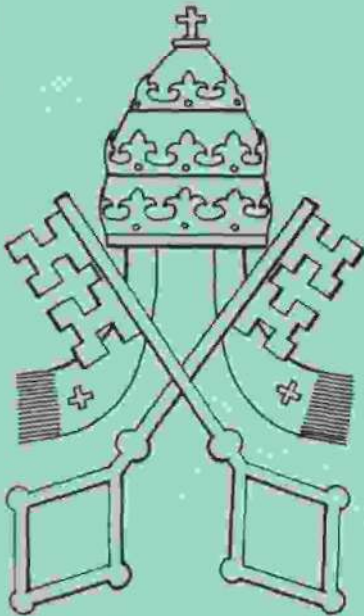


# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

*Vol LXXV, No. 815*

*November-December 1999*



THE AGUTNALDO MASSES:  
ORIGINS, SETBACKS AND SURVIVAL  
*Fidel Villaruel, OP*

RENEWING MISSIONARY COMMITMENT  
*James Kroeger, MM*

PASTORAL LETTER ON PORNOGRAPHY  
*CBCP*

APPLICATION OF INDULGENCES  
*Excelso Garcia, OP*

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

## The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, OP.
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	FR. HONORATO CASTIGADOR, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	FR. FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P. FR. JOSE MA. TINOKO, O.P.
BUSINESS MANAGER	FR. ROBERTO PINTO, O.P.
PUBLICATION ASSISTANTS	ANGELITA R. GUINTO ARNOLD S. MANALASTAS
COVER DESIGN	RODOLFO ATIENZA, O.P.

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FIUPINAS, the Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published by-monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and ia printed at Lucky Press, Inc., Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 31, 1946.

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

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

### Subscription Rates

	One Year	Per copy
Philippines:	P 370.00	P 65.00
Foreign: (Via Air Mail)	US\$ 40.00	\$ 8.00

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

Address all communications to:

**BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS**

Ecclesiastical Publications Office

University of Santo Tomas

Espana, Manila, Philippines

Tel. No. 731-31-01 local 351    Telefax: 740-97-10

E-mail: [boletin@nstcc.nst.edu.ph](mailto:boletin@nstcc.nst.edu.ph) or [ecclesia@ustce.ust.edu.ph](mailto:ecclesia@ustce.ust.edu.ph)

*Table of Contents*

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	645	PRIEST: MAN OF COMMUNION
<b>MAGISTERIAL WORDS</b>		
<i>John Paul II</i>	646	COMMUNION MEANS GAINING STRENGTH AND RICHNESS FROM UNIVERSALITY
<b>PASTORAL WORDS</b>		
<i>Pedro Tejero, OP</i>	651	THE PRIESTLY CHARACTER
<i>Fidel nilarroel, OP</i>	654	THE AGUINALDO MASSES: ORIGINS, SETBACKS AND SURVIVAL
<i>Joseph De Torre</i>	683	THE CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH IN THE TWENTY YEARS OF PAUL II'S PONTIFICATE
<i>James Kroeger, MM</i>	693	RENEWING MISSIONARY COMMITMENT
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>		
<i>CBCP</i>	701	ELECTED CBCP OFFICERS FOR THE MILLENNIUM
	705	PASTORAL LETTER ON PORNOGRAPHY
	709	A LETTER ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE RELICS OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX
<i>Jaime Card. Sin, DD</i>	711	THE DAY OF THE LORD IS OURS TOO

**CONSULTATIVE WORDS**

*Excelso Garcia, OP*

714 NOTORIOUS REJECTION  
OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

717 APPLICATION OF INDULGENCES

**GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW**

*Efren Rivera, OP*

718 HOMILETIC AND BIBLIARASAL POINTERS  
FOR JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2000

**INDEX OF VOLUME LXXV,  
NOS. 810, 811, 812, 813, 814,  
815 (1999)**

767

## **Priest: Man of Communion**

**VICENTE CAJILIG, OP**

The Church in Asia is trying to be a Church of Communion. In this church a priest should become a man of the sacred, of dialogue and of humble service.

The priest as a man of the sacred: He must have a profound faith experience. He must be a witness of holiness and capable of communicating holiness to others.

The priest as a man of dialogue: This implies a certain degree of availability and openness to others even with those of other religious persuasion. He must pursue dialogue with depth i.e. seeking the "semina verbi" in other religious traditions.

The priest as a man of humble service: A lowly attitude is required of a priest who wants to render humble service. His lowly attitude has to emanate from a humble disposition. Likewise, he must acquire skills to effectively and efficiently serve the Church.

The priestly character, which one article of this issue focuses on, serves as the seal for his becoming a man of communion.

## **Communion means Gaining Strength and Richness from Universality**

---

**JOHN PAUL II**

*"Communion does not mean the absorption and loss of one's own identity. Rather, it is a shared pilgrimage to the one Lord, preserving what is specific and gaining the strength and richness that comes from universality", the Holy Father said on Wednesday, 24 March, during a ceremony in the Sola Regia of the Apostolic Palace to open the Rome-Armenia Exhibition being held in the Sistine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Library to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Church. After reviewing the long, fruitful relations between Rome and Armenia, the Pope spoke of his desire for ever greater cooperation among Christians: "Together in the footsteps of Christ: may this be the hope and the prayer of all Christians on the eve of the third millennium and the eve of the 1,700th anniversary of the Baptism of Armenia". Here is the text of the Holy Father's address, which was given in English.*

1, It is a great joy for me to take part in the solemn inauguration of the *Rome-Armenia Exhibition*, sponsored by the ancient and glorious See of Echmiadzin and the Embassy of Armenia to the Holy See, with the cooperation of the Vatican Apostolic Library.

I wish to express sentiments of deep esteem and consideration to His Excellency Mr. Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia, who has wished to be present on this occasion. In thanking you, Mr President, for your kind words, I express the hope that Armenia, in its challenging journey to a deserved prosperity, will experience increased international solidarity and benefit from the guidance of enlightened statesmen dedicated to the common good, so that all citizens may be encouraged to play their part in the nation's development.

A particular reason for rejoicing is the presence, on this solemn and significant occasion, of His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of all Armenians, accompanied by His Beatitude Patriarch Torkom, Archbishop of Jerusalem, and other illustrious prelates, priest and lay people of the Apostolic Church of Armenia. You have wished to honour the Church of Rome in the most beautiful manner accorded to Christians: by the witness of charity and the holy kiss of communion.

Your Holiness, I deeply appreciate this delicate gesture, which constitutes a new and important chapter in the history of the common quest for full unity between Christ's followers. Despite the difficulties of the journey, you and the illustrious guests accompanying you have wished to show once again how much you believe in the ecumenical task, to which you have tirelessly devoted your energies. Again I thank you for your words of historic importance on the occasion of your visit to Rome in December 1996, words which were echoed the following month by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. To His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia I send a warm fraternal greeting and invoke abundant divine blessings upon his ministry.

You have taught your people and your Church that communion is an imperative for Christ's followers and an essential condition "so that the world may believe" in their testimony.

Communion does not mean the absorption and loss of one's own identity. Rather, it is a shared pilgrimage to the one Lord, preserving what is specific and gaining the strength and richness that comes from the universality. May the Father of all blessings grant Your Holiness many years as head of the Armenian Church, in the expectation of new initiatives which will renew the hope of those who believe that the Church of Christ is one, that she "can only be one, one and united" (*Address to the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Insegnamenti XVI, 2* [1993], 1458).

I address warm greetings to my dear Brother, His Beatitude Jean Pierre XVIII Kasparian, Patriarch of Armenian Catholics, who has also come here today to be with us, accompanied by other Bishops of his Church. Full communion with the See of Peter, while making this Church an integral part of the Catholic family, does not separate it from the marvellous heritage of spiritual life and culture which brings so much honour to the Armenian people, but rather commits it to a witness of renewed vigour on behalf of unity.

2. The theme of the exhibition and this gathering of the highest ecclesiastical and civil figures representing the Armenian people is no ordinary event. It is indeed highly symbolic: it points to the openness, the readiness for encounter, and the cultural achievement which have marked the entire history of the Armenian people.

Despite opposition and even open persecution, Armenians did not close in upon themselves, but considered it vital, not only for their own survival but also for authentic development, to engage in an open and intelligent exchange with other peoples. From others they borrowed elements of enrichment, blending them in the crucible of their own unmistakable uniqueness. They have always shown initiative and courage, ever sustained by the power of the Gospel which shaped their history and provided a solid foundation for their life. The Armenian diaspora, painful expe-



rience though it was, is a sign of this dynamic vitality which remains exemplary even today.

And when this attachment to the Gospel involved, as often happened, the sacrifice of life itself for the sake of fidelity to the Christian faith, Armenians showed by their martyrdom what wonders of strength grace can work in those who accept it. The universal Church can only express constant and profound gratitude for this sacrifice, which at times served as a living shield protecting Western Christianity, sparing it dangers which might have proved extremely grave.

3. The relationship between Armenia and Rome preceded the coming of Christianity, but Christianity soon became the very reason for that relationship. For many centuries, free from the misunderstandings and divisions which arose between the West and the Greek world, this relationship was marked by cordial good will. The embassies which the Armenian Church sent to Rome were received as an attestation to a pure and consistent faith. On numerous occasions the Popes sent gifts of liturgical objects to the Armenian Catholicoi as a sign of fraternal esteem, and it is significant that today the mitre and the crosier are still part of the sacred vesture of Armenian prelates.

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was a privileged meeting-point for Latins, Greeks and Syrians: a remarkable commitment to ecumenical fraternity flourished there. Communion between the Armenian Church in that region and the Church of Rome reached an intensity perhaps never attained in other cases. The cultural exchange was fruitful and beneficial, despite considerable difficulties. If it failed to yield more lasting fruit, this was in part due to the intransigence of some who perhaps were not able to appreciate fully the value of so providential an opportunity. On the Roman side, some of this lack of understanding was the result of tragic internal conflicts in the Western Church and the emergence of new canonical and theological concepts which made it more

difficult to understand the ancient spiritual heritage of the East. For us today all this is a motive of profound regrets, and it obliges us not to overlook the opportunities which the Spirit is giving us in calling all Christ's followers to communion.

4. The objects on display in the *Sola Regia* — from the fragment of Noah's Ark from Echmiadzin, to the archaeological finds from ancient Cilicia — are not mere memorabilia; they are signs of the great things which God has done for the Armenian people. They are a invitation to ever deeper self-knowledge and ever greater self-esteem. If in those distant times enlightened and courageous men such as Nerses Shnorhali and Nerses of Lambron amazed the world, and continue to do so even today, with an admirable balance between love of their own culture and openness to the cultures of others, their example — and later the similar shining example of Abbot Mechitar of Sebaste — must be a lesson and an inspiration for us all in the present.

In times long past, saintly Armenians showed great enthusiasm for the unity of the Church, with respect for the dignity of all and for the specific character of each. They were ahead of their times, proclaiming values which were not fully understood. Now that those values have become part of our universal patrimony, we can be no less than they were: we must have the courage to undertake the holy actions which will overcome prejudices and stereotypes.

Together in the footsteps of Christ: may this be the hope and the prayer of all Christians on the eve of the third millennium and the eve of the 1,700th anniversary of the Baptism of Armenia.

May God always bless and protect your people throughout the world, wherever they bear witness to the faith and to the learning of the Fathers. From heaven may the Holy Martyrs and the revered Shepherds of the Church of Armenia intercede for us with Mary, the Mother of love.

## **The Priestly Character**

**PEDRO TEJERO, O.P.**

As it is customary in the Philippines, the day after the ordination of a new priest, a Mass of thanksgiving is offered. The preacher, chosen for the occasion, gives way to his inspiration by extolling the dignity of the priesthood, and its mission and commitment to the spiritual welfare of the Christian community. Unfortunately, rare are the occasions when the faithful get a good and clear explanation on the nature and significance of the priestly character with which the newly ordained priest has been sealed. Needless to say that a better understanding of the nature and function of the priestly character will greatly help to estimate and appreciate the dignity of the priesthood as well as the responsibilities derived from it.

St. Augustine, in his doctrinal debates with the Donatists, was the first to develop and clarify the nature and significance of the sacramental character. He proposed and defended that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders once conferred according to the ecclesial rites cannot be repeated. Such sacraments are valid even in cases when they do not give grace on account of some obstacles. And the reason for this is that these three sacraments produce, by their own nature, an effect which is

permanent, enduring and indelible: the sacramental character. According to this principle, anyone who has validly received these sacraments has been marked or sealed forever. This sacramental character may well be compared to a coin bearing the image of an emperor or king, or to the sign marked on soldiers being deputed to military service.

St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*, Part III, question 63, deals extensively on the nature and qualities of the sacramental character. For St. Thomas, the sacramental character is a gift granted by God to men as the fruit of Christ's passion and death. It is in the soul where the sacramental character is received and it affects intimately the intellectual powers, especially in matters pertaining to the virtue of faith. For St. Thomas, the sacramental character is a power which enables man to receive all the things pertaining to the divine worship, as in the case of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, while the Sacrament of Holy Orders empowers the ministers to bestow the fruits of Christ's passion to other people. Such power acts in the form of an instrument which is moved primarily by the principal agent, Christ, the Supreme Priest. The sacramental character is, therefore, a participation in the priesthood of Christ to receive the graces of his passion and to bestow on others the blessings from God.

Following the line of thought of St. Augustine, St. Thomas defines the sacramental character as "a kind of sign as it is imprinted by a sensible sacrament". "It is a kind of seal whereby something is marked". "Thus, soldiers who are assigned to military service, are marked with their leader's sign, by which they are, in a fashion, likened to him. And in this way those who are deputed to the Christian worship, of which Christ is the author, receive a character by which they are likened to Christ". Faithful to the last consequences of this doctrine, St. Thomas said the following words worthy of serious consideration: "Each minister of the Church is, in some respect, a copy of Christ" (Supplement, q. 40, a. 4, R. 3rd).

The last point treated by St. Thomas concerning the sacramental character is whether the sacramental character of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders can be blotted out from the soul. His answer deserves thoughtful attention at a time when we see people changing religion or priests deserting their ministry. As it has been stated, the sacramental character is nothing but a participation in the priesthood of Christ which is, by its very nature, eternal. In view of this, the sacramental character can never be blotted out from the soul which is perpetual and incorruptible. As to the question whether such mark or seal will remain or disappear after the resurrection and the last judgment, St. Thomas says: "After this life the character remains both in the good as adding to their glory, and in the wicked as increasing their shame"-

To conclude this brief exposition on the sacramental character, I could not have better words than the ones found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. "The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental character or "seal" by which the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions. This configuration to Christ and to the Church, brought about by the Spirit, is indelible, it remains for ever in the Christian as a positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of divine protection, and as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church. Therefore, these sacraments can never be repeated". (CCC n. 1121)

# **The Aguinaldo Masses: Origins, Setbacks and Survival**

**FIDEL VILLARROEL, O.P.**

Every year, as the popular novena of "Aguinaldo Masses" is about to begin on December 16, journalists in our daily newspapers think it timely and relevant to write a column in the editorial section on the nature and significance of this Filipino religious tradition. Reviewing at random various mid-December issues of some newspapers in the last forty years, one finds the write-ups rather repetitious, superficial and stagnant. There is little progress in the field of research about the origins of these Masses and the reason for their celebration. There is confusion even about the names *de Gallo* and *de Aguinaldo*.

Fruitless are also the efforts of these writers to establish the origin of these Masses. For while this religious custom looks and sounds typically Filipino in songs, atmosphere and surroundings, some will think about possible pagan survivals in these Christian rites, others place their origins in Mexico or perhaps in Spain; or perhaps not, because they are unknown today there. And finally there exists a variety of opinions about the reason or intentions for which the Masses are celebrated at such early hours of the morning.

These Masses being among the oldest if not the oldest and most venerable religious traditions still existing in the Philippines, it seemed to me worthwhile to undertake a work of research on this matters in order to clarify, as far as possible, the various points of doubt often asked about the *Misas de Aguinaldo*.

## 1. VOTIVE MASSES

Before discussing the origins of the Aguinaldo Masses in the Philippines, a short preamble on the liturgical character of these Masses may be in order, especially for lay readers who are not acquainted with technicalities regarding rituals and the great variety of Masses that are celebrated throughout the year.

The Aguinaldo Masses belong to a special kind of masses called *votive* in the liturgical books, in the old Missals as well as in the Post Vatican II Missals. *Votive Masses* are those that do not correspond with the Office of the day (the prayers said by priests in the Breviary and the Mass offered by them), but are said by choice of the celebrant, with special text and for particular intentions.

Anyone handling the small daily Missal books for the use of the faithful will realize that proper masses are provided for *every day* of the year. These are daily proper Masses distributed throughout the various seasons of the liturgical year, namely, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and the long post-Easter season called "Ordinary Time" until the next Advent season opens a new cycle. This applies to both the Sundays and the weekly masses. Then, there are Masses proper to the celebration or commemoration of the feasts of saints, which replace the Mass of the corresponding seasonal Mass.

