the last	1991
Parish Priest again of Our Lady of Manaoag Shrine	1982
Parish Priest of Santisimo Rosario Parish, UST up to the present	1993-1996



PONTIFICAL BULL

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS Servus Servorum Dei dilecto filio Josepho Salazar, sodali Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum, electo Episcopo Praelato Batanensi et Babuyanensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Etiam si ex longinquo, sollicito tamen animo intuemur Christifideles communitatis Batanensis et Babuyanensis, qui post renuntiationem Venerabilis Fratris Marii Baltazar novum sacrorum Antistitem exspectant. Te autem, dilecte fili, firma fide, pietate, sapientia, prudentia ceterisque virtutibus excellentem, cogitamus cui istius gregis regimen concedamus. Hac de causa, accepto consilio Congregationis pro Episcopis, Apostolica Nostra potestate, Praelaturae territorialis Batanensis et Babuyanensis Episcopum te constituimus, debitis datis iuribus congruisque impositis obligationibus. Fidei professionem rite absolves coram quovis catholico Episcopo atque ius iurandum fidelitatis erga Nos Nostrosque Successores ad statutas formulas nuncupabis, quas de more signatas sigilloque impressas diligenter ad Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes; ordinationem autem episcopalem ubivis extra Romam accipere potes, servatis liturgicarum normarum statutis. Curabis etiam, ut haec electio tua clero et populo dicionis tuae annuntietur: oportet enim illi suum Pastorem cognoscant ut eum debita reverentia colant. Denique, dilecte fili, te ipsum populumque tuum Beatae Virginis Mariae tutelae committimus, atque exoptamus illic haec prophetica verba expleri possint: *Et laudem eius in insulis nuntiabunt* (Js 42: 12), te videlicet Praesule ac moderatore. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quinto et vicesimo mensis Aprilis, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo nonagesimo sexto, Pontificatus Nostri duodevicesimo.

Joannes Paulus n

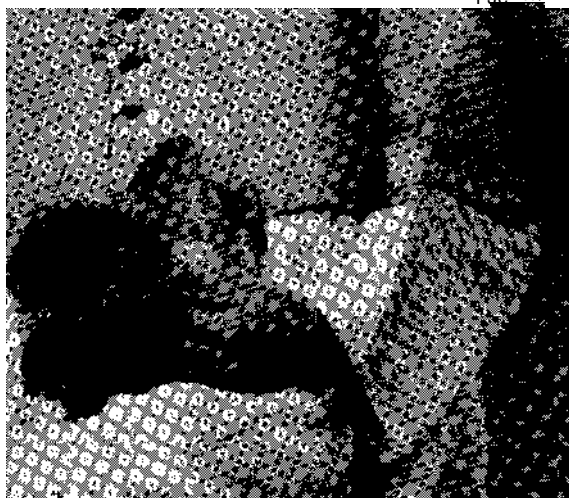
Marcellus Rossetti, Proton. Apost



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PONTIFICAL BULL

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS Servus Servorum Dei dilecto filio Pretioso Cantillas, sodali Societatis S. Francisci Salesii atque hactenus Rectori Collegii eiusdem Societatis in urbe Caebua, constitute Auxiliari Caebuano simulque electo Episcopo titulo Vicensi Caesaris, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Quoniam augescunt in dies Pastorum curae, solet Apostolica Sedes iisdem Episcopos adiutores assignare, quo aptius gravissimum ministerium suum navitate, qua exoptant, valeant explere. Cupientes ergo audire preces, quibus Venerabilis Frater Noster Richardus S.R.E. Cardinalis Vidal, Archiepiscopus Metropolita Caebuanus, ob amplum numerum suorum fidelium, petivit Auxiliarem, te, dilecte Fili, Claris dotibus ornatum rerumque ecclesialium peritum, censuimus idoneum cui huiusmodi munus concederemus. De consilio igitur Congregationis pro Episcopis, Summa Apostolica potestate te renuntiamus Auxiliarem Caebuanum simulque nominamus Episcopum titulo Vicensem Caesaris, omnibus tributis iuribus impositisque pariter obligationibus, quae ad normam sacrorum canonum eidem officio competunt. Permittimus ut episcopalem ordinationem a quolibet catholico Episcopo extra urbem Romam accipias, Hurgicis servatis legibus; antea autem tuum erit catholicae fidei professionem facere atque ius iurandum dare fidelitatis erga Nos et Nostros Successores, teste quovis Episcopo rectae fidei, formulasque adhibitas ad Congregationem, quam diximus, cito mittere usitato more signatas sigilloque munitas. Fac denique, dilecte Fili, ut, secutus exempla virtutum Sancti Joannis Bosco, tuae Societatis Conditoris, atque fraterna coniunctus caritate cum sollerti Caebuano Praesule, munus creditum studeas iugiter obire diligentia, sapientia ac, maxime, *ilia amabilitate* - cfr EpisL Juvenum Patris 2, 9.12: AAS 80 (1988), pp. 976. 978-980 -, quae praecipua nota pastoralis ac ratio paedagogica fuit memorati apostoli nostrae aetatis quaeque nos reddit hominibus caros et acceptos Deo. Cuius gratia et pax, auspice Virgine Matre, te comitentur cunctis diebus vitae. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die uno et tricesimo mensis Maii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo nonagesimo quinto, Pontificatus Nostri septimo decimo.

Joannes Paulus U.

Fianciscus Chiauni, Proton, Apost.

Shepherds of the People of God

PEDROG.TEJERO, OP.

Vatican II, in its decree "*Presbyterorum Ordinis*," underscored the work of the priests as shepherds of the People of God. With the Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, "*Pastores Dabo Vobis*," the role of the priests, particularly of those who are dedicated to the care of souls, has obtained a new and more profound meaning. All priests should bear in mind that they have been selected by Christ and the Church to shepherd the People of God and to bring the souls to the heavenly mansions. In order to fulfill these well, the priest should read, reflect and ponder on the biblical theme of "*The Shepherd*." His attention should be particularly focused on the beautiful parable of the "*Good Shepherd*" uttered by Jesus. In this parable, the Lord pictures himself as the *word* (Jn 10, 1-6), with the mission of instructing, directing and strengthening the faith of the flock. He shows himself too as the *life* (Jn 10, 7-11), by offering to his sheep the rich pastures of his word and grace so that they may have life in abundance. Moreover, Jesus as the Good Shepherd *gives his life for his sheep* (Jn 10, 11-16), for he came to save what was lost and through his passion and death, he saved all men.