But aside from these daily masses assigned to every day of the year, there are in the Roman Missal, and found at the end of it, a great variety of special masses called *votive Masses*, which

the priest, not arbitrarily but following certain' liturgical norms established by the Church, may choose to celebrate in special days for particular reasons and needs in substitution of the masses assigned to a given day: like a *votive* Mass of the Virgin Mary, of the Holy Spirit, of St. Joseph, for the dead, on a death anniversary, etc.

The practice of saying *votive* Masses is very ancient in the Church, going as far back as the fourth century. Christians then begun to ask for, and the Church to celebrate, special Masses for particular intentions, for instance, for the dead, for protection against enemies, for unity, for peace; Masses in time of earthquakes or storms, for a good harvest, for refugees, etc. Later, in the Middle Ages, the Church introduced the *votive* Masses in honor saints (aside from the saints of the day), saints considered as special intercessors before God for obtaining certain spiritual or temporal benefits; Masses, for instance in honor of St. Raphael in view of a long journey to be undertaken, to St. Roche (San Roque) against plagues, and so on.

In addition, there were also *votive* Masses celebrated for one or other day of the week connected with some saint or Christian mystery, under certain liturgical norms. For instance, in honor of the Trinity on Mondays, of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays, of the Passion of Christ on Fridays, and, the most commonly celebrated, even in our times, the *votive* Mass in honor of the *Blessed virgin Mary on Saturdays*\*.

*Votive* Masses have been preserved through the centuries, but as the centuries passed, some of them were kept in the Roman Missal, as most appropriated to the times, while some were eliminated. It is worth noting that the reformed Post-Vatican *Roman*

' Cf. MARIO RICCHETTI, *Historia de la Liturgia*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1956, II, pp. 114.119.



*Missal*, instead of reducing the *votive* Masses with respect to earlier periods, increased their number considerably<sup>2</sup>.

The Aguinaldo Masses being *votive* masses introduced by a particular church (Spain, Mexico or the Philippines) do not have a special text of their own in *universal Roman Missal*. But Rome has recognized them as privileged *votive* masses, celebrated "for grave or weighty reason" (*pro re gravi*) and with massive attendance of the faithful<sup>3</sup>. The privilege given to them is manifested in allowing them to be celebrated instead of the daily Masses for the Advent season, which are catalogued in the liturgical calendar as first class ferial days.

## 2. THE "NOVENAS" OF ADVENT AND THE EXPECTANT MARY

As every Catholic knows, the Church's Liturgical Year begins with the first Sunday of the season of Advent. Advent is a period of preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. The entire liturgy of Advent, including the Divine Office recited by the clerics, and the Holy Mass, express in beautiful mystic spirit the deep feelings and the ardent longings of the Church for the arrival of the awaited Messiah and Savior of the World.

In that atmosphere of waiting, two biblical persons dominate the sacred readings, the antiphons and the songs, as symbolic of

<sup>2</sup> In the pre-Vatican *Missale Romanian* (*intra* note 2), there are forty *votive* Masses added to the Ordinary Masses; while in the new Roman Missal in English, ed. New York, 1985, the number of Masses for special occasions increased to seventy nine.

<sup>3</sup> See *Missale Romanian*, Milan 1962, *Introd.*, *De Missis Votivis*, n. 366: "Votive Masses 'pro re publica et gravi simul' is understood the Mass that, by order or by consent of the Ordinary [i.e. the local Bishop] is celebrated with big assembly of the faithful, for grave spiritual or temporal need and utility that affect the whole community or part of it" (p. xxxi).

the nearness of the great event. Of the four weeks of Advent, the liturgy of the first two focus on the Precursor St. John the Baptist preaching in the desert with the powerful voice of a gigantic prophet. In the third and fourth weeks, the liturgy is centered on the person closest to Christ, Mary the expectant Mother.

It is of special interest for our study to underline how as Christmas looms near, the liturgy uses several series of prayers in the Office and in the Mass in numbers of seven, eight and nine. One of these series is precisely the novena of Masses celebrated in the Philippines known as Aguinaldo Masses.

To be more specific, starting December 17 and ending with December 23, the Divine Office uses new hymns to introduce Lauds and Vespers. On the same days, a set of seven antiphons are used before and after each Psalm of Lauds and Vespers. The new hymns and the seven antiphons convey with greater intensity than in the previous days a sense of urgency in the spiritual preparation for the mystery of the God's appearance in the world.

Among the series of antiphons used in the liturgy in those days, there are seven that are called "major antiphons" and also "O Antiphons". These antiphons are recited or sung before and after Mary's song, the *Magnificat*, at Vespers, from December 17 to the day of Christmas Eve. All the antiphons begin with the exclamation "O" (O Key of David, O Emmanuel, O Flower of Jesse, etc.), and end with the vivid cry of "come" addressed to the approaching Redeemer<sup>4</sup>. Such antiphons are christological in content, but also Marian in the sense of being prayed together with Mary's *Magnificat*,

Even more significant for our case is that the Aguinaldo Masses are votive in honor of Mary, something that escapes the

<sup>4</sup> Cf. JOVIAN LANG, OFM, *Dictionary of Liturgy*, New York 1989, p. 461; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. 'Antiphons'; *Enciclopedia ESPASA*, 39, p. 232.

knowledge of the ordinary faithful. To make a brief digression at this point, the *votive* Masses in honor of Mary, which are said on *Saturday* all throughout the year, are provided with a special text on the Saturdays of Advent (*de tempore Adventi*). They are called "Rorate" Masses from the first words of the entrance song *Rorate coeli desuper* (Let the clouds rain the Just One); the verse before the Gospel is *Hail Mary full of Grace*, the angelic salutation at the Annunciation; and the Communion antiphon begins with the words *The Virgin is with Child*.

Further to show the intimate connection between the last period of Advent and the devotion to Mary the Expectant *Theotokos* (Mother of God), let us turn attention to Spain, where the Aguinaldo Masses had their origin. In former times, the Church in Spain and in some parts of France celebrated on December 18 a feast in honor of the Virgin Mary called the "Expectation of the Delivery of Mary", and by other names "*Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza*" and "*Nuestra Señora de la O*". Our Lady of Hope obviously referred to the hope that soon a Child would be born of Mary. Our Lady of the "O" had reference to what we have explained earlier, that is, to the recitation of the major antiphons "O" before and after Mary's song *Magnificat* at Vespers of the Divine Office. In this connection it is interesting that *Maria de la O* is a name formerly used in Spain for women, perhaps not very commonly, and probably not given to any woman in our times.

For the purpose of the present study, what is more important to note is that the Aguinaldo Masses were and are, in fact, *votive* Masses in *honor of Mary*. The color of the liturgical vestments of these Masses are not the purple of Advent, but the color of all Marian Masses, white; and the text of the Aguinaldo Masses were those of the *votive* Masses for Mary "*tempore Adventus*" (in Advent). And for further and final proof of their Marian character, there is the explicit intention of dedicating them to Mary as it was done in the countries of Spain, Mexico and the Philippines from the beginning.

### 3. THE AGUINALDO MASSES IN SPAIN

It is not possible for us to determine the exact time in which the practice of celebrating the Aguinaldo Masses was introduced in Spain. We know, however, that as early as the seventh century the Holy Mass was already said there for the particular intentions of certain persons, and that before the 8th century votive Masses were celebrated there in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>5</sup>. But it is not until the last decades of the sixteenth century *that* documents show that Masses called *de Aguinaldo* were celebrated in Spain.

The first available testimony to this effect comes from the famous Jesuit canonist and missionary in the Philippines, Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde. In his work *Cursus Juris Canonici Hispanici et Indici*, published in 1743, Murillo quotes a certain classical canonical book under the name of *Grijalbanus* as stating that "Pope Sixtus V granted a plenary indulgence to those who attended these Masses, which we call in Spanish *de Aguinaldo*"<sup>6</sup>. Now Sixtus V was Pope from 1585 to 1890. This grant presupposes that such Masses were well established at least in some parts of Spain before the last decade of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, from other testimonies, as we will see later, we have knowledge of the fact that in 1585, the Aguinaldo Masses were said in Mexico, and that being the case, they must have existed in Spain much earlier.

Even the very appellation name of these Masses denotes Spanish origins. In relation to them, there has always been in Spain the

<sup>5</sup> VILLODAS, "Misas", quoted by Giovanni Devoti in BENITO COROMINAS, OP, *Joanni Devoti Institutianum Canonizarum Libri IV*, Manila 1875, II/ p. 153.

<sup>6</sup> PEDRO MURILLO VELARDE, *Cursus Juris Canonici Hispanici el Indici*, Madrid 1743. This work had two other editions, in 1763 and in 1791. We are quoting from the 1791 edition through B. COROMINAS, OP, *Joannis Devoti*, II, p. 153, and JUAN YLLA, OP, "Sobre las Misas de Aguinaldo", in *Boletin Eclesidstico de Filipinas*, November 1935, p. 724.

*Misa de Gallo*, which is celebrated at midnight of December 24 even today, and is wrongly used by many Filipinos when referring to the novena of dawn Masses celebrated in this country. In Spain, when the Masses *de Aguinaldo* existed, they were celebrated in the early hours of the morning. It is curious that the old documents in this regard use two different spellings of the word. For instance, we find in a work of Aloysius Gardellini (1856) the use of "*Aguilando*" and "*Aquitando*", while other authors, like Vicente Salazar, O.P. (1742), the *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Filipinos* (end of the 18th century) and Benito Corominas\* Q.P. (1875) write it as we do today, that is, "*Aguinaldo*"<sup>1</sup>.

*Aguinaldo* is a Spanish word of very limited use, for it means a Christmas gift, that is, a gift given during the Christmas season, especially on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Epiphany or "Three Kings". And it is never used when making a "regalo" throughout the rest of the year<sup>8</sup>. As to why this name is used for these Masses, one interpretation could be that the Christian faithful offer to God nine Masses as a gift on the occasion of the Birth of Jesus, to him and to his mother. Another could be that the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ALOISIIUS GARDELLINI, *Decreta autentica Congregationis Sacrorum Rituum*, Roma 1856, I p. 491; IL pp. 35-36; VICENTE SALAZAR, OP, *Historic/ de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinos*, Manila 1742, pp. 493-494; B. COROMINAS, op. cit., II, p. 151; *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Filipinos*, ms., microfilm of the Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, fol. 120. -Although the word *Aguilando* is in fact the original Spanish form (still used in very limited areas of Spain), the form *Aguinaldo* is the one currently adopted by practically all Spaniards, and the one preferred by the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*.

<sup>8</sup> The Dictionary of the Spanish Academy gives a probable etymology of the word *aguilando*: "perhaps from the Latin *hoc in anno*, of this year. The word is included in the Webster's dictionary, with this explanation; "*Aguinaldo*". [Spanish (also, gift given on festive occasions, especially Christmas and New Year's Day), alteration of earlier *Aguilando* and *Aguinando*, perhaps from Latin *hoc in anno*, in this year (a phrase common in the refrain of old popular songs sung on New Year's Day)]" (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, Massachusettes, 1981).

Church rejoices at receiving from God the gift of his son, the Word, at the time he is born human.

From their inception in Spain, a peculiar trait of these Masses was, that they were said much earlier than the ordinary daily Masses. In three documents of the seventeenth century referring to these Masses, they are said to be celebrated "summo mane" (very early in the morning), "ad auroram" (ad dawn) and "antequam dies illuxerit" (before daybreak).

We come now to the establishment of historical facts. Two authoritative documents testify to the existence of the Aguinaldo Masses in Spain by the end of the 17th century in two dioceses of Spain, namely, Seville and Granada. Interested parties in both dioceses submitted queries to the Sacred Congregation of Rites describing the Masses and asking for clarification of some doubts.

1. In December of 1676, the Presbyter Diego Diaz de Escobar, Master of Ceremonies of the Cathedral Church of Seville, presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites a list of nine queries regarding various customs practiced in that Archdiocese. Question 7 refers to the Masses popularly called de *Aguinaldo*. From the terms of the exposition, we cull the following elements that describe them<sup>9</sup>:

- The Aguinaldo Masses are celebrated nine days before the  
Nativity of Christ;
- they are said at dawn;
- these votive Masses are called by the people de Aguilando  
[sic];
- they are celebrated in honor of the expectant Mother of God;

<sup>9</sup> The complete text of the query is in A. GARDELLINI, *Decreta autentica*, II, pp. 490-491.

- they are said not only in ordinary weekdays (ferial days), but even on special feasts days (of duplex class) and on Sundays;
- like in great feasts, Gloria and Credo are sung, and only one Prayer is said;
- There is a great popular devotion to these Masses.

The exposition and query end by informing the Sacred Congregation about certain anomalies and abuses that had crept in the celebration of the Masses, which called for a remedy.

2. Notwithstanding the condemnatory declaration of the Holy See against the abuses mentioned in the above query, five years later, a similar query was received in the Holy See from the city of Granada. In 1681, Fr. Juan de Arjona Valle, of the Franciscan Friars of the Observance, wrote to the Sacred Congregation of the Rites presenting three doubts and queries.

The request of the petitioner implies that there was some decree already issued by the said Vatican Congregation downgrading the solemnity of the Aguinaldo Masses sung in honor of the Virgin Mary 'popularly called *de Aguinaldo*', Now, the request explains, the elimination of the festive and solemn elements of the Masses, by taking away the *Gloria*, the *Credo* and the single *Prayer*, and their reduction to the category of an *ordinay votive* Mass, has resulted in great inconveniences "in Spain, and especially in the convents of the Friars", for two reasons: first, because in many convents such Masses were celebrated by special request and intention of the people, with massive attendance of the faithful, and with a sermon; secondly, if now the Masses were not to be sung and the sermon not preached, the convent would not perceive the stipend or offering given for an Aguinaldo Mass, which constituted a source of maintenance for the community.

Fr. Arjona is asking, therefore, whether the Sacred Congregation of Rites would allow the return to the former solemn celebration, the characteristics of which are similar to those found in the earlier request of the church of Seville:

- They are nine Masses said before Christmas at a very early hour of the morning;
- they are sung with *Gloria* and *Credo*;
- the custom "comes from very ancient times beyond memory";
- the Masses are celebrated due to the great popular devotion to the Virgin Mary;
- And the devotees want the Masses offered "*pro re gravi*" (for a grave and weighty reason or intention), that is, "for the recently sowed fields and for the well-being of the whole people" (*pro agris nuper seminatis et pro salute totius populi*)<sup>10</sup>.

From these two expositions, it is clear that the Aguinaldo Masses were celebrated in Spain much earlier than the seventeenth century with a solemnity and festive mood not dissimilar to what we see today in the Philippines. In view of the second request made from Granada, it is well to take note here of the explicit intention for which the Masses were celebrated: the fertility of the sowed fields and health and well being of the people. The intention was timely. A great part of the arable lands in Spain are sowed in the autumn season waiting to sprout in spring.

I must not bypass an objection commonly made against the Spanish origins of the Aguinaldo Masses. The objection comes from what we read in a report written in the seventeenth century

<sup>10</sup> For the complete text of the query see A. GARDELLINI, *op. cit.*, II, p. 35.



by a Jesuit missionary in the Philippines, Fr. Francisco Ignacio Alcina, a report to be quoted more fully later in this study. In his extraordinary studies on all aspects of the Philippines of his times, specially the Visayas region, Alcina does not fail to deal with the religious celebrations, and in particular with the Aguinaldo Masses. About them he says that the first time he saw them was in Mexico, but not in his native Spain: "*Que en Espana yo no to vi*" (in Spain I did not see them)<sup>11</sup>.

This statement needs a brief commentary. Fr. Ignacio Alcina was born in the town of Gandia, province of Valencia, Spain, in 1610, and he entered the Society of Jesus in 1624. In 1631 when he left for the Philippines, his residence was the city of Zaragoza, in the northern region of Aragon<sup>12</sup>. That Fr. Alcina never saw Aguinaldo Masses celebrated in Spain, as he states, is one thing; that the Masses were not said anywhere in Spain is quite another. Eastern Spain, where Valencia is, and even more northern Spain where Aragon is, have extreme cold temperatures in December, while southern Spain, the Adalucian region of Seville and Granada, has a temperate climate even in winter.

To celebrate Aguinaldo Masses for nine days in northern Spain at dawn in the middle of winter would have entailed excessive inconvenience to people especially the elderly and the children. It is unlikely that these Masses would have had a favorable massive response. It is, therefore, very possible that Fr. Alcina did not actually see the Aguinaldo Masses in the areas where he spent his early life, while such Masses were certainly celebrated in the southern cities of Granada and Seville where they

<sup>11</sup> "Alcina's Report on the celebration of the feasts in the XVII Century Samar and Leyte", in *Philippiniana Sacra*, XVI, 46 (January-April 1981), p. 134).

<sup>12</sup> See KANTIUS J. KOBAC, OFM, "The Great Samar Leyte Bisayan Missionary of the 17th Century", in *Philippiniana Sacra*, XIII, 39 (September-December 1978), p. 402.

were very popular and where they were attended by big assemblies of the faithful.

#### **4. THE AGUINALDO MASSES IN THE AZORES AND IN MEXICO**

Explorers, conquistadors, colonizers and missionaries; language, laws, customs and traditions: all of them traveled from Spain to the New World westward with the sails of the galleons. This was also the case with the practice of the Aguinaldo Masses. They were carried by the Spanish missionaries to Mexico (New Spain) in the early years of the evangelization of America.