This is, therefore, the pattern, the exemplar after which the priest must configure his life and inspire his ministry in behalf of the people of God. In order to overcome the temptation that the priestly task cannot be achieved by poor and deficient ministers, he is advised to look into the lives of those saintly priests who, following Christ's footsteps, were able not only to consecrate their lives for the welfare of their sheep, but also shed their blood for the sake of their flock.

The second snare that lurks at his step is to think that in order to be modern and perceptive of today's thinking, he has to create confusion, ambiguity, mistrust and, at times, discontentment among the faithful entrusted to him. When a shepherd of souls leans in this way, he has ceased to be a shepherd and has become a thief whose mission is to destroy God's flock.

A fruitful and dedicated ministry for the souls requires from the shepherds a life of serious commitment and total detachment. To fall into the monotony of life and not to be vibrant to the needs and problems of men, points out that the life of the priest is passing through a moment of great difficulty and it needs careful attention.

A shepherd of souls must always be alert to the promptings and insinuations of the Holy Spirit. To close oneself in his own views and formalities goes against the cultural dialogue which may prove helpful and encouraging. When a careful discernment is done, the shepherd should never be afraid, conscious that Jesus is always present in his Church.

Lastly, a good shepherd of souls should look on the confessional as one of the most vital and necessary means in the pastoral ministry. There is no better place than the confessional to impart light and encouragement to souls in anguish and pain. In the confessional, the deep wounds and injuries of souls are healed and the life in abundance promised by Jesus becomes a reality. To this purpose, Paul VI, in 1974, in his allocution to the confessors, said: *"There is no redemption in practice from human frailty it can be said, and there is no real vocation to following Christ and spiritual perfection, which is not derived from the strict and wise reception of this sacrament: the sacrament of humility and joy... Therefore, the esteem, the practice, the patience and the art of the care of souls, characteristic of this ministry"* (L'Osservatore Romano, April 11, 1974).

Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers

November-December 1996

EFREN O. RIVERA, O.P.

November 3, 1996

THIRTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

MATTHEW 23:1-12 CHRIST'S DISCIPLES
MUST BE HUMBLE SERVANTS

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. When Jesus gave a powerful warning to the crowds and his disciples against the Pharisees, his teaching had an application not only for them but also for us today. The Pharisees are the type of people who can exist in any religion, including our own Catholic religion. We must admit that the Church has not been remarkable for heeding the warning not to use the titles "Teacher" and "Father" (see v. 8 and 9) and even an equivalent of "Rabbi" (see v. 7, literally "my great one"), like the title "Monsignor" (literally, "my lord"). For the renewal of the Church, Vatican II stressed the common dignity of all its members: "The chosen People of God is one: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Eph 4:5). As members, they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection" (*Lumen Gentium*, 32).

Focus Points. (1) Vv. 2-7. Jesus carefully distinguishes between (a) the Torah or Law of Moses, (b) the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, and (c) their "works" or "deeds" which are their own invention. Jesus respects the Torah and the Pharisees' role as teachers following Moses, but condemns the deeds or practices that are their own inventions and lead to *hypocrisy*.

(2) Vv. 8-10. More importantly, Jesus teaches how, by contrast to the Pharisees, his disciples should be, namely: humble learners... aware of the fatherly love of God that gives all human beings a common dignity... aware of having been taught the saving truth by the example of the Messiah. For these reasons they are to avoid the titles "Rabbi," "Father," "Teacher." They are to be a "*community of disciples*".

(3) Vv. 11-12. In conclusion, it is *humble service* that will distinguish the Christian disciples from the Scribes and Pharisees.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. God spoke through Moses and the Torah but not through the Scribes and the Pharisees when they prescribed *practices* that they themselves invented without consulting God.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. God can speak through human beings like Moses, but these human beings must first humble themselves and submit to God. They must constantly watch out lest they deviate from God's ways. Do you examine your conscience to see whether or not you are in harmony with God?

2. It will still take a long time before titles like "Monsignor," "Father," and "Master" or "Teacher" will disappear from the Church. This, however, is of secondary importance. Our primary concern should be to acquire those *attitudes* that will make every Christian community a "*community of disciples*" listening to one Master, that is, Jesus Christ as the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines wants the Philippine Church to be.

2.1 *Pointer for Sharing.* Do you see signs in your community indicating that it is on the way of becoming a "*community of disciples*"!

3. Humble service to the poorest of the poor cannot be rooted in anything else but genuine *love of God and neighbor*. Conversely, it is through humble service to the least of our brethren that one shows one's love to be a giving, selfless and sacrificial love.

3.1 *Pointer for Sharing.* Have you taken time out of your usual activities to seek out the poorest of the poor and truly serve not only by giving them money but by giving them something of yourself?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* When we share during our Bible Study or prayer meetings, we should avoid talking about our accomplishments and instead focus our attention to *what God has done in our lives*. Otherwise our so-called sharing can become an occasion for pride and hypocrisy.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* When we want to show our caring for others, we should think of their *needs*, not of what we have and would like to dispose of because they are things that are of no use or little use to us.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* We should avoid the hypocrisy of praising others to curry favor with them. Instead we should focus on the *community-oriented values* we see in others and need our affirmation so that the whole community can benefit from them.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* Jesus does not forgive but rather condemns the faults to which the Pharisees have blinded themselves because a) such forgiveness will not take away the faults and b) these faults are a bad influence on others.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* By forming a "*community of disciples*," Jesus has given humankind the detergent and the water that will purify it from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

C. STORY: THE PHARISAICAL LIEUTENANT

In a certain ROTC unit, a lieutenant took pride in being a freethinker. He knew he had a sergeant who was a very devout man, and his rival in courting a girl. So one day while the unit was practising for the presentation of corps sponsors and the girl was within hearing distance, the lieutenant decided to make the sergeant lose face.

As the company lined up for inspection, the lieutenant had the sergeant stand in front of everybody and he proceeded to question him in a loud voice. "Can you see the sky?" he asked. Not knowing what the lieutenant was up to, the sergeant replied, "Yes, sir." "Can you see the sun... and the parade ground... and the pretty girls with us today?" the lieutenant continued. Still wondering about what was happening, the sergeant replied, "Yes, sir."

Next, the lieutenant asked, "Can you see God?" The sergeant promptly answered: "No, sir." Triumphantlly,- the lieutenant proclaimed, "So that proves there isn't any."

At that point, the sergeant asked if, for fairness sake, he could have equal time and ask the lieutenant and the cadets a few questions. "By all means," agreed the lieutenant. So the sergeant turned to the cadets and asked them: "Do you see the lieutenant... and his feet... and head... and arms?" "Yes!" the cadets shouted. "Do you see his brain?" "No!" came the loud answer. "So... that proves he doesn't have any," concluded the sergeant. All the cadets laughed heartily, and the sergeant went up a notch higher in his girlfriend's esteem. But the Pharisaical self-styled "freethinking" lieutenant made him pay for this later on.

November 10, 1996

THIRTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

MATTHEW 25:1-13 PARABLE OF THE
TEN BRIDESMAIDS

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. We have come to the last three Sundays of the liturgical year and its time once more to reflect on what will happen at the end of time. Our reflection today will be based on the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. At the time of Christ the role of bridesmaids was to await the bridegroom at a little distance from the house where the banquet will be held and light his path with their lamps as they proceed to the house (wedding banquets were always done at night), in the parable, there was a *delay* in the bridegroom's coming. When he finally arrived, the *wise bridesmaids* still had their lamps lit because they had brought oil for a refill, while the foolish bridesmaids had not taken such precaution and the light had gone out of their lamps. Obviously, the bridegroom represents Christ, and the bridesmaids represents individual Christians.

Focus Points. (1) The Parable of the Ten Virgins or bridesmaids illustrates the need for wisdom, prudence or common sense in the disciples who are awaiting the arrival of the kingdom's final stage.

(2) The wisdom of the wise virgins consists in their having taken precaution against a long delay in the bridegroom's arrival. They were able to keep their lamps glowing till the end. The lamp is a symbol of the life lived according to the Gospel. The foolish virgins are those whose light has gone out, whose welcome of the Gospel has not stood the test of time.

(3) To be truly wise, a Christian must work for the accomplishment of the Kingdom. A wise Christian should know that the final stage of the Kingdom of God on earth will not come due to a further intervention of God into the world, rather it will erupt or evolve from within this world already sown with the seed of the Gospel. The Christian's role

is to be an instrument in the realization of this Kingdom, and he or she performs this role by being always ready, that is, always living the Gospel.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. It is not enough to live according to the Gospel for a while, and then revert to one's old ways. One must think of Christian life as a life-long commitment and Christians are wise when they resolve to be faithful to Christ to the end.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Reading the Bible every day is a way of maintaining one's life-long commitment to be faithful to Christ until the end. Perhaps you can share on how your daily Bible reading has helped you maintain your commitment to Jesus Christ

2. It is by forming *good habits or virtues* that it becomes easier and easier for us to live as Christians.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Have you been able to kick a bad habit recently? How did you do it? Your sharing on this could help someone else do the same.

3. Christian life is not something that we can put "on" and "off" as we wish. It is like the blood that must always be flowing in and out of our heart if we are to remain alive.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. Maybe we can apply to Christian life some of the tips that doctors give to their patients who need to take care of their heart. Just as physicians advise patients to avoid food that is too fatty and rich in bad cholesterol, we must avoid the bad habits that can clog and eventually choke our spiritual life.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

I. CAN OUR SHARING BE *IMPROVED*? Groups like "Alcoholics Anonymous" use group sharing as a means of helping their members kick the bad habit of drinking. A Christian community

can learn from the techniques of such groups to help their members break all kinds of bad habits.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* To emphasize the need for wise foresight, the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids portray the five wise virgins as people who were uncaring for the plight of the five foolish ones. We must avoid taking this as part of the teaching of the parable.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* While warning the foolish Christians, the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids affirm the wise Christians.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* Forgiveness must be obtained at the proper time, before "the door is closed." When the time of mercy is over, it will be the time of justice. While we are in this world, it is still the time for mercy.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* With God's help we can keep our lamps burning until Jesus comes again!

C. STORY: THE USELESS LANTERN

A blind man visited his friends. It was dark when he left and so they gave him a lantern. "Thank you," he said, "but I don't need one. Light or dark, it is all the same to me."

But a friend replied, "Yes, we know. But carry it along anyway, so other people won't bump into you."

So off he went, but soon someone collided with him and shouted, "Why don't you watch where you're going?"

The blind man replied, "Why, don't you see my lantern?"

"Sorry, brother," the other said, "but it has gone out."

November 17, 1996

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Cycle A

**MATTHEW 25:14-30 (or 14-15. 19-21)
PARABLE OF THE TALENTS**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. If the main lesson of the last Sunday's parable was the need for vigilance and preparedness in face of the delayed parousia, the main lesson of today's parable of the Talents is the need for faithfulness to the task to which the Christian has been commissioned. Faithfulness is not conservatism. Indeed it necessarily involves progress. The Church remains faithful to Christ, in so far as it adheres to its original mission. Its faithfulness consists not in holding on to the past or the present but in continually responding to God's call for the future. For, if it is true that the Kingdom will achieve its perfection when the Lord returns, it is also true that the Lord will return only when the Kingdom of his love is perfected. The Lord will return only when his servants have been completely faithful.

Focus Points. (1) Vv. 14-20. Jesus is the "Lord" who has entrusted his "servants", the Christians, with his "property", the mission to evangelize the whole world. Already, for Matthew's catechumens, Jesus appears to have been away from his Church "a long time", and Matthew seems to envisage that it will be quite a while yet before Jesus returns. In the meantime the role of Christians is to carry out the task which Jesus has assigned to them "according to each one's ability."