In relation to these traveling of so many things from the Old Continent to the New, we have found with surprise that the Aguinaldo Masses existed, some time in the past, in the Azores Islands, a bridge or stepping stone placed in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The Azores have never been linked to Spain; they were always a colony (today an autonomous region) of Portugal. In 1534 the small archipelago of nine islands became a diocese, suffragan of Lisbon, which was called "*Anagrenesis*" from the town of Angra, capital of one of the islands, the Terceira.

Now we come to the point of interest for our study. On a date we have not been able to establish, a document related to this Diocese speaks an *ancient custom* of celebrating nine Holy Masses in honor of the Virgin Mary before the Nativity of Christ. The document is a query elevated by that Diocese to the Sacred Congregation of Rites: "Whether, in consideration of being a very ancient (*antiquissima*) custom, it could be licit to celebrate the nine votive Masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary before the Nativity of the Lord, even though some of them coincide with the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle [December 21] and on the 3rd and 4th Sundays of Advent". The Sacred Congregation replied that, considering the multitude of the faithful who attend those

Masses , they may be sung<sup>13</sup>. No name is given to this novena of Masses, but it is clear that they were no different in character from the Aguinaldo Masses of southern Spain.

The voyage across the Atlantic ended in Mexico, New Spain. In Mexico, the Aguinaldo Masses must have been introduced in the sixteenth century by the earliest missionaries. For they are the subject matter of a decree enacted by the Third Provincial Council of Mexico held on 1585. That Council, presided over by Archbishop Pedro Moya de Contreras, was convoked with the aim of implementing the doctrinal and disciplinary decrees of the Council of Trent. It was the most important and complete of all the Mexican Councils and its influence was transcendental for two centuries<sup>14</sup>.

The aforementioned decree is part of the chapter on "the celebration of Masses and of the Divine Office", and it reads as follows:

*"Nullus Missam ante auroram nee post meridiem (nisi privilegio sibi ad it concessio) celebret. Missae vero quas hispanice de Aguinaldo vocant antequam dies illuxerit ne celebrentur"*(No one may celebrate Mass before sunrise, nor in the afternoon, unless a privilege has been granted to him to do so. Besides, the Masses called in Spanish *de Aguinaldo* must not be celebrated before daybreak),<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The text of the declaration of the Sacred Congregation is taken from JUAN YLLA, OP, "Sobre las Misas de Aguinaldo", in *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, November 1935, p. 724, quoting *Decreta Authentica Sacrae Rituum Congregationis*, n. 1093.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. ELISA LUQUE ALCALDE and JOSEP IGNASI SARANYANA, *la Iglesia Católica en América*, Colección MAPFRE 1492, VI/10, Madrid 1992, pp. 198-199.

<sup>15</sup> "Concilium Mexicanum Provinciale celebratum Mexici anno 1585, lib. III, tit. XV: De celebratione Missarum et Divinorum Officiorum", #8, published in JOSE SAENZ DE AGUIRRE, *Collectio Maxima Conciliorum Hispaniae et Novi Orbis*, Roma 1693.

From this conciliar provision it can be surmised that the Aguinaldo Masses were well established in Mexico by the year 1585, for the Council introduces a change in its celebration, that is, regarding the *hour* of their celebration that should not be before daybreak.

Forty years after this Council, the Aguinaldo Masses continued to be very popular in Mexico, judging from a report coming to us from the personal experience of the Jesuit missionary Fr. Ignacio Francisco Alcina, already quoted in this study. Father Alcina arrived in Mexico on August 1, 1631 on his way to the Philippines, leaving Mexico on February of the following year. It was therefore in the season of Advent of 1631 that he witnessed the celebration of the Aguinaldo Masses there. Here is his report:

*"The first time that I heard about and saw these festive manifestations of the nine Masses (de Aguilandp [sic]), was in Mexico, where their celebration is very much spread. It was in the Seminary for the natives which our Society [of Jesus] has in that city, called St. Gregory Seminary, where I first began to appreciate it, [and this not only] for the well-known and revealing circumstances of its celebration, but also for its reverential, religious and solemn air. I say that it came here [to the Philippines] from Mexico without any doubt (in Spain I did not see it"<sup>16</sup>. It must have been brought to these Islands where it is celebrated with no less ostentation"<sup>17</sup>.*

And this is the last time we hear about the Mexican tradition before the Masses were prohibited in 1677, as it is will be seen below.

<sup>16</sup> See *supra*, "The Misas de Aguinaldo in Spain", with Alcina's text and our interpretation.

<sup>17</sup> "Alcina's Report", in *Philippiniana Sacra*, XVI, 46 (January-April 1981), pp 134-135.

## 5. THE AGUINALDO MASSES IN THE PHILIPPINES

As far as I can know, no historical document has yet been found giving us a clue about the first time and place of the celebration of the Aguinaldo Masses in the Philippines. Two Jesuit missionaries will lead us to establish approximate dates of their celebration in the 17th and 18th centuries. They are Fr. Francisco Ignacio Alcina and Fr. Pedro MuriUo Velarde. Later on, a Dominican will be added as witness: Fr. Vicente Salazar, in the 18 th century.

Fr. Ignacio Alcina, "one of the most outstanding and indefatigable missionaries in the entire Visayas region", has already been quoted in this study. Born in Spain, and after entering the Society of Jesus in 1624, he arrived in the Philippines in 1631. After staying two and a half years in Manila, he was assigned to the Visayan missions in 1634, where he worked as missionary for the rest of his life, except for another brief period of residence in Manila from 1658 to 1660. All through these years Alcina moved from one island to another in the provinces of Samar, Leyte, Panay and Cebu. He died in 1674<sup>18</sup>.

Alcina's references to the Aguinaldo Masses do not specify particular places, but apply to the Visayas in general and presumably Manila also, but they might apply to the entire Philippines as well. These references are found in his monumental work *Histona de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas...1668*, which he left unpublished<sup>19</sup>. The voluminous work has been praised as "true,

<sup>18</sup> For more biographical details of Alcina, see KANTIUS KOBAK, "Ignacio Francisco Alcina" (*supra*, note 12), pp. 402-404; HORACIO DE LA COSTA, SJ, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 1581-1768, pp. 614-615.

\*<sup>1</sup> A great part of his work has been published in its original Spanish with parallel English versions, starting in 1978, in *Philippiniana Sacra*. The editing work has been done by Kantius Kobak, OFM, Pablo Fernandez, OP, and Lucio Gutierrez, OP.

meticulous and most exhaustive", "the achievement of a very erudite man", "a masterpiece of history"<sup>20</sup>.

In Chapter 12 of the Second Part, dealing with the Advent celebrations in this country in his times, that is, between 1634 and 1674, Alcina describes, among the Advent devotions, those in honor of St. Francis Xavier (December 4), the great evangelizer of India and of the Far East, and those in honor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (December 8). Explaining the latter feast, Alcina ponders how the "new Christians" in Visayas are pleased with everything that pertains to the devotion to Mary. And he continues:

*"As a result of this devotion, there are established in our communities the Masses they called de Aguinaldo [sic]<sup>21</sup>. This devotion consists of nine Masses and begins on the 16th of December (and continues on) till the 24th, which is the Vigil of the Nativity".*

Then Alcina refers to the practice of these Masses in Mexico, as we have previously described. And he adds:

*"It [this devotion] must have been brought [from Mexico] to these Islands, where it is celebrated with no less ostentation [than in Mexico]. And in this new ministry [Visayas], as far and as much as possible, we say the nine Masses, all sung [to the accompaniment] of excellent music, carols, musical instruments and all that fosters devout expression of such a holy Expectation [i.e. of Christ's birth]. Although the Masses here are not as early as elsewhere..."<sup>22</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> C. KOBAC, *op. tit.*, pp. 408-409.

<sup>21</sup> About the words "Aguinaldo" and "Aguinaldo", see *supra*, footnote 7.

<sup>n</sup> See KOBAC, *op. tit.*, pp. 136 and 192, footnote 15,

It is unfortunate that, at this point, one folio is missing in Alcina's original text, depriving us of further details about the celebrations he was describing. But from the little that was left, we are informed not only about the early existence of this religious celebration but also about their connection with the veneration of the Virgin Mary the expectant Mother of God and with the Nativity on earth of God's Word.

The second Jesuit missionary reporting on the Aguinaldo Masses in this country is Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde, whose testimony proves the continuation of this tradition one century after Fr. Alcina. For a brief situationer, let us say that Murillo was born in 1696 in Laujar, Granada, Spain. Having joined the Society of Jesus in 1718, he arrived in the Philippines in 1723. After working in these Islands for twenty six years, he returned to his native Spain, where he died in 1753<sup>23</sup>.

Besides a very valuable history of the Jesuits in the Philippines<sup>24</sup>, Fr. Murillo wrote a canonical treatise entitled *Cursus Juris Canonici Hispanici et Indici*, printed in 1763 and re-edited in 1779<sup>25</sup>. This work was very much appreciated by canonists here, and in fact it was used in the nineteenth century as textbook in the Faculty of Canon Law of the University of Santo Tomas.

It is in this book that Fr. Murillo, discussing the ecclesiastical norms about votive Masses, enters into certain details about the Aguinaldo Masses. Although we have not been able to find a copy of Murillo's work, we know his information through quotations made from him by a nineteenth century Canon Law professor of the University of Santo Tomas, Fr. Benito Corominas<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. H. DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, pp. 614-615.

<sup>24</sup> PEDRO MURILLO VELARDE, SJ, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinos de la Campana de Jesus, desde el ano 1616 hasta 1716*, Manila 1749.

<sup>25</sup> M. VELARDE, SJ, *Cursus Juris Canonici Hispanici et Indici*, Madrid 1762.

<sup>26</sup> BENITO COROMINAS, OP, *Joannis Devoti*, see *supra*, footnote 6.

In the Philippines, Murillo Velarde wrote in 1763, a solemn Mass is celebrated *every Saturday* in honor of the Virgin Mary, using texts appropriate of the Advent season. This Mass is said with special solemnity, with *Gloria et Credo*; and the intention of the celebrants and assistants is:

*"pro constantia Indorum in fide and pro religionis conservatione in his partibus, quae causa gravissima sane et publica est; quippe maxima est ratio quae pro Religione militat"* (for the perseverance of the natives in the faith and for the preservation of Religion in this part of the world; certainly a very weighty reason for the advancement of Religion).

At this point Velarde passes from the Saturday votive Masses to the Aguinaldo Masses:

*"Then, in the nine days preceding the Nativity of the Lord, some Masses are celebrated in the same way and for the same intention, but with a text pertaining to the Advent season. The faithful who attend these Masses, called by us in Spanish de Aguinaldo, gain a plenary indulgence granted by Sixtus V in 1585"*<sup>21</sup>.

By way of summary, these testimonies of Alcina and Velarde are sufficient to prove that the Aguinaldo Masses existed in the Philippines from the early years of evangelization, through the 17th and 18th centuries. Shortly we will see that such a venerable tradition would continue until our times, except for a brief period when the Masses were prohibited by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in the Holy See.

<sup>s</sup> M. VELARDE, *Cursus*, in tit. 41, lib. 3, decret. 565, quoted by B. COROMINAS, *Joannis Devati*, H, p. 43.



## 6. PROHIBITION OF THE MASSES

It is a fact that today the celebration of the Aguinaldo Masses has disappeared from Spain, the Azores Islands and Mexico, while it is still holding out in the Philippines. Here the Masses are attended with undiminished enthusiasm in spite of the defying changes of modern life and mentality. This surprising phenomenon must be explained. In the first place, the disappearance of the Aguinaldo Masses in those countries was not due to loss of popular fervor, but to excess of it and to the intervention of the high ecclesiastical authorities.

By the year 1677 several abuses were reported to have crept during or around the celebration of the Aguinaldo Masses. Those abuses scandalized many people who were 'zealous for the observance of good liturgical rites, also causing 'scruples to learned and spiritual men' on account of the disorderly manner of expressing the joyful anticipation of Christmas. The abuses had nothing to do with the sacramental aspect of the Mass itself, nor with attitudes of the celebrant priest, but with the behavior of the assembly and specially of the choir.

The complaints of such zealous people moved the Master of Ceremonies of the Cathedral Church in Seville, Spain, to submit, at the end of 1676, a query to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, asking this Roman dicastery to issue a formal declaration on the matter. In his exposition, the petitioner describes in Doubt 3 the character and traditional celebration of these Masses, as we have described above, and then he passes on to explain the abuses<sup>28</sup>:

<sup>28</sup> There are two texts of this query and of its answer. One published, probably with some slight editing changes, in A. GARDELLINI, *Decreta Autentica*, I, p. 491, containing nine questions proposed to the Sacred Congregation; and another, in a manuscript copy of the *Anales Eclesidsticos de Filipinos*, U, fols. 119-121. We have followed the latter, using a microfilm of the Archives of the University of Santo of Tomas. The grammatical differences between the two text are minimal.

*"Under pretense of popular devotion and to add more flavor to the celebration, improper things are done which need to be corrected. For many lay people assemble in the choir of the church for the purpose of singing certain light songs (cantinelas)<sup>29</sup> that provoke to laughter and are improper of the time and place. Opportune remedy must be applied to this abuse, so that the public scandal may be totally eliminated<sup>30</sup>.*

On January 16, 1677 the Sacred Congregation replied with the following declaration:

*"In as much as this custom, or to put it better, these abuses, exposed in Doubt 3 are contrary to the Rubrics and to the opinion of the exponents, they must be suppressed totally, because not only are they not laudable, but rather they are scandalous, more so to those who are zealous for the observance of good liturgical rites. This is so declared and decreed [by this Sacred Congregation], which hereby orders the above to be totally suppressed"<sup>31</sup>.*

The decree took effect immediately upon receipt of it in Spain, Mexico and the Philippines. Therefore, the Aguinaldo Masses were

<sup>29</sup> The text in Gardellini uses the word *cantilenas*, which is the correct Latin form, while the text in *Anales* uses *cantinelas*. In Spanish both forms are accepted in the official *Diccionario* of the Spanish Academy, but the current form today is *cantinelas*: "A song, couplet or short poetic composition, composed generally to be sung"

<sup>30</sup> The Dominican historian Vicente Salazar, writing in 1742, specifies that "those Masses were tainted by superstitious practices opposed to the Sacred Rites of the Church. They were tolerated under the guise of devotion, and although they seemed bad to some, these ones did not dare to denounce them publicly for fear of attracting the ire of the piety of the common people. The handling of these matters belongs to the zeal and care of the Prelates" (VICENTE SALAZAR, OP, *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila 1742, p. 494.

<sup>31</sup> *Anales Ecclesiasticos*, *ibid*.

either totally discontinued or they were reduced to a lower rank of ordinary votive Masses in honor of the Virgin Mary, without solemnity, without the singing of *Gloria* and *Credo*, without sermon and other festive manifestation used until then.

In Spain an attempt was made to have the Aguinaldo Masses reestablished in some places. In 1682, the Superior Provincial of the Franciscan Province in Granada, Fr. Juan de Arjona Valle, presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites a request for dispensation from the prohibition, alleging several great inconveniences (including the loss of alms for the maintenance of the Community) that the Roman decree of prohibition had caused to them. But the Sacred Congregation, with a declaration dated January 24, 1682 answered with a laconic "*negative*"<sup>32</sup>.

## 7. THEIR SUPPRESSION AND SURVIVAL IN THE PHILIPPINES

It took about three years for the Roman decree of 1677 to arrive in the Philippines, via Spain and Mexico, not a surprising delay considering the bureaucratic procedures of the Royal Patronage of the Indies and the slow system of communications through two oceans and the American continent. We are informed by the *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Filipinas* that "a copy [of that decree] was received from the Archbishopric of Mexico, where the Masses had already been prohibited and are no longer sung". That was in 1682.

In this year the Archdiocese of Manila was governed by Archbishop-Elect Felipe Pardo, O.P., who had been promoted to that office in 1676. For all canonical purposes, he had all the faculties to govern the Archdiocese even though he had not

<sup>32</sup> See the query of Arjona and the answer in A. GARDELLINI, *op. dr.*, II, p. 3546.

received the Pontifical Bull of nomination and had not received the Episcopal Ordination. He received both in 1681<sup>B</sup>.

Now, in 1680, having received the Roman declaration prohibiting the Aguinaldo Masses, Archbishop-Elect Pardo "communicated the matter to, and asked for the advice of, learned persons of the Religious Orders", and consequently issued an "auto" or decree which he "ordered to be posted at the doors of the churches" of Manila. This being a document of transcendental importance for our subject, we may well transcribe in full, but in English version, from the *Anales Ecclesiasticos de Filipinos*"<sup>3</sup>\*\*

### DECREE

*"We, Dr. Don Fray Felipe Pardo, Archbishop-Elect of this Metropolitan Church of Manila, of the Council of his Majesty, and Governor of this Archdiocese, etc.*

*Whereas it has come to our knowledge that a decree has arrived prohibiting the celebration of the Masses that are sung for nine days before the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (which are commonly called de Aguinaldo), enjoining that they absolutely may not be sung, forbidding also all kinds of music and instruments and light songs (chanzonetas)<sup>35</sup>, since it is proper that this prohibition be observed and kept in this archdiocese;*

<sup>33</sup> Archbishop Felipe Pardo, an outstanding ecclesiastical personality in the 18th century Philippine Church, had been professor and Rector of the University of Santo Tomas, Prior of Santo Domingo Convent, twice Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Rosary and Commissary of the Holy Office (Cf. HILARIO OCIO, OP, *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Pwvincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinos*, Manila 1895, pp. 172-173).