(2) Vv. 2-23. The profit-making of the good servants is a symbol of their missionary activity. This missionary work of the disciples is not independent, or in place, of Jesus' work. The disciples are the "servants" of the "Lord", his instruments. Jesus has only apparently, not really, left his Church. The Church is his body, its mission is his own. He is the one who, through his Church, both sows the seed and gathers men into his Kingdom.

(3) Vv. 24-30. The faithfulness to which Jesus exhorts his disciples is not mere preservation but co-operation. The faithful servant is not the one who merely preserves what he has been given but the one who allows it to increase and develop. The treasure of the Gospel is not to be stacked away and jealously guarded but allowed to increase. For the Gospel, God's Good News, is that God is love, and this Good News must be shared with all men, in order that it might reach perfection in them. Faithfulness to the Gospel of love means loving, and loving, for the Christian, means giving, sharing, serving.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. The whole Church shares in Jesus' mission, but each member "according to each one's ability", and until the end of the age, it remains possible for some members to fail in their mission.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. So as not to fail, Christians must remain united with Christ In your experience, what are the best means of keeping this union?

2. Every Christian is a missionary. Those who do not realize this are like the servant who buried his talent.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. In a period of one week we get several opportunities to witness to our Christian faith. Sometimes we are not alert enough to avail of these opportunities. Sometimes we lack the will or the courage. Sometimes we follow the prodding of the Holy Spirit and do something. It might help other people if we share on our different responses to different situations.

3. "Tell the World of His Love" was the theme song of the World Youth Day in Manila, when the Pope came to visit Unfortunately, for many people, this song has become just a vague memory. But we can change the world if we avail of at least one opportunity each week to "tell the world of His love."

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. It is good to have a prayer group where at least once a week we can tell other people of God's love for us. Making such groups grow and multiply is excellent missionary work.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? Let us "tell the world of His love."

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? Let us train ourselves to be alert to the needs of others.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? Let us affirm the "little ones" who do missionary work in their own unassuming ways.

4. FORGIVENESS. Christ's teaching about forgiveness is one of the topics we can talk about in spreading the Good News. It helps people a lot when they hear how the grace of God has worked in someone who has forgiven their enemies.

5. THE GOOD NEWS. Faithfulness to Christ means faithfulness to the Spirit of Christ ever-presently active within the Church. And this Spirit does not simply refer us back to the past, but leads us on to the future, to the time when, in the terminology of Vatican II, this world of ours, with all its values, will be "purified, illumined and transfigured" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39, 3).

C. STORY: DID YOU MEET A WOODEN CHRISTIAN TODAY?

Aling Sofia was an "atsay" who did menial jobs for a rich lady, but one day she was recruited to join a charismatic group. From that time on, she used to say that she had been called to scrub floors and to preach. Wherever she went, she would tell others of Christ the Savior.

Someone made fun of her once by remarking that she had been seen some time ago talking about Christ to the wooden statue standing in front of the cigar store.

Sofia's answer was, "Perhaps I did. My eyesight is not good. But talking about Christ to a wooden statue is not as bad as being a wooden Christian who never talks to anybody about Christ."

November 24, 1996

SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, Cycle A

MATTHEW 25:31-46 THE SHEPHERD
SEPARATING MEN INTO GOOD AND BAD

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. The Parable of the Last Judgement is a reminder that there is no service of Christ which is not a service to one's fellows. The glorious Son of Man points to the service which men have afforded him not *as* glorious but *as* suffering. The point of the parable is not that one day we will see what we have done but that we must serve Christ here and now in our fellows, especially those who are suffering. The Kingdom of God is the rule of love. The final revelation of this Kingdom is that it is active here and now in our serving love of our fellows. The parable of the Last Judgement does not take us to the future as much as it reminds us about the present. It teaches that, at the end of our lives, we shall be judged on love and love alone.

Focus Points. (1) The unique norm by which all people — Christians and non-Christians — will be judged is that of service to the Son of Man: "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or away from home or naked or ill or in prison and *not attend you in your needs?*" This service consists of attention to the Son of Man *present in a poor and suffering humanity*.

(2) The mention of "brothers" in Mt 25:40 is probably an indication that the poor in question are the disciples, the members of the Church, Christ's body to the world.

(3) But the unfortunates of today's parable are not confined to the Church. Throughout his life Jesus associated with the outcasts of society, whether Jewish or otherwise. His mission was essentially one of compassion in the strict sense of this term, that is, *of becoming one with those who suffered*. He came to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (see Mt

8:17). Any act of true brotherly love towards any human being is an act of love towards Christ who has revealed this love and commanded people to love one another as he has loved them (see John 15:12).

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. People have been conditioned to think of service to God as service in the ritual sense: becoming a priest or brother or nun, or being an acolyte or a lector at Mass, or being part of the choir that sings in Church, or being in the guild that looks after altar vestments, etc. The Bible, however, does not mention these services at all. The Bible speaks of the *service of love or charity* to the poor and unfortunate. Such service is truly one given to Jesus Christ because he is present in the poor, he identifies himself with them.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. We think of Christ as a *Seflor* and we depict him as always clothed with rich, embroidered garments even when he is hanging on the cross. It is worse when we present him as seated on a throne with a bejeweled crown. How do we get out of this mental conditioning? How do we identify him with the poor?

2. When the Gospel of Matthew was written, the Church was understood as the *Community of the poor and humble*. There were, of course, well to do members of the church, but they were the minority, and they did not distance themselves from the others.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. It is sad that within the Church today there is a gap between the rich and the poor. What can we do to bridge this gap and eventually eliminate it?

3. The poor with whom Jesus identifies can be of any color or creed or nationality. Our charitable service must be rendered "without frontiers".

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. Has your service of charity gone beyond frontiers?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* We must share not only spiritual but also material goods. It is the policy of World Vision, an organization that helps poor children get an education, to provide not only for the temporal needs but also for the spiritual welfare of the children it helps.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Our caring should not be limited by any frontier.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* When we help people for the sake of Christ, we also affirm them because we give witness to our belief that Jesus is present in each and every poor person.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* At the last judgement, it seems that Jesus will forgive all sins as long as one has not failed to serve him in poor and unfortunate people.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* The just will go to eternal life. To be just, all one has to do is serve one's poor fellow human beings, which is equivalent to serving Jesus Christ.

C. STORY: OFFICE UPSTAIRS

In a small town in America there was a certain Doctor Brackett. He was known as the poor man's friend because he spent hours at the bedside of unfortunates and never once took a fee from them. He lived in two upstairs rooms over a grocery store. At the foot of the stairs going up to his quarters was a painted sign which said. DOC. BRACKETT — OFFICE UPSTAIRS.

He wanted to marry his girlfriend but lost her because he spent more time with the sick than with her. He spent a life of selfless dedication to any and every person around him. When he died, his funeral was the biggest ever seen in that town.

At a meeting afterwards, the townspeople tried to figure out what kind of monument to erect to the memory of the doctor, but all the proposed projects required a big sum of money and nobody knew where the money will come from. No decision was made. A husband and

wife of Mexican origin who had been especially helped by the doctor, on their way home from the meeting, hit on a bright idea. They removed the sign from the departed doctor's door and the following day it appeared over his grave. It read: **DOC. BRACKETT — OFFICE UPSTAIRS.** His monument in death was the very monument he already had in life.

December 1, 1996

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Cycle B

Preparation for the year 2000:

1997 Theme: Jesus Christ, the One Savior

Focus on: The Sacrament of Baptism I The Virtue of Faith

**MARK 13:33-37 ORDER TO THE DOORKEEPER:
BE ON GUARD**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Jesus Christ has only one Incarnation and in this sense he has only one Coming and this has already occurred. If we speak of his future Coming, it is only because we have not yet fully realized his presence among us. In any case, his future Coming will not be a second Incarnation to be followed by a second ministry on earth. It will not be a new beginning but a *conclusion* of what was already started at the Incarnation and is presently being worked out. As the letter to the Hebrews says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*" (Heb 13:8).

In preparation for the *Jubilee Year 2000*, In union with Pope John Paul II, we shall have in mind the theme: *Jesus Christ, the One Savior*. We will also focus on the Sacrament of Baptism and the virtue of Faith.

Focus Points. (1) In their question to Jesus: "Tell us, when will this occur? What will be the sign that all this is coming to an end?" (Mk 13:4), the disciples suggest that the destruction of the temple (13:2) would be the definite sign of the immediate arrival of the Kingdom of God. In his answer (13:3-36) — where the passage for this First Sunday of Advent is situated — Jesus repudiates the suggestion. He repeatedly

warns his disciples against looking for precise signs of the end (**13:5**. 6. 7. 8. 10. 13. 21. 22. 23).

(2) One little concession is made about the time of the end of the world: it will happen *AFTER* the destruction of the temple (13:24-27). But again, no specific precision is given. The precise moment of the end is unknowable in advance (13:32). Mark particularly stresses the *suddenness* of the kingdom's arrival (13:33).

(3) The parable of the absent master of the house teaches that the disciples must be ready for the arrival of the Kingdom *at every moment*. The disciples — all of them, not just one or their leaders — must be like the door-keeper in the parable (13:34). All of them must be vigilant and wakeful for Jesus's hour or **KAIROS** (**13:33**; see **1:15**; **11:13**; **12:2**). The message of the parable concerns not so much a future event but a present *ATTITUDE: WATCHFULNESS, TO A PRESENT REALITY: THE KINGDOM REALIZED IN THE PERSON OF JESUS*.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. We must not be so engrossed in the Parousia as a "coming event" and thereby forget to **LIVE FOR THE KINGDOM DAY AFTER DAY**. We must not think of the end-time revelation of Jesus as equivalent to, let's say, the coming of the Pope for a visit. For, until the Pope arrives, he is not with us in any real way. But even before the end of the world, Jesus is **ALREADY REALLY AND TRULY WITH US**.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. The best preparation for the future is the good use of our time now. Have you some experiences to share on the truth of this statement?

2. We are already living in the end-time period because we **are** living *AFTER* the destruction of the Temple, which happened in the year 70 A.D. Any time now the Kingdom will *suddenly* come to perfection. Better, perhaps, is the thought that, at a given moment in our own lifetime there will *suddenly* be a salvific event, **KAIROS** that will foreshadow

the final one at the end of time. It is our duty to contribute something to it.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Can you point to some events in your own life-time that can be considered a *KAIROS* or foreshadowing of the FINAL HOUR OF CHRIST'S REVELATION? Some people can point to the EDSA PEOPLE'S POWER REVOLT.

3. The yearly celebration of the season of Advent aims to develop in us the ATTITUDE OF WATCHFULNESS which all Christians must have so as to be able to contribute something to the FINAL BREAKING IN OF THE KINGDOM IN ITS PERFECT STAGE.

3.1 Pointer for Sharing. We must be convinced that, no matter how small one may be, one can contribute something to the coming of the Kingdom *if one lives in union with Christ.*

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* Our contribution to the perfect coming of the Kingdom will be done not as individuals but as members of a Christian Community.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Instead of spending our energies in speculating about the precise time of the end of the world, we should attend more to the present needs of our brothers and sisters.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* When we affirm one another in a Christian community we contribute to the coming of the Kingdom.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* Let us not forget that, in the Lord's prayer, we pray not only for the coming of the Kingdom but also for the gift of forgiveness: of being forgiven and being able to forgive others.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* Jesus has put us visibly "in charge" of his household (Mk 13:34) while he invisibly works for the final coming of the Kingdom.

C. STORY: PRIME TIME IS A PREPARATION FOR HARVEST TIME

A stooped old man who lived in Manila went to the province for vacation, and one day he went to take a walk near the ricefields almost ready for harvest. There he met his nephew who had entered college at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City and was home during the semestral break: The young man bragged to the old timer, "Why don't you walk straight, like me? That's no way to grow old. It's all a matter of habit — at least that's what I'm told."