<sup>34</sup> *Anales Ecclesiasticos*, II., fols. 119-121.

<sup>35</sup> *Chanzonetas*, From the French *chanzonette*, "name formerly given to light and festive couplets, compositions or verses, composed generally to be sung on Christmas or in other religious feasts" ; also *chanza*, from the Italian *ciancia*, "festive and jovial phrase. Burlesque action to amuse people and to exercise one's wits" (See these words in *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*).

Therefore, by this present decree We order that absolutely in no way may such Aguinaldo Masses be sung or said, that no rejoicing of music be made, no instruments be played or light songs or any other songs be sung even if they are transformed into religious tunes (aunque sean a lo divino)<sup>36</sup>.

Those who will do the contrary, disobeying the commandments of our Holy Mother Church and our injunctions, will suffer the public punishment that will be inflicted on them. And we order that this decree be posted at the doors of the churches of this City and that it be forwarded to the (Cathedral) canons for their information.

Given at San Gabriel, "Extramuros" of Manila, on this 12th day of October of the year 1680.

Fray Felipe Pardo, Archbishop-Elect of Manila

By order of the Archbishop, my Lord,  
Andres Escoto, Secretary

The author of the *Armies Ecclesiasticas* comments: "And so in this year 1680 [the Masses] begun to be omitted and not to be sung". For how long? We do not know exactly. But the Dominican historian Fr. Vicente Salazar, writing the history of his Order in the Philippines, published in Manila in 1742, gives us a sure answer and an approximate date: " While [Archbishop Pardo] lived, the Masses were not celebrated, but after [his death] they began to be celebrated again, although with some moderation (I do not know if this was universal) with regard to the abuses

<sup>36</sup> A lo divino. In Spanish literature, a "romance" or poetic composition with a religious theme, called a "romance a lo divino".

with which they had been celebrated"<sup>37</sup>. Archbishop Felipe Pardo died on December 31, 1689.

## 8. ON WITH THE TRADITION

Historian Salazar assures us that the celebration of the Aguinaldo Masses was resumed after Archbishop Pardo's death, but he does not inform us about the exact date or about the authority on which the Masses were permitted again. Nor can we find any document to that respect. What is not difficult to assess is that the celebration once resumed has continued through the centuries without interruption. Here are some testimonies:

In the 18th century, Pedro Murillo Velarde, writing his manual of Canon Law before 1763, describes the celebration with the details we have already mentioned<sup>38</sup>.

In the 19th century, Fr. Benito Corominas, O.P., writing in 1873 his commentaries on the canonical works of Giovanni Devoti, attests to the celebrations of these Masses in his time ("et hoc anno celebrantur", they are celebrated this year)<sup>39</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Fr. Serapio Tamayo, another Dominican canonist, in his inaugural address of the school-year 1906-1907, at the University of Santo Tomas, states that this religious "custom has been continued in this capital [Manila], where the Aguinaldo Masses continue to be celebrated in some churches [of Intramuros]"<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> V. SALAZAR, *Historia*, p. 494.

<sup>38</sup> See the text of Murillo Velarde *supra*, no. 5, "The Aguinaldo Masses in the Philippines".

<sup>39</sup> B. COROMINAS, *op. cit.*, II, p. 152.

<sup>40</sup> SERAPIO TAMAYO, OP, *Idea General de la Disciplina Ecclesiastica en Filipinas durante la Dominación Española* (Discurso Inaugural, UST, Manila 1906, p. 78).

In 1953, the First Plenary Council of the Philippines, attended by the entire Philippine Hierarchy, drafted a special decree regarding the Aguinaldo Masses, which may be considered as the most solemn ratification and consecration of one of the oldest traditions of the Philippine Catholic religiosity. The decree is worth transcribing here:

*"There is a legitimate tradition in these Islands coming from ancient times to celebrate the Masses popularly called de Aguinaldo for the perseverance of Filipinos in the [Christian] faith and for the preservation of religion in this area of the world. For nine days preceding the Nativity of Christ the Lord, the solemn votive Mass Rorate Coeli desuper is sung with great solemnity and with massive attendance by the people, one Mass every day in the churches, especially the parochial and conventual ones. These Masses are celebrated with Gloria, a proper Prayer with other commemorative prayer of the concurrent Advent ferial Mass, with preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary and with the Gospel of St. John at the end, except on Sundays and on First Class feasts that may coincide [with the Aguinaldo Mass]"<sup>41</sup>.*

But six years after this statement of the Hierarchy in a Plenary Council, a new *Code of Rubrics* or Code of Liturgical Norms valid for the universal Church was published in 1961 by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, with the approval of Pope John XXIII. The Code revoked "all statutes, privileges and customs of any kind, even the multisecular and most ancient ones, which are not in accordance with this Codex"<sup>42</sup>. However, the Vatican new rulings

<sup>41</sup> *Acta et Deereia Primi Concilii Plenum Philippinarum*, Manila 1956, n. 356, p. 126.

<sup>42</sup> See ALBERTO SANTAMARIA, OP, "Misas de Aguinaldo", in *Boletin Eclesidstico de Filipinas*, April 1961, p. 409.

left some leeway for special Masses celebrated "for grave and public reasons".

This exceptive clause notwithstanding, since some people thought that the Aguinaldo Masses might fall into the category of the suppressed customs, the Philippine Hierarchy, through their President, Archbishop Julio Rosales of Cebu, decided to elevate to the Holy Father in the same year 1961 a suppliant letter "humbly asking that, in spite of the promulgation of the new *Code of Rubrics*, and for as long as the same grave reason, namely the conservation of the Faith [in the Philippines] continued, the Aguinaldo Masses be allowed to be sung for nine days preceding the Nativity". And the petition was granted on March 24, 1961, for a period of five years"<sup>43</sup>.

The historical study on the origins of the Aguinaldo Masses should end here, leaving the canonical and liturgical aspects to canonists and Uturgists. There is the question of the expiration of the above-mentioned authorization of the Holy See valid for a period of "five years". This writer has not found any document as to whether a renewal of the authorization was requested and granted or whether there was no need for renewing it.

We doubt about that need because before the concession expired in 1966, the Vatican Council came upon the Church marking a new era in many aspects of the Church in our modern world. One of the most visible changes introduced were the liturgical reforms. It is for canonists and liturgists to explain how the conciliar and post-conciliar documents affected the Aguinaldo

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 470-471.



Masses. For such study there are several basic documents issued after the Council, plus a new *Roman Missal*<sup>44</sup>.

As the Second Millenium is ending this month of December, Catholic Philippines still clings strongly to the centuries old tradition of celebrating the Aguinaldo Masses, with undiminished popular attendance and festive joy, for the same reasons adduced in ancient times, but with some changes and trends caused by the "Filipinos' changing life style" in our consumer society.

Regarding the reasons or main intent of the celebration, it is significant to observe something most people cannot notice. That is, that the "grave reasons" that our ancestors in Spain, Mexico and the Philippines adduced for celebrating these Masses, were the reasons repeated in the Plenary Council of 1953, and exactly the same ones stated in the ORDO 1999 (Liturgical calendar for guidance of priest reciting the Divine Office. Here is the informative note of the ORDO on December 15, 1999: "Tomorrow begin the *Aguinaldo Masses* (white color), to be celebrated on the nine days before Christmas for *the perseverance of the nation in faith and the preservation of our holy religion in this part of the world*". Let us note also that "white color" is the color of the Marian celebrations, while the color of the Advent Masses is purple.

The new trends introduced in the last few years are not essential to the Mass itself, but to circumstantial - yet very typically

<sup>44</sup> For interested readers, the main documents of the Church regarding liturgy in the conciliar and post-conciliar periods are: Vatican II, Constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium" on the Sacred Liturgy; Postconciliar documents: Motu Proprio "Sacram Liturgiam", on the Sacred Liturgy, January 25, 1964; Instruction of the SCR. on the proper implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 26 September, 1964; Apostolic Constitution "Missale Romanum" on the Roman Missal, Paul VI, 3 April 1969. These four and other documents can be seen in AUSTIN FLANNERY, OP, *Vatican II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 7th ed., Minnesota, 1984.

traditional - aspects of these Masses. We refer to the time and places of their celebration. Some Masses are now being said in the evening, and not only in the churches and chapels but also in megamalls and commercial centers, "obviously geared for the mall's clientele, especially those rushing to finish their Christmas shopping", " or " to accommodate employees in the commercial districts who find free time only after office hours"<sup>45</sup>.

These are still considered Aguinaldo Masses, preparatory for Christmas, but the mystic of the "Dawn Masses" must be missing when celebrating the "Simbang Gabi" Masses in those places. One wonders what the new trends will become one century hence.

<sup>45</sup> See some reports and comments on the Aguinaldo Masses in the local dailies of last year: SUSAN A. DE GUZMAN and DONA Z. PAZZIBUCAN, "They are taking the dawn out of the "Simbang Gabi", in *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 16, 1998; MARILOU JUMILLA, "More churches hold Misa de Gallo at night", in *The Manila Times*, December 16 1998; BRENDA P. TUAZON, "Nation prepares for 'Simbang Gabi'", in *The Manila Bulletin*, December 15, 1998.

# **The Concerns of the Church in the Twenty Years of Paul IP's Pontificate**

**JOSEPH DE TORRE**

## **A record-breaking papacy**

This coming October 22 is the twentieth anniversary of the present Pope's mandate, although his actual election took place on October 16, 1978. It was just one hundred years after the election of Leo XIII to the papacy, a papacy then already released from the encumbrance of the Papal States, and so more free to address the complex issues of modernity: social, political, economic and cultural.

The two decades just elapsed have brought us to the brink of the third millennium, just about to "cross the threshold of hope" in the well-known expression of the Pope's best seller of 1994. This is an invitation to make an assessment of a pontificate which seems on the way to break all papal "records".

It is unnecessary to cite the staggering figures of his pastoral trips both at home and abroad (suffice it to say that not a single year has passed from 1979 to the present without such trips abroad, one of the latest of which was the historic visit to Cuba), the thorough use of up-to-date means of transport and communication; and the number and kinds of personalities and groups met in person by him both at home and abroad.

To make this assessment brief and to the point, it confines itself to the *concerns of the Church* which the Pope has expressed himself from the very beginning of his pontificate, when he cried out to the whole world, "Be not afraid to open your doors to Christ!", and which he has vigorously been promoting ever since.

## **The ecclesiology of Vatican II**

It is a characteristic of the Church, as the Kingdom of God on earth, to be *both* inward-oriented (Lk. 17:2 1) *and* outward-oriented (cf. Mt. 5:13-16), or in other words, *both* eschatological or transcendent or vertical, *and* world-transforming or immanent or horizontal, as the ecclesiology of Vatican II proclaimed, notably in its two major documents on the Church, namely *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*.

The concerns of the Church, stemming from that ecclesiology, have been manifested and thoroughly articulated and spelled-out by her visible Head, the Vicar of Christ, ever since he assumed his God-given office twenty years ago. He did so in avowed continuity with Vatican II, with his immediate predecessors connected with that Ecumenical Council, Popes John Paul I, Paul VI and John XXIII, and with the entire *living* tradition of the Church.

This Pope is a striking example of those two inseparable aspects of the Church which are a consequence of the Incarnation, namely the temporal and the eternal.

As a divine or eternal institution (cf. Mt. 16:17-19), the Church has to be *traditional* or in living (not dead) communion with her past. But at the same time, she must avoid a *traditionalism* that rejects all changes, including those required by the needs of a growing and adaptable organism always true to itself but in constant development and interaction with the world. And on the other hand, as a human or temporal institution in the world

(cf. Jn 3:16), the Church has to be *progressive* or forward looking. But at the same time, she must avoid a *progressivism* that rejects the past in the name of a relativist historicism, shortsighted and self-destructing.

As, I have written elsewhere (*Generation and Degeneration: A Survey of Ideologies*, p. 18), "the so-called deposit of revelation or set of divinely revealed Truths (some of them surpassing the power of human reason alone, and others confirming and clarifying the findings of human reason concerning religion and ethics) was entrusted to the Apostles for the oral and written transmission in a "Sacred Tradition" of life in the Holy Spirit. These Truths are the Word of God kept alive in a Church marching through history and evangelizing every age and people. 'Here on earth', Pope John Paul II has said (*U Osservatore Romano*, English ed., July 15, 1992, p. 6), 'a Church which does not move is not a Church. And neither would the Church exist if she did not faithfully cultivate the memory of her origins and the mysterious goal towards which she strives in hope'. [...] Thus while the 'mysteries', revealed by God must of necessity remain unchangeable in themselves, the 'dogmas' or rational expressions of those mysteries by the teaching Church (Magisterium) must be living realities subject to growth. The Magisterium (Apostles with Peter) is entrusted with the custody of that sacred tradition to ensure (a) that it preserves the original content and meaning of those divine mysteries, and (b) that it adapts their communication to changing circumstances of time and place. [...] Following the ancient teaching of St. Vincent of Lerins, the Church explained once again this 'growth' of dogmas, which preserves the original meaning of the revealed mysteries, in the I Vatican Council, under the influence of Cardinal Newman. And in 1923 Francisco Marin-Sola published his now classic *The Homogeneous Evolution of Catholic Dogma*.

## The Pope's balanced position

The Pope's firm stand as a "rock" between the two erroneous extremes of traditionalism and progressivism as well as between the two erroneous extremes of fideism and rationalism, since Christ is neither on the Left nor on the Right, but in the Truth (cf. *In.* 8:32), has caused him intense suffering inflicted on him by the individuals and groups of both tendencies, whose names are well known. But he has persevered in the Petrine office of confirming his brethren in the faith (cf. *Lk.* 22:32), with his boundless trust in the protection of the Blessed Virgin, Spouse of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Lk.* 1:35), and the support of all the faithful, the really faithful children of the Church.

Secular observers, without the supernatural outlook of true believers in the divinity of Christ and of his Church (cf. *Mt.* 16:17-19), tend to classify Popes and other prelates in political categories such as "conservative", "moderate", "liberal", "progressive" and so forth, which of course, are off the mark in this case.

The point is that, if one takes into account the aforementioned twofold dimension of the Church (the ecclesiology of Vatican II), the Church as a force unleashed and injected into the very bloodstream of secular society—the 'people of God', to use the expression of *Lumen Gentium* and the 1983 Code of Canon Law—must not only be progressive but even in some sense revolutionary, with a revolution on the spiritual level, namely of freedom and justice, of love and peace, not of hatred and violence (cf. *Acts* 4:32-37). But she is so, however, only on condition of remaining true and faithful to herself as Mystical Body of Christ and Bride of Christ (cf. *Eph.* 5:21-32), in a living *resourcement* or contact with her source.

## The role of the laity

Those two dimensions of the Church, the eternal and the temporal are respectively represented by the official ministers (clergy and religious) and the laity. Because of this, the world-transforming action of the Church is to be carried out by the laity, a laity well-trained both in Christian doctrine and in technical and professional expertise in secular occupations; and in the heart of the families, who are the living cells of society.

This is how the Church can be and will be the "sacrament or the sign of intimate union with God, and the unity of all, mankind", as Vatican II declared in *Lumen Gentium*. And this Pope committed the Church "irrevocably" to the implementation of that Ecumenical Council from the very start of his pontificate.

## A glance at the Pope's output

A brief look at the major documents he has issued to date gives a good idea of his mind, of his objectives and of his projects. All of these are, for believers (cf. Mt. 16:19), a reflection of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the pilgrim Church (cf. Jn 16:12-13).

He has issued twelve encyclicals. Three of them on each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, core truth of the Mystery of Christianity, namely *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) on the Son, *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) on the Father, and *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986) on the Holy Spirit, relating the three of them to the truth about man and society rooted in the dignity of the human person, a Christian anthropology or philosophy for the "enlightenment" and guidance of all human or social sciences.

Three more on the "social question" as corollaries of socio-economic and political anthropology deriving from the theological trilogy on the Blessed Trinity (the 'social teaching of the Church'),

namely *Laborem Exercens* (1981) on the philosophy and theology of labor and capital (90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) on the theology of development (20th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) on the cultural roots of a free society and a free economy (100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*).