The old man gave him a look of pity and said, "My dear young nephew, have you ever examined a grain field and noticed which heads are bent and which ones stand up straight? If you take a good look as harvest time draws near, you will notice that the heads which are empty are standing tall and high. But the heads that make a good harvest are the ones that are filled and bending low."

The young man learned more during that encounter with his old uncle than during the whole semester he had spent at the university.

In our prime we must start producing fruit, so that when the time comes, we will be laden with our contribution to the rich harvest

December 8, 1996

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Cycle B

MARK 1:1-8 PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD
(Reflection on Baptism)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Conversion from bad habits to good habits is necessary in our life. But there is something more fundamental: conversion from wrong attitudes to right attitudes — a change of mind and heart in the way one looks at life. A man may be morally upright and yet may still need conversion. For example, before Paul became a Christian, he was a morally respectable man, even worthy of admiration because of his ascetic life and his faithfulness to Mosaic Law. But he

did not have the correct attitude about Jesus Christ, whom he considered a Jewish heretic. After his conversion at his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, his mind and heart turned to Christ. His conversion was a *change of attitudes, more than a change of life-habits*. This is the kind of conversion preached by John the Baptist, whose figure dominates the First and Second Sundays of Advent.

Focus Points. (1) V. 1 "Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." For Mark, the "gospel" is not just a record of Jesus' life, nor is it simply the "good news" about Jesus. It is the "good news" of Jesus, the "Good News" which *IS* Jesus. The whole of Mark's message is contained in this first sentence. For him *JESUS IS "GOOD NEWS"*. The "news" announced in Jesus' person is that he is both "Christ" or "Messiah" (see Mk 8:27-30) and (especially) "Son of God" (see Mk 15:39). This is "good" news both because "messiahship" and divine sonship fulfill the most profound hopes of humanity and especially because they have been achieved within the ordinary circumstances of human existence, in "this man" (see Mk 15:39).

(2) Vv. 4-5. John preaches "a baptism of repentance which led to the forgiveness of sins". Many have availed themselves of the opportunity to be baptized by John (1:5) and one mightier than John is coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (1:8). From these we can see that Baptism is a major topic in the first nine verses of Mark's Gospel, but it does not dominate the Gospel as a whole. Neither Jesus nor his disciples baptize in this Gospel. Jesus, appointing the Twelve to preach and cast out demons, does not mention baptizing anyone. Why did Mark opt to keep quiet about baptism in such passages? Most probably because he knew the big difference between the baptism preached by John and the baptism by which people became Christians. This latter baptism is "with the Holy Spirit" and was operative only after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was "poured out" on the disciples.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. As we read Mark's "Gospel", we should try to realize that we are now being evangelized, we are the targets of what Pope John Paul

n calls "*new evangelization*" even though we are already baptized Christians. After all, Mark's "Gospel" was written not only for those preparing for baptism but also for those who have been followers of Christ for some time already. We should try to follow Mark's special insights into *who Jesus is*.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Have you grown in your experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ?

2. It has been suggested by Pope John Paul II that we reflect on the meaning of our Christian baptism as a preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. Taking a clue from Mark 1:8, we should appreciate our baptism as the giving to us of the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier and as the source of charisms that are meant to build up the Church.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Do you reflect on your dignity as a baptized person, that is, one who has become a Temple of the Holy Spirit and indeed of the Most Holy Trinity?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* Sharing based on reading the Bible and relating it to our life experiences is certainly one of the most effective means of continuous personal renewal.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* The Good News which is Jesus Christ himself should make us realize that, just like him, we should care for the poor and the down trodden.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* We should see not only ourselves but also our sisters and brothers in the Christian community as Temples of the Most Holy Trinity. This is where our self-worth lies.

4. *FORGIVENESS.* When we cannot forgive others, we have not yet been truly converted to the Good News of God's Forgiveness freely given to us through Jesus Christ.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS.* Jesus Christ, true God and true man, IS THE GOOD NEWS.

C. STORY: YOU NEED HIS SPIRIT

An artist who made stained glass windows was approached by a young apprentice who had been studying under him for some time. He asked the master if he might have the privilege of borrowing some of his tools.

"Why do you want my tools, son?" asked the master.

"Oh, I just want to use them to see if they will make any difference in the work I do."

A week later the master visited the young artist in his studio and then asked him, "Well, son, how are you doing with my tools?"

"Not so well, master. In fact, my work is no better now than when I was using my own tools." And the young man looked disappointed.

A gray-haired professional overhearing the conversation between the master craftsman and the apprentice, said to the young man, "Son, its not the tools of the master that you need. You need his spirit"

December 9, 1996

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

LUKE 1:26-38 BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN

(The same Gospel Reading is used for the 4th Sunday of Advent)

STORY: THE EXCEPTION

Two university professors met after twenty years, and after a bit of small talk, one asked, "How are those four sons of yours doing?"

"Well, the eldest," reported the father proudly, "has a brilliant legal mind. He is working in a judge's office, getting experience. The pay is low, but the training will get him to the top some day."

"My second son is an engineer. You should see the buildings that boy has constructed. He's working for the government now. But one day he'll strike it rich."

"My third son is going to be a famous doctor. He's still training and we have to support him, but that will all be changed one day."

The father did not seem anxious to finish his story, so his friend reminded him. "And what about your youngest son?"

"Oh, him," said the father, almost embarrassed. "He's the exception. He didn't go to college. After high school he got a job as a security officer and he now owns a security agency and is making a lot of money. But what kind of profession is that for the son of a university professor like me?"

Then he admitted, "But if it were not for him, the rest of us would be starving to death."

LESSON

Mary has been the exception among us. We have all been redeemed curatively, that is, after we incurred original sin. But Mary was redeemed "preventively" — before any sin touched her — in view of the merits of her son Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all humankind.

We must admit, however, that without the figure of Mary, perfectly redeemed, we would be somewhat insecure about our own "curative" redemption.

December 15, 1996

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Cycle B

JOHN 1:6-8. 19-28 THERE IS ONE AMONG YOU
WHOM YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT/BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. John's challenge: "there is one among you whom you do not recognize" (Jn 1:26) is as relevant to us today as it was to his contemporaries. Christ is still hidden among us. He is revealed to us today not in the sensational or the spectacular but in the ordinary circumstances of our lives. The challenge before us is both to understand

and to make real — that is, "realize" — the presence of Christ in our midst

Focus Points. (1) Vv. 19-27. John the Baptist corrects the mistaken eschatological expectations of the "Jews" (who here represent all those, including the readers, who hold to their own fixed ideas about the end-time).

(2) John not only denies that he is any of the eschatological figures expected by his contemporaries: the Christ, Elijah, the Prophet. He also suggested that the one who will fulfill all the aspirations associated with these figures is less spectacular than he is himself. The "Jews" were attracted by the unusual, the sensational. They flocked to the austere prophet, finding it easy to associate the Kingdom with him. But he turns their attention to one of their number: "There is one among you whom you do not recognize." They did not recognize that the one who would fulfill all their hopes and aspirations was one of them.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. Even today, not only non-Christian people but Christians themselves, including Catholics, have wrong expectations about the end-time. We even have wrong notions about Advent, thinking that it is purely a preparation for Christmas. (It is not. It is a season for intensifying our efforts for the coming of the Kingdom). In the Liturgy, the preparation for Christmas starts on Dec. 17, which we in the Philippines anticipate on Dec. 16 to make room for a novena — a nine-day period of prayers. Christmas is also mistaken as the birthday of someone who lived long, long ago, whereas in fact, it is meant to be an intensification of our awareness of the Incarnational presence of the Savior among us.

/./ Pointer for Sharing. In your lifetime, have you changed your ideas about Advent and Christmas?

2. The whole drama of Jesus' life, as John the fourth evangelist sees it, is expressed in 1:26 and earlier in 1:11, 'To his own he came, yet his own did not accept him.' And it is part of his purpose in writing

his gospel to insinuate that this drama is still going on among Jesus' new "own", the church, that is, among us. The difficulty in accepting Christ is that he comes to us not as God only or man only but as Incarnate God. Many Christians accept him as God but not as one who is present in the poor and down trodden.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. How do you plan to celebrate Christmas this year? Have you included the poor and downtrodden in your plans?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? More than anything else it is HIMSELF that Christ has shared with us. We must try harder to share our self with others, especially during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? If we look at the other person as someone in whom Christ is present, our caring for him or her becomes easier and deeper.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? As John says in his prologue, "Any who did accept him (Christ) he empowered to become children of God." Herein lies the principle of a Christian's self-worth. When we affirm Christians, we should affirm first and foremost their being children of God.

4. FORGIVENESS. When we look at people as beings whose sins have been atoned for by the blood of Jesus Christ, it is easier to forgive them.

5. THE GOOD NEWS. Christ the Savior is in our midst.

C. STORY: FLOWERS DON'T MAKE DEAD PEOPLE HAPPY

The Mercedes Benz drove into the first class Memorial Park. The driver got off and told the manager at the entrance office, "Would you come out to see the lady in the car? She is too ill to walk."

Waiting in the car was a frail, elderly woman. "I am Mrs. Reyes," she said. "Every week for the last two years I have been sending you

two hundred pesos to spend on flowers for my son's grave. But the doctors tell me I don't have much longer to live, and I've come to thank you for taking care of the flowers."

The manager blinked at her and said, You know, ma'am, I'm sorry that you kept sending the money for the flowers."

"Sorry?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, because dead people never see them," he answered.

"Do you know what you are saying?" she said, very hurt.

"Oh, indeed, I do. I belong to a visiting society: insane asylums, state hospitals, and the like. People in those places dearly love flowers. They can see them and smell them. Lady, there are living people in places like that."

The lady sat for a moment, and then signaled her driver to drive on.

Some months later, the same lady came back... but now a much younger person, and driving the car herself. "I take the flowers to the people myself," she explained with a friendly smile. "You were right: it does make them happy. And it makes me happy. The doctors don't know what is making me well. But I do: I have something to live for."

She had re-discovered what we all know and forget: in helping others, she had helped herself.

December 22, 1996

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Cycle B

LUKE 1:26-38 MARY'S FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

(The same Gospel Reading is used for the
Feast of the Immaculate Conception)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLICAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. Unlike the "Jews" of last Sunday's gospel episode, Mary recognized Christ, literally, in her midst. In the conception of a child — one of the most ordinary of human situations — she acknowledged the presence of Christ. She could do this because, like the servants of Mark 13:34 (see the First Sunday of Advent), she was waiting for the Lord. Obviously her physical conception of Jesus was unique. But it was but one moment in a whole life-time of waiting, and it is with regard to this waiting that Mary is our model.

Focus Points. (1) In writing the account of the Annunciation of Jesus' birth to Mary, Luke gives his readers (including those not yet baptized as Christians) an example of their response to the gospel. His purpose is more catechetical than historical, even though he is doubtless using certain historical data. Throughout the whole of his "Infancy (of Christ) Narrative" or chapters 1 and 2, he presents Mary as the ideal Israel and the type or model of the church, the one to whom all Christians are to look if they want to understand how to receive God's word in the gospel.

(2) The "good news" of God's favor (Lk 1:28) is addressed to all people. Likewise, all people are called to "conceive" Christ and "bear" him to the world (1:31). The church is the community of men and women who recognize this grace and call of God.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. Before Vatican II it was customary to exalt Mary to such an extent that she became "unreal" and therefore an impossible model for others to imitate. Because of Vatican II, we can now look at Mary as the "First Disciple of Christ" we are all called upon to imitate. Her prerogatives, like her Immaculate Conception, have not been abolished, but now their relevance to us is being underlined.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Mary responded to God's word with faith and obedience. In your life, have you been challenged to do the same? How did you respond?

2. The thrice-a-day praying of the Angelus should not only be a devotion to Mary but also a reminder that we Christians should be the ones to "bear" Christ and give him to the world.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. Don't you think it is time to transform the "devotional" Christian life into a "missionary" one? Many of the people you will meet today have not yet truly met Jesus Christ. Why not introduce him to them?