Three more on Ecumenism and evangelization namely *Slavorum Apostoli* (1985) on the theme of what he has called the two "lungs" of the Church: Latin (Rome) and Greek (Constantinople), with the latter having evangelized most of the Slav world. This is why he joined the two great Greek apostles of the Slavs, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, to St., Benedict, as Patron Saints of Europe, the cradle of Christianity. Then, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), on the ever-present evangelizing must of the Church in obedience to her Founder (cf. Mt. 28:18-20), defying all attempts at emasculating the missionary effort on the grounds of being a sign of fanatical fundamentalism. This encyclical is in line with the three Vatican II documents on the subject, namely *Ad Gentes* (on Evangelization), *Unitatis Redintegratio* (on the Unity of all Christians), and *Dignitatis Humanae* (on Religious Freedom), as well as with Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). The Church has the duty and the right to *propose* her faith without imposing it on anybody. And finally *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), on opening the Church to all Christians by focusing on Christ himself, and so conspiring together towards unity by an all-out effort of "healing memories". This is the "crossing the threshold of hope" into the third millennium after a second millennium of divisions.

The programmatic Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (1994) has also described this hopeful process, dedicating the countdown of the three years leading to the 2000 Jubilee to each of the Three Divine Persons: 1997 to the Son, the sacrament of rebirth in Christ, and the supernatural virtue of faith; 1998 to the



Holy Spirit, the sacrament of Confirmation, and the supernatural virtue of hope; and 1999 to the Heavenly Father, the sacrament of the Eucharist and the supernatural virtue of charity. And the three years are placed under the motherly protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of God the Holy Spirit, and Daughter of God the Father, in line with the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (1987) to commemorate the approximate centenary of Mary's birth.

Two more Encyclicals complete the dozen: *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995). These are perhaps the most far-reaching of them all: an astonishingly comprehensive analysis of present day culture—a "culture of death" in a crisis of truth challenged by a "culture of life" (the "gospel of life") preceded by a ringing reaffirmation of the rational power of submitting to, and lovingly embracing the "splendor of the truth", of the truth about man, his freedom and responsibility, and the truth about God as creator and redeemer of man and liberator of humanity.

## Other documents

The unparalleled wealth of doctrine poured out by John Paul II is by no means exhausted by the twelve encyclicals. It has been enormously augmented and enriched by the series of Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations and a number of Apostolic Letters and Apostolic Constitutions on related issues. Among the latter: *Sapientia Christiana* (1982) on seminary teaching (in line with Vatican IPs *Optatam Tortus*), and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1988), on Catholic schools, both of them emphasizing the crucial role of the training in philosophy and history. Among the former: *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), on the absolute need of a Christocentric orthodoxy faithful to the Magisterium in all spheres of the Church's life, from public worship to catechesis and temporal action: it has provided the inspiration and guidance for the subsequent collegial elaboration of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Then

*Familiaris Consortio* (1982) (a sequel to Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of 1968) on the centrality of the family for the world's evangelization and indeed for the "future of humanity". This has been further developed by the Letter to the Families (1995). Then, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1985), on the meaning of sin, personal and social, conversion and the sacrament of Penance. Then, *Christifideles Laici* (1988), a follow-up of the Vatican II documents *Lumen Gentium* (Chapter IV) and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, on the mission of the laity in the Church and in the world. Then, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1991), on the formation, life and ministry of priests, in line with the Vatican II documents *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Optatam Totius*. And finally, *Vita Consecrata* (1996) on the institutes of consecrated life, in line with the Vatican II documents *Lumen Gentium* (Chapter VI) and *Perfectae Caritatis*.

Three more Apostolic Letters are of notable interest, namely *Salvifici Doloris* (1982), on the Christian value of human suffering as man's contribution to Christ's redemption (cf. Col. 1: 24), *Redemptoris Custos* (1988) (a sequel to *Redemptoris Mater*) on the unique role of St. Joseph in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption and *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1993) on the genius of womanhood and its place in God's providence, an unprecedented document on feminine anthropology, accepting all the positive aspects of modern feminism while disqualifying those not in keeping with woman's dignity.

In addition to all the above, we cannot overlook the bewildering output of addresses to the youth, particularly in the successive World Youth Days; his weekly catechetical talks in the Wednesday audiences, most notably the series on the "theology of the body" and the meaning of human sexuality; his innumerable addresses to diplomats and civil leaders applying the social doctrine of the Church to specific issues, his World Day addresses for universal peace, associated with the historic meeting of all religions

at Assisi on October 27, 1986; and last but not least, his memorable addresses to the UNO on October 2, 1979, and October 5, 1995 as well as that commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (1995).

### **A Christian humanism and anthropology**

Throughout all the above, as well as in his countless other speeches, messages, addresses, and homilies to civil leaders, to ecclesiastics, to leaders and representatives of all religions, to academics, health-care workers, industrialists, businessmen, workers, artists, media people, scientists, farmers, in short to people in all sectors of culture and society, John Paul II has left a legacy of Christian humanism and anthropology ready to supply the energy for the coming millennium, for a culture of life and truth, for a civilization of love, justice and freedom, whose point of departure was his 1980 Address to UNESCO.

In this regard, he has repeatedly referred to a "new springtime for the Church". Here is indeed an ecclesiology (the ecclesiology of Vatican II) vitally linked with its living tradition, but dynamically forward looking, and wielding a truly "public philosophy" as an instrument of dialogue and a means of communication with the whole of mankind. Cardinal Ratzinger, in his recent book *The Salt of the Earth* has revealed the keen interest of the Pope in the philosophical issues: social, anthropological, ethical and scientific. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* reveals the Pope's profound respect for all philosophers, writers and social scientists. With all of them, as with all religions, he shows an open, friendly and truth-loving mind and heart, in the truly Catholic tradition of Justin, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas and all the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church. He is equally removed from a fideism that scorns philosophy, and from a rationalism that scores the supremacy of faith in "Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt. 16:17). This thrust toward unity and peace, in freedom, truth and love, has dictated the tentative agenda for "crossing the

threshold of hope", and so has spelled out the true concerns of the Church on the threshold of, and looking forward to the third millennium of Christianity.

Will future generations look at our time, John Paul II's time, as a turning point in history? This is neither wishful thinking nor Utopian dreams, but the firm hope (and prayer) of John Paul II as Visible Head of Christ's Church.

In this year dedicated to the Holy Spirit, to the sacrament of Confirmation, and to the supernatural virtue of hope, as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Pope's election, this is a thought which deserves to be cherished by all sincere Christians and indeed by all people of good will.

# Renewing Missionary Commitment

JAMES KROEGER, M.M.

The missionary vitality of the local churches in Asia was experienced in a unique way as all six of the Asian-born Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (AMSAL) gathered in Tagaytay, Philippines for an international colloquium (August 17-21, 1999). This event marked the first time in the history that Superiors-General and General Council personnel of all the AMSAL members were able to participate; an earlier organizational gathering in Thailand in 1997 had brought together some members of these indigenous Asian missionary societies.

The AMSAL body is comprised of the following mission societies — all founded in the Vatican II era: Mission Society of the Philippines (1965); Missionary Society of Saint Thomas the Apostle — India (1968); Catholic Foreign Mission Society of Korea (1975); Missionary Society of the Heralds of Good News — India (1984); Mission Society of Thailand (1990); Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society — Philippines (1997).

These Asian societies, like many such groups in other parts of the world, bring a unique charism and focus to the missionary activity of the universal Church. Their specific contribution is *Ad*

*Gentes, Ad Exteros, and Ad Vitam.* They direct their efforts of evangelization *ad gentes* (to those who have not yet heard the liberating and salvific Good News of Jesus Christ), *ad exteros* (to peoples outside their own country, cultural milieu, and language group), *ad vitam* (through a life-long commitment to this unique forms of missionary witness).

The purpose of the 1999 AMSAL Colloquium was to explore how these missionary movements could better facilitate *ad gentes* mission in Asia in the approaching third millennium. A first step in this endeavor begins simply with establishing contact and interpersonal relationships as a stepping-stone to sharing mission vision, experience, issues, and possible collaboration in mission apostolates. AMSAL remains a totally voluntary organization; it has no legislative authority over members and makes no binding decisions. Its vision and purpose lie in fostering missionary animation, collaboration, and exchange.

Archbishop Jaime Cardinal L. Sin of Manila received the participants at his residence on the first morning of the colloquium. The Cardinal, a close friend of missionaries and a strong advocate-supporter of the two indigenous Philippine mission societies, spoke of the permanent need of the Church for selfless missionaries—especially for Asia and foremost for China. In addition, he described the national mission congress being planned for the Philippines in the year 2000; he emphasized the centrality of the family for missionary vocations and the importance of active recruitment for mission societies.

The working sessions of the five-day colloquium reflected on the mission insights and agenda that emerged from the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia: what does *ad gentes* mission mean in the challenging context of Asia; how do missionaries realistically address Asian realities (demographics, peoples, cultures, religions, ecology, globalization, socio-politico-economic situations, etc.); how are missionaries to be heralds and proclaimers of faith and

redemption in Jesus—all in the context of great respect and reverence for the values, faith convictions, and freedom of conscience of everyone?

Although the majority of the input and exchange was among the twenty-one participants, two speakers, who attended the Asian Synod, were invited to address the assembly. Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales, DD presented his paper "The Soul of Mission"; he focused on the spirituality of the proclaimer within the Church's mission of love and service in Asia. Father Luis Antonio "Chito" Tagle, member of the Pontifical International Theological Commission, spoke dynamically on "The Challenges of Mission in Asia: A View from the Asian Synod." As a colloquium participant, Archbishop Petrus Turang of Kupang, Indonesia, who also was present at the Asian Synod in Rome, shared several additional Synodal insights.

The colloquium did not remain on the level of theoretical explorations. As is common in all gatherings of missionaries, practical questions were addressed: How are mission locations chosen and personnel assigned and prepared for mission? What kind of formation is needed to instill a creative and pioneering spirit in the missionary? How do the mission societies promote their *ad gentes* charism — especially when there are many pressing pastoral needs? How does one recruit and animate for mission in the local church of origin? How is our *ad gentes*, *ad exteros* and *ad vitam* commitment promoted in young people and in the missionaries themselves?

An additional recurring theme in the colloquium focused on areas of missionary cooperation. Participants received copies of the recent (October 1, 1998) instruction *Cooperatio Missionalis* issued by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; they explored its meaning for their societies. In addition to direct inter-society collaboration in formation and overseas mission apostolates, the AMSAL delegates affirmed the importance of continued close

cooperative links with the Office of Evangelization of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC: OE). The presence of Saturnino Dias, Executive Secretary of FABC: OE was welcomed; the Secretary affirmed this linkage and spoke of the importance of this collaboration. AMSAL will find its natural link with the "Missions Desk" of the FABC: OE.

Archbishop Marcello Zago, OMI, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) in Rome, had planned to attend the colloquium; health factors forced the cancellation of his participation. AMSAL affirmed its strong desire to continue close missionary collaboration with the CEP through the person of Archbishop Zago. In addition, the colloquium was enriched by the presence of Bishop Vicente C. Manuel, SVD, DD, Chairman of the Commission on Missions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). Father Pedro Mesiona, MSP, National Director of the Pontifical Missionary Societies — Philippines, was present and spoke about missionary animation in the local church.

AMSAL welcomed the participation of representatives from additional local churches throughout Asia (Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Indonesia); invited delegates from Japan and Myanmar were unable to be present. The purpose of including "non-AMSAL" participants was to encourage mission-minded persons in those Asian local churches to consider their response to *ad gentes* mission. In this context, one Final Proposition (Number 28) from the Asian Synod was recalled: "This Synod recommends the establishment within each local Church of Asia, where such do not exist, of missionary societies of apostolic life, characterized by their commitment exclusively for the mission *ad gentes*, *ad exteros*, and *ad vitam*". In addition, it was noted how Pope John Paul II had taken special note of this Synod theme and incorporated it into his 1998 "Message for World Mission Sunday" (Section 5).



A pervasive spirit of joy and missionary enthusiasm permeated the entire five-day gathering. Visits to the Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society Seminary in Manila and to the Mission Society of the Philippines (MSP) Center in Tagaytay provided opportunities to meet priests and seminarians of the two hosting missionary groups. The visit to the MSP Center included a Eucharistic celebration, followed by a typically Filipino meal and short cultural program presented by the seminarians of the "Fil-Mission" Society, this visit added variety to the more formal colloquium events. These experiences affirmed the truth that missionaries must be "joyful evangelizers" (Paul VI) in order to effectively communicate the Good News.

The AMSAL-1999 colloquium issued a short statement as a brief summary of its deliberations and discussions. The statement is marked by *a* renewed commitment to the Church's missionary activity; this commitment flows from the participants' renewed appreciation of their unique charism as *ad gentes*, *ad exteros*, and *ad vitam* missionary societies of apostolic life. The official acronym of the organization (**AMSAL**) was augmented from ASAL (temporarily adopted at the initial organizational gathering in Thailand in 1997); by including the word "missionary" in the full title of the organization, emphasis is laid on the particular charism of these Asian-born societies: *ad gentes* mission is the heartbeat of these missionary communities.

The AMSAL group sees itself following the rhythm of assemblies of similar missionary societies in other parts of the world. Each society is invited to send a participant to the International Assembly of the Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life to be hosted at Maryknoll, New York (April 29- May 4, 2000). AMSAL itself plans to gather again on a continental basis (similar to Europe, the Americas, etc.) in two years. The next AMSAL colloquium will be hosted in November 2001 by the Missionary Society of Saint Thomas the Apostle in India. The theme for the

next colloquium will be: Missionary Spirituality and formation. Finally, the continued work and position of Maryknoller James H. Kroeger as AMSAL secretary-convenor was unanimously approved by the colloquium participants.

NOTE: The two-page formal AMSAL Statement "Commitment to Mission in Asia for the Third Millennium" follows this overview-report.

## AMSAL STATEMENT:

### **COMMITMENT TO MISSION IN ASIA FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM**

Representatives from all six of the "Asian-born" Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (AMSAL) gathered from August 18<sup>th</sup> to August 21, 1999 in the Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay, Philippines. This AMSAL group was joined by delegates from some other local churches of Asia and from a few foreign Mission Societies and the Executive Secretary of the Office of Evangelization of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). The focus of this five-day colloquium was to explore mission in Asia at the dawn of the new millennium, and the discussion drew upon the key mission themes and agenda emerging from the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia.

The fact that this was the first time in history that all six "Asian-born" societies came together was a special joy for the participants of the colloquium. These societies are the Mission Society of the Philippines, Korean Foreign Mission Society, Mission Society of Saint Thomas the Apostle (India), Lorenzo Ruiz Mission Society (Philippines, Mission Society of Thailand, and Heralds of Good News (India).

We superiors-general and other delegates of the AMSAL Colloquium, after deliberating on the concerned issues, wish to make the following observations and commitment:

1. Conscious that the originality of our Mission Societies is *ad gentes*, *ad exteros*, and *ad vitam*, we took stock of the following realities of Asian countries: that over 50% of the world's population resides in Asia; that Catholics in Asia are only a small minority of less than 2% (the Philippines is the only predominantly Catholic nation); that the majority of poor people live in this continent; that Asia is the birthplace of the five major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity); and, that there is the variety of deeply-rooted living cultures in Asia.

2. With this background, we see the urgency of the implementation of the missionary mandate of Jesus Christ and hear the call specially addressed to us as Mission Societies *ad gentes*. We realize that:

- a. Jesus who came as a messenger of the love of God our Father is himself the message of life and must be proclaimed in word and life.

- b. Our message is that it is through his death, the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood, that we receive forgiveness of sins. His death is the expression of the greatest love of God for us. Therefore, he is the only Savior of the world.

- c. This message, which is being conveyed through our instrumentality by the same Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who is the principal agent of mission, will be effective only if we witness to it through our life.

d. This message of the love of God the Father can best be proclaimed in the context of multi-religious and pluri-cultural Asia and prevalent poverty of its peoples through the mode of triple dialogue with the religions, cultures and poor among we live.

*Therefore, we commit ourselves:*

1, To take every opportunity to make Jesus Christ and his message known in a way that is acceptable to Asians, presenting him to them with an "Asian Face," using Asian cultural concepts, terms and symbols.

2. To learn about the other religions and understand cultures, taking the Incarnation as our model.

3» To present the Gospel message as humble servants of the Kingdom of God, always sensitive to the religious and cultural traditions of the people where the Spirit leads us to make Jesus known.

4. To strive to be transformed by a life of prayer and contemplation into presenters of Jesus Christ, the kind, compassionate, true and divine master.

5. To inculcate this spirit and the specific charism of our Mission Societies in all our future proclaimers throughout their formation period.

6. To be supportive of each other both through regular meetings and apostolic collaboration in the mission areas where two or more of our Mission Societies work.

We present this our commitment through Mary, Queen of Apostles, to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who is the principal agent of mission, ready to be led by this same Spirit where he wills.

## ***DOCUMENTATION***

# **Elected CBCP Officers for the Millennium**

## **CBCP**

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) will greet the new millennium with a new set of officers. The CBCP elected Cotabato Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI as president, and Caceres Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., vice president during its 79th Plenary Assembly, held on July 10-12 at the Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay City.

Archbishop Quevedo, 60, replaces Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz of Lingayen Dagupan who serve for two consecutive terms, the maximum allowed by the CBCP Constitution.

Also elected were the regional representatives and the chairmen of the CBCP commissions, committees and offices.

Archbishop Quevedo, who was archbishop of Nueva Segovia (Vigan) before his appointment to Cotabato in 1998, has served in various commissions of the CBCP since his ordination as bishop in October 1980. He had been chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice and Peace.

The terms of the new officers and chairmen start on December 1, 1999 and end on November 30, 2001.

The CBCP's 79th Plenary Assembly, its last for the millennium, was attended by 83 — 80 active and 3 honorary — of the Conference's 115 member-bishops. The assembly approved and released the Pastoral Letter on Filipino Spirituality, the last of the comprehensive reflections made by the Bishops on vital concerns confronting the Philippine Church and society at the approach of the new millennium. The previous pastoral letters were on Politics, the Economy, and Culture.

The bishops also released "Life or Death, A Primer Calling for the Commitment to Life and the Abolition of the Death Penalty." The primer is aimed at educating Catholics in particular and the public in general on the basis of the Church's present stand on the death penalty.

The CBCP also called attention to the increasing menace posed by the proliferation and accessibility of pornography through the various forms of media, including the Internet. It asked for greater vigilance to stop its spread especially among the young, and encouraged the different sectors of society to come up with creative solutions to address this problem.

The Assembly also welcomed the new Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Antonio Franco who, in his address, assured the bishops that the doors of the Nunciature are open to all of them and promised to visit them without having to be a burden to them.

The new Nuncio also expressed his cooperation in the bishops' effort to make the Philippines' celebration of the Great Jubilee "rich in spiritual fruits."

## **CBCP OFFICERS**

*December 1, 1999 to November 30, 2001*

President:	Abp. Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI
Vice President:	Abp. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP
Secretary General:	Bp. Nestor C. Carifio
Treasurer:	Bp. Honesto F. Ongtioco

### **Regional Representatives:**

North Luzon:	Abp. Edmundo M. Abaya
Central Luzon:	Bp. Florentino F. Cinense
South Luzon:	Abp. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP
Southwest Luzon:	Bp. Francisco C, San Diego
Southeast Luzon:	Bp. Emiliano Z. Marquez
East Visayas:	Abp. Pedro R. Dean
West Visayas:	Bp. Gabriel V. Reyes
North Mindanao:	Bp. Zacharias C. Jimenez
South Mindanao:	Bp. Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ

### **Commissions/Committees/Offices Chairmen**

Biblical Apostolate:	Bp. Arturo M. Bastes, SVD
Bioethics:	Abp. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP
Canon Law:	Bp. Leonardo Y. Medroso
Catechesis and Catholic Education:	Abp. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP
Clergy:	Abp. Gaudencio B. Rosales
Cultural Heritage of the Church:	Bp. Leopoldo S. Tumulak
Culture:	Bp. Honesto Ch. Pacana, SJ
Doctrine of the Faith:	Abp. Pedro R. Dean
Ecumenical Affairs:	Bp. Deogracias S. Iniguez

Eucharistic Congresses:	Abp. Diosdado A. Talamayan
Family and Life:	Abp. Edmundo M. Abaya
Health Care:	Bp. Patricio H. Alo
Indigenous Peoples:	Bp. Francisco F. Claver, SJ
Interreligious Dialogue:	Abp. Fernando R. Capalla
Laity:	Bp. Gabriel V. Reyes
Liturgy:	Abp. Onesimo C. Gordoncillo
Mass Media:	Bp. Jesus A. Cabrera
Migrants:	Bp. Ramon C. Arguelles
Missions:	Bp. Vicente C. Manuel, SVD
Mixed Commission:	Bp. Carlito J. Cenzon, CICM
Pontificio Collegio Filipino:	Ricardo J. Cardinal Vidal
Prison Pastoral Care:	Bp. Francisco C. San Diego
Public Affairs:	Bp. Teodoro J. Buhain, Jr.
Seminaries:	Bp. Benjamin J. Almoneda
Social Action, Justice and Peace:	Bp. Dinualdo D. Gutierrez
Vocations:	Bp. Antonieto D. Cabajog
Women:	Bp. Crisostomo A. Yalung
Youth:	Bp. Rolando J. Tria Tirona, OCD



# Pastoral Letter on Pornography

CBCP

*"BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART!" (Mt 5:28)*

Dear People of God:

We, your Pastors tasked to promote our common good, want to bring to your attention a major social concern these days, that of pornography. We are gravely distressed by what is happening in the media and the entertainment world nowadays. Tabloids attract attention not just on their sensational headlines, but more on the seductive poses of girls on their front pages. Movie ads and films project nudity and sexually explicit scenes to command higher commercial patronages.

With pornography, the dignity of the human person is debased. As it is bent on commercializing human sexuality, pornography degrades both the subjects, especially the women and young children, and the users themselves.

Allows us then to reflect with you on the evils of pornography, its causes and how they can be creatively solved. There is a need for an integral and coordinated effort to combat this social malady.

## EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (n. 2345) teaches that pornography is a grave offense, because it seriously injures the dignity of the participants. The subjects become objects of base pleasure and sources of illicit profit for others. Those who exploit them also degrade their humanity. Pornography creates an illusion of a fantasy world.

The Church's condemnation of pornography stems from the fact that it destroys the essence of human sexuality and it corrodes human relationships, especially those of women and the children. Family life and marriage are gravely undermined. The moral fiber of society is weakened. Pornographic consumption is a major factor contributing to sexual crimes and the scandals that seriously affect the public consciousness. Police blotters are full of confessions of sexual and violent crime offenders about their addiction to some form of pornography<sup>1</sup>.

## CAUSES OF THE SOCIAL MALADY

The deeper cause of pornography is sheer greed, especially on the part of the producers and disseminators. In 1997 alone, there was a reported \$ 15 billion profit from the sale of videotapes, the popularity of sexphone use, cable TV and Internet, without including movies and magazines.

This lucrative industry grows because people, mainly the male adults and young people, patronize it for the gratification it offers. A liberal attitude using as an excuse freedom of artistic expression lends support in justifying the making of porno materials.

<sup>1</sup> We can cite the following: 1) *The Longford Report on Pornography*, Ricerche-Mursia, Milan (Italy), 1978; 2) *Final Report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography*, Rutledge Hill Press, Nashville, Tennessee (USA), 1986; 3) *Istituto di Studi Politici, Economici e Sociali, I e II Rapporto sulla pornografia in Italia*, Rome (Italy), 1986 and 1988.

Furthermore, the difficulties of effectively enforcing our existing laws on pornography worsen the malaise. With the development of technology like the Internet and the upsurge in the number of cable TV businesses, these difficulties are compounded. There is then the need to pass stringent laws against irresponsible use of these media tools. It is hoped that the two pending Congress bills (Senate Bill no. 336 and House Bill no. 1401) will help curb pornography on the Internet. There is a need for stronger political will in the fight against this evil force.

### CREATIVE SOLUTIONS NEEDED

Before this gargantuan foe, the various sectors of our society need to join forces seeking and working out creative solutions.

1. We urge **professional communicators** (tabloid publishers, Internet servers, artists, producers, movie and TV show distributors, those in advertising business) to form associations which will fortunate and live up to ethical codes for the betterment of our people. Clearer guidelines on the ratings of the movie films should be formulated and implemented.
2. **Parents** should build in their children healthy attitudes toward human sexuality through their example and appropriate sex education. They should set house regulations that will prevent entry of pornographic garbage in their homes. They should also contribute to the values education programs of their children's schools.
3. The **schools** are significant extensions of the children's growth environment. They should help the students develop mature attitudes on sexuality and human relationships, especially in marriage and family life. Through integrated education, the students will learn the need to practice self-discipline and be discerning and critical consumers of media. We wish to express our strong objection to the use of pornographic

materials and approaches in sex education classes held in our schools.

- 4, The initiatives of some private sectors to combat pornography are commendable. To these, we express our outright support. The **general public** needs to make its voice heard and known to producers, commercial interests and the public authorities. Writing protest letters against immoral materials being shown in public movies and TV or being sold on the newstands will also prove effective. The viewing public should be made aware that patronage of lewd movies and entertainment shows express support for pornography. The active involvement of our lay people in the campaign against pornography is necessary and will lead to the effective transformation of our society.
5. We commend the efforts of the **public authorities**, particularly some police and military personnel, to curb pornography. We urge consistent enforcement of laws against pornography. Our people expect also creative control of pornography in the Internet and telecoms.

We recall here that the Lord gives a stern warning against becoming the source of sin and scandal to the little ones. He would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck (*Mk* 9:42). To eradicate pornography, there is a need to purify our hearts (cfr. *Mt* 5:28), for as the Church teaches, "the imbalances which the modern world labours are linked with that more basic imbalance of the heart" (Vat. II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 10).

Let us invoke the powerful intercession of Mary our Mother whose purity of mind and heart helped her clearly see and fully live the will of God in her life in an act of devout service to others through Her Son Jesus our Lord.

# **A Letter on the Occasion of the Visit of the Relics of St. Therese of Lisieux**

CBCP

Dear Brother and Sisters in the Lord:

From January 30 to April 29, 2000, the Year of the Great Jubilee, the relics of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Doctor of the Church, will be in the Philippines. This occasion is for us a moment of grace. Though she lived and died more than a hundred years ago in the little town and in a Carmelite Monastery of Lisieux in France, many Filipinos are devoted to her and she is for them a friend, model and intercessor. She has been a chosen instrument by God to show to us that holiness is available to each person. Through her little way of confidence and love she teaches us that by entrusting ourselves completely and obediently to our Father who loves us, and by doing and enduring all things for love of God we can also attain to holiness and serve the salvation of the world.

Her relics, which will be brought to us, will remind us of this saint whom Pius X called the greatest saint of modern times and should inspire us to follow her little way for which the Church has given approval.

Families will be inspired to be prayerful and God-centered as they remember that St. Therese was the finest flower of a prayerful and God-centered family.

Priests and seminarians will be encouraged to fidelity and perseverance by her who entered Carmel to pray for sinners, and especially for priests.

The young will see in her who died at the young age of twenty four a model of holiness for the youth.

Those who suffer from infirmities of the body and trials of the soul will be encouraged and strengthened by her fortitude and endurance.

And all of us will be inflamed with her missionary zeal which caused her to be declared patron saint of missions with St. Francis Xavier.

Let us therefore welcome these relics in a spirit of faith and say to St. Therese herself, *"tuloy po Kayo sa aming rnga pusol"*. Let us turn this visit into means of making our own and showing in our lives the little way of confidence and love she so well taught and exemplified.

# **The Day of the Lord is Ours Too**

JAIME CARD. SIN, DD

Circular No. 98-57

The Holy Father has recently written an apostolic letter about keeping the day of the Lord holy. His words are the words of the Lord for us. We must read it, study it, pray over it and live it.

The day of the Lord is holy because God blessed it and made it holy (Gen. 2:3). The day of the Lord is our weekly celebration of the rising of the Lord from the dead and the day of the outpouring of gift of the Holy Spirit. Sunday is our day for our Eucharistic celebrations, therefore, Sunday is not only the day of the Lord, it is also happily the day of the Church, the people of God. Because it is the day of the Church, it is also our day. It is our day to pray, to rest and to serve the needy.

When the Scriptures tell us that God rested on the seventh day, we do not mean that God turned into inactivity. God is always at work and the creative act is unceasing. Sunday is a day that invites us not only to rest as God rested but to rest in the Lord. Sunday is not only an interruption of work but an opportunity to behold the marvels God has wrought.

Sunday is rendered holy because of Jesus, the Sun who rose from the dead on this day. This day of the "Sun" our LIGHT, may also be rightfully called the day of "FIRE" because it was on this day that the apostles received the outpouring of the Spirit. The light of Christ our Sun is intimately linked to the fire of the spirit of Pentecost.

It is appropriate to remind ourselves of our Sunday obligation to participate in the Eucharist. At the Eucharist, we are nourished by the table of the Word and the table of the Bread and Wine. I need to encourage our priests to prepare their homilies well by prayer, by study and by listening to the sighs and joys of the people.

Homilies create better and stronger impact if they are short. Go direct to the point and come direct from the heart.

It is obligatory to attend and participate in the Eucharist on Sundays and holidays of obligation for all Catholics. Our Sunday Masses should also be accompanied by appropriate liturgical songs that express the joy of the Eucharistic gathering. The priest is not the only celebrant. The entire community is celebrating the Eucharist and the priest presides in the celebration. It is important that the various liturgical ministers be given opportunities to exercise their ministry distinctly but harmoniously.

Sunday is not only a day of rest and joy, it should also be a day of solidarity and service for our brother and sisters.

Sunday is not only a weekend for excursions and outings. Sundays should be days to rest from oppressive work as well as a day for apostolic acts for the poor.

I appeal to our government officials and businessmen to respect the rights of our workers to rest on Sundays. Let us never forget the poor. "What good is it if the Eucharistic table is overloaded with golden chalices, when our brothers and sisters are dying of hunger. Start by satisfying their hunger and then what is left you may adorn the altar as well", said St. John Chrysostom.



Sunday is Dies Domini, Dies Christi Dies Ecclesiae and Dies Hominis. May Mary who is Mater Domini, Mater Christi, Mater Ecclesiae and Mater Hominis be our constant source of inspiration and guidance.

Let us keep holy the day of the Lord.

## Cases & Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, OP

### NOTORIOUS REJECTION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

*Amaldo wants to marry Lydia. The girl is a good Catholic, while Amaldo is known in the vicinity for his bad life. He not only does not practice his Catholic religion, but has also committed several crimes and is notorious for his immorality and dishonesty. When I told the parish priest about their plan to get marry, he told me not to solemnize their marriage. "Amaldo," he said, "must be considered as having deserted from the Catholic Church and consequently his marriage cannot be solemnized without the Bishop's permission, according to canon 1071§ 1,4°." May I ask you what is exactly the meaning of the expression "notoriously rejected the Catholic Faith" used in that canon?*

*A Parochial Vicar*

The new Code has the following similar expressions, although with different connotation:

a) "He who publicly rejected the Catholic faith" (canon 316 § 1);

b) "He who notoriously rejected the Catholic faith" (canon 1071 § 1, 4°);

c) \*He who defected from ecclesiastical communion" (canon 316 § 1);

d) "He who by a formal act defected from the Catholic Church" (canon 1086 § 1, 1117).

Obviously persons who fall under a) and b) come under the same category. They have rejected publicly or notoriously the Catholic faith. The expression "have rejected" implies that they have given up their Catholic faith. No formal act is necessary for the rejection of the Catholic faith. This rejection can be deduced either from their public membership to an association (not a religious sect) condemned by the Church, from their public declaration of having already lost their faith or from their behaviour contrary to the Catholic faith.

Person under c) are those who without any formal act have defected from ecclesiastical communion, which is made up by three different elements, namely, the profession of the faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance (canon 205).

Persons who fall under d) are those who have defected or separated themselves from the Catholic Church by a formal act. Their formal joining a non-Catholic religious sect constitutes, therefore, the characteristic of this group. Their marriage with a Catholic is included in what we call mixed marriage. This is the reason why this expression is found in canon 1086 § 1, which deals with the impediment of disparity of worship, and in canon I<sup>17</sup> where their marriage with a non-Catholic party is exempted from following the canonical form of, celebrating a Catholic marriage.

With the foregoing explanation, we can answer our consultant as follows:

a) Arnaldo should still be regarded as Catholic. In fact, he has not given up his Catholic faith by a *formal act*, nor has he become member of any non-Catholic religious sect. He therefore, cannot be treated as a non-Catholic. The parish priest then is not correct in saying that Arnaldo must be regarded as having deserted or abandoned the Catholic Church.

b) Unfortunately, Arnaldo has not neglected his Catholic faith, but his behavior is contrary to the tenets of the Catholic religion. He is what we usually call a *public sinner*, therefore, a person who has notoriously rejected the Catholic faith.

e) Canon 1071 deals with some particular marriages no one is to assist, "except in case of necessity," without the permission of the local Ordinary. And one of them is precisely the marriage "of a person who has notoriously rejected the Catholic faith" (§ 1, 4°).

d) Consequently, the parish priest is correct in saying that Arnaldo's marriage with Lydia cannot be solemnized without the permission of the local Ordinary. The presumed reason is mainly because of the scandal that such a celebration may bring about. The Ordinary will see what to do in order to avoid such scandal before granting, if ever, his permission.

But once more we repeat that the parish priest is not correct in saying that Arnaldo must be regarded as having deserted or abandoned the Catholic Church. If this were so, their marriage should be considered as a *mixed marriage*, ruled by special norms. Arnaldo has not deserted the Catholic Church by joining any non-Catholic Church. He simply is a *public sinner*

':

## APPLICATION OF INDULGENCES

*In the case "Requirements and Conditions for Indulgences" you say: "No indulgence may be applied for other living person. Indulgences may be applied only to oneself or to the dead". This seems not in conformity with what the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1471 states: "Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead". You can see this quotation in the Catechism published by ECCCE, CBCP 470 Gen. Luna St., Manila, 1994, •n. 7471, last paragraph.*

*Why do you restrict the application of indulgences to "oneself only or to the dead", while the Catechism says: "Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead"?*

*A Priest*

What the consultant priest says is unfortunately true. The discrepancy is real. Which is correct and which is wrong is what should be determined according to legal bases presented. On my part, all I can say is that in the *Decree* of the Sacred penitentiary, of June 29, 1968, n. 3 it is stated: "Nemo indulgentias acquirere potest eas *aliis vitam degentibus* applicare" (AAS, 60 (1968), p. 414), This norm was in conformity with canon 930 of the 1917 Code stating: "Nemo indulgentias acquirens potest eas aliis in *vita degentibus* applicare". Canon 994 of the New Code of Canon Law reads : "All members of the faithful can gain indulgences, partial or plenary, *for themselves*, or they can apply them by way of suffrage to the dead". The Spanish translation of the new Catechism, n. 1471, reads: Todo fiel puede lucrar *para si mismo* o aplicar por los difuntos, a manera de sufragio, las indulgencias, tanto parciales como plenarias".