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. *CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED?* Sharing has an inbuilt missionary dimension. When we tell others what God has done in our lives, we imply that he is ready to do something similar in their own lives.

2. *CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED?* Right after the Annunciation came the Visitation having learned at the Annunciation that her kinswoman Elizabeth was "in her sixth month" and therefore in need of special attention, Mary went to stay with her until she gave birth, to attend to her needs. This is an example of caring that we should follow.

3. *CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED?* The angel affirmed Mary by expressing her situation of being a person highly

avored by God. We, too, should be ready to see and express the favors granted by God to others.

4. *FORGIVENESS*. The name "Jesus" which was announced as the name of Mary's child (*Lk* 1:31), means "God saves" and Matthew explicates that this name was given to the child "because he will save his people from their sins" (*Mt* 1:21). We participate in this salvation when we, too, forgive others.

5. *THE GOOD NEWS*. Rejoice (*Lk* 1:28). Through Mary, humankind has responded to God's offer of salvation.

C. STORY: THE WOMEN HAD FAITH

When the famous nun, now a Saint, Mother Cabrini, arrived in America in 1900 to work among the downtrodden Italian immigrants, she was penniless. A countess came to her help and offered her a large house to be used as a convent and home for homeless children.

Archbishop Corrigan of New York City did not believe in the whole idea, even though the countess had also given thousands of dollars to support it. "So what?" he skeptically asked. "How long do you think that money will last? Within a year it will all be gone. And then what?"

But the countess answered, "Your Grace, when we pray, we ask for our daily bread, not bread for a year."

December 25, 1996

CHRISTMAS, SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S BIRTH, Cycle B

Preparation for the year 2000:

1997 Theme: Jesus Christ, the One Savior

Focus on: The Sacrament of Baptism I The Virtue of Faith

Midnight: LUKE 2:1-14 TODAY A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU

Dawn: LUKE 2:15-20 THE SHEPHERDS FOUND MARY AND JOSEPH
AND THE BABY

Day: JOHN 1:1-18 (or 1:1-5, 9-14) THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

STORY: THE WISE PHYSICIAN

A wise physician said to a friend. "I have been practising medicine for 30 years, and I have prescribed many drugs. But in the long run I have learned that for most of what ails the human creature, the best medicine is love."

"What if it doesn't work?" asked the friend.

"Double the dose," he replied.

LESSON

That's what God did. In the Old Testament he loved his people. But on Christmas, by sending us his Son, He "doubled the dose."

December 29, 1996

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY, Cycle B

LUKE 2:22-40 (or 22. 39-40 **HIS PARENTS BROUGHT
JESUS UP TO JERUSALEM**)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Use in the Liturgy. To inculcate the importance of the family in Christian life the Church has established the feast of the Holy Family on the Sunday after Christmas. Biblically, however, in the Gospel passage for this year, Joseph's role is just that of accompanying Mary and the child Jesus. He and Mary both marvel at what is said about Jesus (Lk 2:33). They both marvel at the "good news" but it is only Mary who receives the "bad news" that a sword will pierce her heart (2:35a). This is because Luke presents Mary as the model of Israel and the Church who have to undergo pain and suffering to "give birth" to Jesus at his Resurrection and Glorification.

Focus Points. (1) Vv. 26-38. Luke presents his readers with the revelation of Jesus's true identity and mission. Jesus is the *Servant* of Deutero-Isaiah: "a revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:32; see Isa 42:6; 49:6).

(2) According to Isaiah 50:4-11 and 52:13-53:12, the *Servant* will accomplish his mission by being rejected, persecuted and killed. Simeon evokes this aspect of Jesus' mission in Luke 2:34-35. But Mary is not merely the recipient of this sad news. She is also intimately associated with it. The reason is that she is the model of Israel and the Church that have to give birth, in pain, to the glorious Messiah. While the New Testament does not associate pain with Jesus' birth at Bethlehem (Luke 2:7), it does see his second "birth" at his resurrection as involving suffering (John 16:21-22; Apoc 12:1-6; Mk 13:8 par.) It is in the process of this second "birth" (Passion-Resurrection) that Mary will suffer and participate in his mission after his Resurrection.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. Jesus is to be the *Light* both of Israel and of all nations. He will accomplish his mission in two stages: first by being a light to Israel during his public ministry in Palestine, and then by being a light to all nations (including Israel) after his Resurrection.

1.1 Pointer for Sharing. Can you truly say that your experience of accepting Jesus has been like getting out of the dark to be bathed in light?

2. Like Mary, if we really want to be associated in the saving work of Jesus, we have to share in his suffering.

2.1 Pointer for Sharing. It is specially when we have to undergo pain and suffering that we can show our faithfulness to Jesus and his mission of saving all of humanity.

BIBLIARASAL STEP 6: SEARCH

1. CAN OUR SHARING BE IMPROVED? In our Bible study sharings, we must frankly admit that it is not only in our joys but also in our sorrows that we find the hand of God.

2. CAN OUR CARING BE IMPROVED? Even when we suffer, we should show our caring for those who suffer more than we do.

3. CAN OUR AFFIRMATION BE IMPROVED? Even while announcing to Mary that she will suffer because of Jesus, Simeon was affirming her because he was saying that she will be his associate in saving humankind.

4. FORGIVENESS. It is for the forgiveness of the sins of humanity that Jesus, Mary, and all faithful Christians suffer.

5. THE GOOD NEWS. The sufferings of Jesus and Mary did not end in death but in the Resurrection, Ascension and Assumption.

C. STORY: THE FAMILY - THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

"From the wedlock of Christians there comes the family, in which new citizens of human society are born. By the grace of the Holy Spirit received in baptism, these are made children of God, thus perpetuating the People of God through the centuries. The family is, so to speak, the *domestic Church*. In it parents should, by word, and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them fostering with special care any religious vocation." — Vatican II *Lumen Gentium* (On the Church), n. 11.