The quotations mentioned above restrict the application of indulgences, both partial and plenary to *the person who alone gain it* or to the dead; never to other living persons.

## Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers January - February 2000

---

EFREN RIVERA, O.P.

<0 JUBILEE YEAR Q> D JANUARY 1, 2000  
SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

**NUMBERS 6:22-27** This passage is called "the priestly blessing" because it gives the obligatory words used by Jewish priests when they blessed the people. <> It is part of today's liturgy because January 1 is World Peace Day

**GALATIANS 4:4-7** This pauline text is the only passage outside the Gospels that refers to the mother of Jesus. Here she is referred to simply as "woman."

**LUKE 2:16-21** In connection with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the following should be noted. Luke shows that Mary's role is not just to be the physical mother of Jesus. A spiritual motherhood is implied when he says that Mary "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." At the stage of Salvation History where this text is set, the Son of God was already born but the Church, his Body, still had to be born. Just as, before becoming the Mother of God, Mary asked herself what the words of the angel could Mean (Lk 1:29), so also, before becoming the Mother of the Church, the Body of Christ, she ponders things in her heart

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BD3LIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** All benediction comes from God but it is ministered to people through his representatives. Underlying the value of benedictions is the belief that God's word has infallible efficacy.

*"May Yahweh keep you"* finds its echo in Christ's priestly prayer at the Last Supper: "Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name (Jn 17:11).

To pray that *God's face shine on* someone means to pray that God show him special favor. The blessing specifies that this special favor be **PEACE**.

PEACE, Hebrew **SHALOM**, in biblical language, is not just the tranquility of order. It is the sum total of everything conducive to a happy life. At the Last Supper, Christ also bestowed the blessing of peace on his disciples (Jn 14:27).

**Second Reading.** The emphasis of Paul's thought is that we have been delivered from the Law and have become adopted sons/daughters of God. However, it should not escape our attention that, to accomplish this, Christ first had to become a human being who had to obey the Law. To be in such a situation, he had to be born from an Israelite woman. Hence, we have here an argument for the indispensability of Mary for the work of our redemption.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o The Infancy narrative of Luke uses Old Testament texts not so much by direct reference as Matthew does, but by allusion. In the light of this general observation, it is possible that the story of the shepherds: a) emphasizes that the first ones called to worship Christ were the poor, since shepherds at the time of Christ had a reputation for being destitute; and b) alludes to the patriarchs of Israel, who were shepherds.

MEANING, o If the allusion to the patriarchs is admitted, verse 19, "*she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart,*" is best explained in the light of Genesis 37:11. Jacob, the father of the 12 patriarchs, noticing the jealousy of his sons toward their brother Joseph after his dreams, "kept the thing in mind." Mary did something similar. Both the patriarch Jacob in the Old Testament and Mary in the New Testament realized that the happenings to which they were witnesses were the beginnings of something great that God would one day bring into full bloom. They kept silent but also prepared themselves to play their roles in the unfolding of the mystery.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** Members of the Bibliarasal Group could identify themselves with at least one of the personages in the story and pick out words accordingly. For example, if one is poor, s/he can identify her/himself with the *snepherds* who *a) went in haste to Bethlehem... b) understood what had been told them concerning this child... c) glorified and praised God for all they had heard and seen.* Parents could identify themselves with *Mary and Joseph* watching the child Jesus. One could also identify with the people who heard about the Christmas story and were "*astonished*" by *h.* A reflective person could identify with *Mary* who *treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.*

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) When you give a "sign of peace" what should it really mean? (2) We are all "*born of a woman*" and Jesus Christ joined us in this situation. In this light, what should a "*woman*" mean to us?



## HOMILY

### BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN IS A WOMAN — MARY

**THEME.** Mary is both the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church, the Body of Christ, each and every one of us. She is our Spiritual Mother who will help us have peace and success.

#### **STORY.                    AUGUSTINE AND MONICA AT OSTIA**

Near the International Airport of Rome is the town of Ostia. There, long ago, St. Augustine spent many long hours letting his mother, Monica, teach him about the Christian faith and how to mature as a Christian.

Speaking of his mother, Monica, St. Augustine said: "She brought me forth, both in the flesh, that I might be born to this temporal light, and in the heart, that I might be born to Light Eternal" (Confessions, Bk. IX). What would have been his life if he did not have a spiritual mother? He himself confessed that he was on the way to perdition and would have been lost.

**OUR CONDITION.** We all feel the need for a spiritual mother. If the woman who gave birth to us could also be our spiritual mother, that would be excellent. But sometimes we have to turn to a sister, an aunt, a friend, a wife. We have to find one, or ask the Lord to send us one. We can also ask Mary to be the one. "Behind every successful man," they say, "is a woman." We can add: "Behind every successful Christian is a woman — Mary."

**THE GOOD NEWS.** For our spiritual success, God has singled out a woman to back us up — no less than his own mother, Mary. Her role was not only to be the mother of Jesus, but also to be the Mother of the Church, the Body of Christ, and that's is.

The Gospel Reading tells us that Mary, reflecting on the Nativity of Christ and the events surrounding it, "*treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.*" It was necessary for her to do this so that she could understand the work of Jesus and cooperate with him. By so doing she would become his Associate in our redemption, our Spiritual Mother. Just as she asked herself what the words of the angel could mean when she was informed of God's choice of the Mother of his Son, so also she "*pondered things in her heart*" when it began to dawn on her that she was being prepared to become the Mother of the Church.

If we fail in our search for a spiritual mother among the women we know, there's no need to panic or worry. Because in fact we already have Mary as our Spiritual Mother. She draws us to her heart and makes us authentic brothers and sisters of Jesus.

**OUR RESPONSE,** Like Mary we are to treasure and ponder in our hearts the mystery of her divine and ecclesial maternity. We are to honor her both as the Mother of God and Our Mother. In a special way we are to ask her to make us authentic brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ by making us instruments of reconciliation among people so that there would be true peace on earth.

Let us ask our Spiritual Mother to stand by us and make us authentic Christians — in our thoughts, words and deeds — throughout this special Jubilee Year 2000. Let us start the first New Year of the 21st century right.

<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> 2) JANUARY 2, 2000  
EPIPHANY (SOLEMNITY)

**ISAIAH 60:1-6** This passage applies God's promise to Abraham in Gen 12:3 to the high regard that different nations will have for reconstructed Jerusalem. When originally written, this poem was about the Holy City. In eschatological perspective and as used in today's liturgy, it is about different peoples of the world flocking to the Church.

**EPHESIANS 3:2-3, 5-6** The "mystery" discussed by Paul in Ephesians 1:9 etc. is the hidden plan of God to create a universal community of people in Christ.

**MATTHEW 2:1-12** Jesus is the New David, the true King of the Israel who fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 5:1.

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BffiLIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** This poetic passage is a lyrical description of the New Jerusalem. When originally written the poem was about the holy city of Jerusalem to be reconstructed after the exile of the Jews in Babylon. In eschatological perspective, and as used in today's liturgy, it is about the Church.

**Second Reading.** Verse 6 says that the "Mystery of Christ" is "no less than this: in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are now co-heirs with the Jews, members of the same body and sharers of the promise through the preaching of the gospel." To give a formal

equivalence to the three Greek words used by Paul — SYGKLERONOMA, SYSOMA, SYMMETOCHA — we can use "CO-HEIRS," "CO-BODY MEMBERS," and "CO-PARTNERS."

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND. ◇ Matthew started his Gospel by stating that Jesus Christ is the "son of David" and in the first place the "son of Abraham." He thereby hinted at his aim of showing how the divine promises to David (see 2 Samuel 7:12-17) and to Abraham (see Gen 12 etc.) have been fulfilled in Christ.

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY-CRITICAL NOTES, ○ "Three Kings" is the popular name for the feast of the Epiphany. However, the Bible speaks of "magi" / "wise men" instead of kings. Besides, it does not tell us their number, nor their names. "Melchor, Caspar and Baltazar" are folkloric rather than biblical names. These eastern visitors have become the "Three Kings" because the liturgical juxtaposition of Psalm 72 and Isaiah 60 fed the imagination of popular piety. Psalm 72:10-11, speaking of the promised king of Israel, says that "the kings of Tarshish and of the islands will pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts." Isaiah 60:6 says that "everyone in Sheba will come, bringing *gold* and *incense* and singing the praise of Yahweh."

The interpretation that sees in the gold, frankincense and myrrh the symbols of Christ's royalty, divinity and passion, respectively, has patristic and liturgical authority but is non-biblical in the strict sense. Biblically the gifts simply reinforce the statement that homage was paid to Christ by the gentiles, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Some biblical scholars (now fewer in number than formerly) say that the *star* was a true heavenly body (planet, comet, etc.). Others, now more numerous, say that it is just a symbolic star. The basis of the symbolism, however, is not generally agreed upon. Some seek it in the prophecy of Balaam: "A star has come forth

from Jacob, a sceptre (or comet) has risen from Israel." (see Numbers 24:17. Others point to midrashic legends as providing the key for interpretation.

### MEANING, o

1. Matthew certainly wanted to show that Jesus is the New David, the true King of the Jews who fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 5:1.

2. The contrast between the disbelief of the Jews and the faith of the gentiles (the wise men from the east) is also one of the main lessons of this passage.

3. Matthew also points to Jesus as the Offspring of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed.

4. Whatever may be the true nature of the star in the story, it certainly represents the divine guidance that led the gentiles (non-Jewish nations) to pay homage to Christ.

5. It should also be noted that the gentiles were first guided by a **visible sign** and later, more accurately, by the Scriptures read by Jewish Scribes.

## B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** Members of the Bibliarasal Group could identify themselves with at least one of the personages in the story and pick out words accordingly. For example, one who is honestly seeking the truth about God and human salvation could identify with the *magi I astrologers I wise men*. One who is familiar with Scriptures could identify with the *scribes of the people* who gave the wise men an answer from the Bible.

One could pick the word, *star*, reflect and share about being guided to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

**V. lib** *They prostrated themselves and did him homage.* Reflection on these words can lead to a beautiful sharing about giving oneself as a gift to Jesus Christ.

**V. lie** *gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.* One can reflect and share on the kind of gift s/he is offering to Jesus.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) Some faiths other than the Christian faith are followed by MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD today. Examples are: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. Surely, it is unrealistic to want to convert all these millions of people so that before they die they will become Christians. For some of them, the very idea of Christians wanting to convert them is an affront. What, then, should we do? Can people remain in the faith of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. and be saved?

(2) What used to be God's "hidden plan" and therefore a "mystery" is now a reality in the Church where Jews and Gentiles and people of all nations live as brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church itself, however, continues to be a "Mystery." It is a symbol of Christ's abiding presence in the world. Have you felt being in touched by Christ through his Church?

## HOMILY

### COME CLOSER

**THEME.** God wants all nations to be blessed through Christ, the offspring of Abraham. A commitment to work for the unity of all peoples in Christ is our best gift to Jesus Christ.

**OUR CONDITION-** The United Nations has its faults but people still want it to exist. Ecumenism, too, has its pitfalls, but we want more ecumenical happenings. Our country, consisting of the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao regions, feels the pull of forces threatening to make it fall apart, but we still want to be one Filipino nation. If we are members of a group we know that there are often quarrels that work toward the disintegration of the group, but we try to patch them up. In short, inspite of our selfish tendencies, deep down in our hearts we want the unity of people, we want everyone to share in a common good, we want fellowship among all.

### **STORIES. DIKO, UZI, ISMAIL, HELEN & RIMA**

Diko was an Armenian Christian. But he did his schooling with the Christian Brothers of De La Salle. He proudly told us this fact when a group of pilgrims and I visited Israel and we got him as our guide. I recall that he always attended Mass with us although he did not take communion. We were all touched when, at Nazareth, he bought some gifts for his wife and toys to give to his small son when he got back to Jerusalem. For us, it was a beautiful gesture of a man who loved his family.

Uzi is a Jew. He owns the tour agency called "Meteor." Other pilgrims and I were his first group of Filipinos, and because of this he treated us to an ancient Roman meal in a restaurant with ancient Roman ambiance. Before the meal, he brought us to a belvedere where we had a beautiful sight of Jerusalem. He light-heartedly told us that he had his own solution to how Jerusalem is to be divided among Jews, Christians and Muslims. He said the Jerusalem of the future has to have three levels, one on top of the other. The lowest level will be for the Jews, the second for Christians, and the third will be for Muslims.

Ismail is a Palestinian who drives a taxi in Jerusalem. I asked him to drive me to the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. It was

about an hour's drive and we had time to chat. He told me that he and all his friends do not want war with Israel. They want PEACE, He said that with peace, Palestinians and Jews will be able to live a more prosperous and happier life together.

Helen and Rima are Jewish women. They are licensed tourist guides and I coordinated with them on two separate pilgrimages that I made with groups to the Holy Land. Helen always stayed apart from us when we had Holy Mass. But Rima always joined us, although not at Holy Communion. Both of them spoke well of Catholics. The Catholic groups that they took care of liked them very much.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** God wants all people to acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters having him as our common father. In the past he gave his special blessing to just one people, the descendants of Abraham and Isaac. But even then it was his plan that through the offspring of Abraham all nations would be blessed.

The New Testament has revealed that the "offspring" of Abraham through Whom all nations will be blessed is none other than Jesus Christ. Symbolically, when he was born, wise men from the East, representing all non-Jewish peoples, were invited to pay him homage. The Scribes of Jerusalem assisted them, in accordance with God's plan that salvation should spread from the Jews to the gentiles. But the principal credit is to be given to the wise men themselves, who diligently followed SIGN and WORD in order to find the newborn king.

When God sent his Son to our world, he sounded a call for all people to unite and, as one body, accept the salvation offered to all. But some people, like Herod, showed hostility to him.

Today, the perfect unity of all humankind is still a dream. But somehow, because the Spirit of God is at work all over the world in all cultures and all religions, people are getting closer to one another.



Christian folklore likes to identify the Wise Men as Three Kings names Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar, Furthermore, folklore paints one of them white, another brown and another black. These details may not be historical but they symbolize the fact that all races are called to unite in the Kingdom of God.

OUR RESPONSE. We are to work for the unity of all people, starting with our family, our neighborhood, our barangay, our parish, city and country. As opportunities arise, we are to practice ecumenism with other Christians and dialogue with other faiths. Our Christian faith and religion must be factors that help in unifying people instead of stumbling blocks to unity. This commitment to the brotherhood and sisterhood of all people under the fatherhood — or, if anyone so desires to put it, under the motherhood — of God, is the greatest gift we could offer to our Lord on this feast of the Epiphany in the Year of the Great Jubilee.

**<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> 3) JANUARY 9, 2000  
BAPTISM OF THE LORD, B**

**ISAIAH 42:1-4, 6-7** This passage is taken from the first song of the Servant of Yahweh. Although the Israelite people as a whole is sometimes spoken of as the "servant of Yahweh," as in Isaiah 41:8, in the four "Servant Songs" in Isaiah 42, 49, 50 and 52 the Servant is a mysterious individual. The New Testament will later identify him as Jesus Christ.

**ACTS 10:34-38** All over Judea people heard reports about Jesus of Nazareth, beginning in Galilee with the baptism John preached. They heard of the way God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power.

**MARK 1:7-11** V. 9-11: "Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. Immediately on coming up out of the water he saw the sky rent in two and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. Then a voice came from the heavens: "You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests."

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

**First Reading.** "*Servant*" is not a derogatory designation. It is applied to king David in 2 Samuel 7:5, at the start of a prophecy the assures perpetuity to the Davidic dynasty. The Servant is God

"chosen one" like Moses (see Psalm 106:23), David (see Psalm 89:4) and all Israel (see 1 Chronicles 16:13; Isaiah 41:8).

**Second Reading.** The coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism was considered by the early Church as his "*anointing*" that singled him out as the Messiah-King.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o Mark is the earliest of the canonical Gospels that have come down to us. If we compare his report of Jesus' Baptism with that of Matthew and Luke we notice two striking things: 1) there is no mention of a Baptism by "fire" in Mark while both Matthew and Luke have this; 2) and there are no threats to those who will not repent and be baptized.

MEANING, o Jesus is described in all the three Synoptics as someone "*more powerful*" than John the Baptist. This is to be understood as a **SPIRITUAL POWER** in deeds and words. It is a power directed against satan. It is a power to open heaven, and this is symbolized by Mark's observation in *verse 10* that Jesus "*saw the sky rent in two and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*"

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** Every member of the Bibliarasal Group should remember that s/he has been *baptized by Jesus* although the minister of baptism may have been a priest. Consequently, every member of the group has been "*baptized in the Holy Spirit.*" Share on what this means to each member.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) Knowing that Jesus was given the title of "Servant" would you too like to be a "servant?" (2) Baptism was not only "administered" by John. The text says that John *"preached" "baptism."* He required that people who would submit to baptism must BE HUMBLE, REPENT, AND practice JUSTICE. Does your personal Christian life reflect these qualities?

## HOMILY

### CURE FOR INSECURITY

**THEME.** The human condition is steeped in insecurity but Jesus has inaugurated his messianic reign and offers the security of salvation to all. This security is still specially offered to us in the Sacraments.

**OUR CONDITION** At one time or another in our life we feel insecure. We ask ourselves whether what we are doing or plan to do is right. The situation is specially painful in the case of growing adolescents. Sometimes they are exalted and enthusiastic; sometimes they are down and depressed. Even when they are doing what is right, they feel they are not doing it for the right motives. How many times have priests heard young people say, "Father, I feel like a hypocrite. I feel that I please other people just so that they would praise me!"

Even adults often feel insecure. Parents wonder whether their health would hold out until they could see their children well established in life. Sometimes they worry about their finances. A businessman worries about his investments. Priest and nuns also worry themselves. About the Church or their Order or Congregation. About the state of affairs in the country.

## **STORY: ALL SAINTS' DAY RED ALERT**

Where in the world are policemen placed on "red alert" just because the people are celebrating All Saints day? The answer is... in the Philippines!

At least in 1999, the Metro Manila newspapers reported that 7,000 policemen were placed on "red alert" in and near cemeteries in case trouble breaks out. The expected trouble was not from subversives but from people who get drunk and quarrel. Or from people who are frantic in getting some parking space. The previous year, just for a quarrel over such parking space, a man shot at another driver. He missed but the bullet killed the man's pregnant wife. He was later sentenced to life imprisonment.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Even a man like John the Baptist, whom our Lord Jesus Christ called the greatest of all past prophets (see Mt 11:11), felt insecure. When he was instructed by Jesus to baptize him, he felt insecure. He thought it was not the right thing to do.

The only one who has always been sure of himself was our Lord Jesus Christ. He was absolutely sure that everything he did was in accordance with God's plan. He told John the Baptist to go ahead and baptize him so that they would fulfil] "all that righteousness demands"(Mt 3:15)\*

By submitting to the baptism of John, Jesus started to put an end to all the rituals of the Old Testament period and substitute them with the Christian Sacraments which, like himself, are *more powerful* in leading people to salvation. The event marked his inauguration as the Messiah, as the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove coming down on him, and the voice from heaven attested. At this point Mark says" that Jesus "*saw the sky rent in two*". This confirms his power to save people, a power that was once more manifested when he died on the cross and "the

curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mk 15:38),

The shadows of the Old Testament are cast away by the light of the Messiah. All past uncertainties are solved by his presence. The expectation of salvation is brought to an end by the coming of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ.

OUR RESPONSE. "What should we do in order to be saved?" is a legitimate question for those who do not know Jesus Christ. For followers of Christ it is an obsolete question. We need not have any insecurity about the way to salvation. It is the way taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ. By uniting ourselves with Christ let us participate in that absolute security he had that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Concretely, the Lord has taught us that the way to salvation is the way of the Christian Sacraments. These are the rituals initiating us to eternal life and putting it at work in our present situations. They are the packages containing the benefits of the messianic kingdom that Christ inaugurated. Let us reach out to them and let us experience the secure hand of Jesus who takes hold of us through the Sacraments, and leads us securely and powerfully to eternal salvation.

<0 JUBILEE YEAR Q> 4) JANUARY 16, 2000  
FEAST OF THE STO. NINO

- ISAIAH 9:1-6            This poem calls the Messiah "a child bom to us, a son given us... They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-hero, Father Forever, Prince of Peace."
- EPHESIANS 1:3-19    "Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens..."<sup>15</sup>
- MARK 10:13-16        "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them. It is to such that the kingdom of God belongs."

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

**First Reading.** The passage is a follow-up of the prophecy that designated the Messiah as "Emmanuel" meaning "God-is-with-us," see Isaiah 7:14. He possesses to a supreme degree the qualities of all the great figures of his race: the wisdom of Solomon, the valor of David, the virtues of Moses and the Patriarchs.

**Second Reading.** We receive blessings "*in Christ*," that is to say, inasmuch as we are members of his Body, the Church. This means that the actualization of the blessings in our lives depends on our union with Christ. The greater the union, the fuller the actualization. We should be realistic enough to see that we will enjoy these blessings imperfectly on earth and totally only in heaven. However, the blessings are so great that even their partial actualization is such a wonderful thing!

**Gospel Reading. BACKGROUND.** <> In Mark, only four short pericopes separate this episode from an earlier one, where the disciples discuss who among them are the greatest, see Mk 9:33-37. Matthew puts eight pericopes in between, and Luke many more (62!). Mark alone reports that Jesus was *indignant* at his disciples for turning the children away. Mark alone also says that Jesus *"put his arms around them"* (JB) / *"embraced them"* (NAB). Both Mark and Matthew, but not Luke tell us of Jesus laying his hands on the children in a gesture of prayer/blessing. All three Synoptics attest to Jesus's words *"It is just to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."* Only Mark and Luke, not Matthew, reinforce this with another saying: *"I assure you that whoever does not accept the reign of God Uke a little child shall not take part in it."*

**MEANING.** <> Children have the qualities needed to be under the reign of God, but Jesus Christ has to confirm and enrich these qualities with his blessing or prayer.

The "reign of God" is his exercise of kingly prerogatives over his people. First of all, he is the Ultimate Governor, and in the Bible this is presented as a shepherding of a flock by a Good Shepherd. The disposition necessary to be under a good shepherd is **TRUST**. One has to put one's life in God's hands. We worship him, and in exchange, he will take care of us.

God is our King also when we accept his laws. In other words, we **OBEY**.

Finally, God is our King when we submit to his judgement. We have to look forward to the end of our lives on earth and the beginning of life in another world or in another sphere of existence. We have to **LOOK TO HEAVEN**.

**TRUST... OBEY... LOOK TO HEAVEN.** Children are good at these. We are to imitate them.



**B. REFLECTION POINTS**  
**BIBLIARASAL STEPS 4 & 5: GOD SPEAKS,**  
**WE LISTEN AND SHARE**

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** The personages in this short passage are: the parents or guardians of children; the children (boys and girls); the disciples; Jesus. With whom do you identify, and why?

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) How come, people are not too aware of the original titles given to the biblical "Santo Nino"/ Immanuel, which are: Wonder Counselor (someone like Solomon), God-Hero (like David), Father Forever (like Abraham), Prince of Peace (like Moses)? Why do they prefer titles like Santo Nino-Fisherman; Santo Nino- Policeman; Santo Nino with a bag of money, etc. etc.? (2) Why do people want material blessings rather than spiritual blessings?

**HOMILY**

**WE MADE HIM OUR OWN**

**THEME.** Just as our ancestors "inculturated" the Spanish image of the Santo Nino by making it their own their own Protector-God we have to further inculturate the Christian faith by harmonizing our ancestral traits and customs with it in religious practices.

**STORY.                    THE FILIPINO SANTO NINO**

Historians tell us that an image of the Child Jesus was presented to the queen of Cebu as a baptismal gift when she was baptized on April 14, 1521. Antonio Pigafetta, who accompanied Magellan in the first Spanish expedition to reach the Philippines wrote:

"After dinner the priest and some of the others went ashore to baptize the queen who came with forty women. We conducted her to the platform, and she was made to sit down on a cushion, and the other women near her, until the priest should be ready. She was shown an image of our Lady, a very beautiful wooden Child Jesus, and a Cross. Thereupon she was overcome with contrition and asked for baptism amid tears... She asked to be given the little Child Jesus to keep in place of her idols (and we gave it to her) and she went away."

The expedition left the Philippines not long after Magellan's death on Mactan island on April 27, 1521.

What the Spaniards found when they returned to Cebu 44 years later is told by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, head of the expedition in a letter to Philip II of Spain:

"When we entered this village, one of the soldiers went into a large and well-built house of an Indian where we found an image of the Child Jesus... This was kept in its cradle, all gilded, just as it was brought from Spain and only the little cross which was generally placed on the globe in his hand was lacking. The image was well-kept in that house and many flowers were found before it, no one knows, for what object or purpose."

As far as Legaspi and his men could gather, the image they found was the same one presented to the queen of Cebu in 1521. In the meantime, however, after the first converts reverted to paganism due to lack of further formation in the Christian faith, the Cebuanos worshipped the Santo Nino as one of their **diwatas** or deities.

When Legaspi had a shrine built for the Santo Nino and the natives saw the white men kneel in prayer before it, they became disposed to embrace the Christian faith.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** God came to be with us and this is not to be interpreted in a merely external way — as though all that happened is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he grew up in Nazareth, preached in Galilee and Judea, and died on Golgotha. Actually he came to be with people of all races and cultures, until the end of time (see Mt. 28:20).

He came to give more value, more goodness, to everything truly human. The legacy of our ancestors, like respect for the old and for authority, regard for a woman's honor, hospitality, bayanihan, etc., are values that are also basic to Christianity and should be enhanced by the Christian Spirit.

As for traits and customs that could be improved, Christianity should not erase the particular Filipino flavor in the process of improvement. Lavish fiestas, for example, should be avoided, but the desire to have a fiesta should not be suppressed. It should only be re-oriented towards something socially beneficial.

Jesus came to save us from our sins, but not everything we had before he came falls under the category of sin. Let us indeed get rid of sin with the help of Jesus. But let us also, with his help, appreciate what is good in us, in our filipino heritage.

Jesus, in the guise of Christianity, came to take from us our pagan ways, but in exchange, he enabled us to make him our own, our Lord. Symbolically, this is what happened when the image of the Santo Nifio, of foreign origin, was accepted by Filipinos to represent their heavenly protector.

**OUR RESPONSE.** We should be grateful for the Christian faith given to us. But let us not forget that the best form of gratitude is to let this faith take away what is bad in us — our sins — and let it affirm what we have that is good.

<{} JUBILEE YEAR Q> 5) JANUARY 23, 2000  
3RD SUNDAY ORD. TIME, B

\* + + + + + + + + + + + + +

*National Bible Week begins tomorrow (Monday) and culminates on Sunday, Jan. 30. People are to be urged to come to Mass next Sunday with a special contribution for the Biblical Apostolate.*

+ + + + + + + + + + + + +

JONAH 3:1-5, 10 V. 3 "Jonah... went to Niniveh, according to the Lord's bidding.

I CORINTHIANS 7:29-31 V. 31 "The world as we know it is passing away."

MARK 1:14-20 V. 17 & 20: "Come after me; I will make you fishers of men." ... He summoned them on the spot.

### A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BD3LIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** Jonah was an unwilling prophet. He tried to flee from the Lord but the Lord caught up with him through a whale. It was only then that *"he went to Niniveh, according to the Lord's bidding."* When the people of Nineveh got converted, he was shame-faced — in Tagalog, *napahiya siya*. God had to teach him a lesson about his mercy see Jonah ch. 4,

**Second Reading.** Every year, whether the cycle being followed is A, B, or C, as the Sundays in Ordinary Time start, the Second Reading is from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. This is a recognition of the many practical teachings this letter contains. St. Paul connects these practical advises to the Christian Vision of life. In today's passage he concludes his teaching on marriage and virginity by reminding Christians that

what matters is the eternal, not what is temporary. People can enjoy the things of this world — like marriage — but they must not forget that the world is passing away. Even while enjoying marriage, people should set their sights on that eternal life where marriage is surpassed.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o Mark is a fast paced Gospel. It has no Infancy Narrative. It starts immediately with the preaching of John the Baptist in the desert. The message of John is adopted by Jesus, as we read in v. 15 *"This is the time of fulfillment The reign of God is at hand! Reform your lives and believe in the good news."*

The remaining verses of the passage show that from the very beginning, Jesus wanted to have collaborators in his work, and he wanted to train them as his disciples. When they were called "on the spot" and followed him, this did not mean that they clearly knew what they were getting into. In the measure in which Jesus will reveal himself to them, he will also ask for more commitment.

The fishermen of Jesus' time were not like the very poor fishermen in today's Third World countries. Fishing in Galilee, at the time of Jesus, was a lucrative business. Besides, it is clear from the story that these fishermen owned their own nets and boats, and Zebedee, aside from being helped by his sons James and John, had *"hired men"* (v. 20).

MEANING. <> If we take the cue from the First Reading, our focus of attention will be on the second part of the passage, namely, the call of the first disciples. Contrary to Jonah's case, however, these disciples do not express reluctance at their call. They seem to have been captured by the Charisma of Jesus. Now, if God could achieve the conversion of Niniveh through a reluctant prophet like Jonah, he will certainly be even more successful in converting the world through Jesus and his spellbound followers.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** It would be a good spiritual exercise for the members of a Bibliarasal Group to identify themselves with one of the many personages in addition to Jesus in this short passage: Simon, Andrew, James, John, Zebedee or the "hired men." How did these people react when faced by the spell-binding presence of Jesus Christ?

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) The story of Jonah is one of those windows through which we see God's plan of saving all humankind, and this plan was at work even in the Old Testament. Do you see signs of God's salvific work today among people of different cultures and religions? (2) When Paul said that the world is passing away, he did not mean that the end of the world is near. He meant that someday, everything that pertains to this world will end. It was his way of exhorting Christians to hold dear the values that are eternal. Have you identified those values in your life?

## **HOMILY**

### **THE GREAT ADVENTURE**

**THEME.** The greatest adventure on earth is that of saving people for eternal life. When Jesus set out on this adventure, he wanted other people to share it with him, and so he began choosing his disciples.

**OUR CONDITION.** People who are young in age or at heart want adventure. One need not know how things will turn out stage by stage, but those who set forth want something glorious in the end.

## **STORY.                    STAR WARS, ANYONE?**

I had no interest in Star Wars until last summer, when I had the opportunity to see Episode I — the Phantom Menace. All in all, I liked the movie. Not only because of the amazing special effects but because it had such a variety of settings. There were the galactic scenes, of course, but also samurai fighting with laser swords, deep sea diving, car racing in the desert, shooting contests inside magnificent buildings, and in the end a parade that could have taken place in ancient Rome.

To my surprise, when I talked to people familiar with earlier Star Wars movies, they said the old movies were better. Later, I also read about Bishops objecting to the bad effect the story-line might have on kids, because the cute boy Anakin Skywalker will someday become the evil Darth Vader. Besides, Anakin is presented as the son of a virgin mother — so is he a kind of parody of Jesus Christ?

People exhaust their resources just to come up with supposedly new and more amazing adventure stories, but behind the "special effects" and "computer magic" humankind's great adventure is still the same: how to come to a better world where every tear will be wiped away, and the whole universe becomes glorious.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Jesus has come among us to be our great leader in the greatest adventure of all. He calls on people like you and me to become his disciples and be at his side in this adventure.

**OUR RESPONSE.** Like Simon, Andrew, James and John, let us drop whatever we are doing that is simply a worldly endeavor, and join Jesus Christ in the greatest adventure of all — saving people for eternal life.

<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> 6) JANUARY 30, 2000  
4TH SUNDAY ORD. TIME, B

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

*Today is National Bible Sunday. A special collection is to be taken up in all churches. 40 % is kept by the local (Parish & Diocesan) Director; 30% goes to the Regional Center, 30% goes to the Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate.*

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

**DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20 V. 15** "A prophet like me (Moses) will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen."

**I CORINTHIANS 7:32-35 V. 35** "I do want to promote what is good, what will help you devote yourselves entirely to the Lord."

**MARK 1:21-28 V. 22** The people were spellbound by his teaching because he taught with authority and not like the scribes...  
**V. 27** All who looked on were amazed (at the exorcism).

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** This passage portrays one of the instructions of Moses before he dies. He first announces that the gift of prophecy will not die with him. Other prophets, forming a corporate body (singular), will follow. The people are to *LISTEN* to this corporate prophetic body. As time went on and this text



was re-read, it was given a Messianic meaning. The Messiah will be the New Moses, equal if not above him as a **prophet**.

**Second Reading.** For St. Paul, single blessedness is a better state of life than marriage because "*the virgin — indeed any unmarried woman — is concerned with things of the Lord, in pursuit of holiness in body and spirit*" (v. 34) The idea is not that lack of sexual intercourse keeps a virgin "pure." Nor is it in any way implied that legitimate sexual intercourse demeans a woman. It is a question of one's choice to be *preoccupied* either with the things of this world (the choice of the married woman) or **with things of the Lord** (the choice of the virgin). The virgins in the early churches must indeed have been exemplary in their service to the Lord. Their tradition will be carried on in later centuries by the shining examples of St. Agnes, St. Agatha, St. Lucy and innumerable nameless others. Still later on, the tradition will be carried on by nuns and religious Sisters in Congregations engaged in different apostolates.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND. < Mark's portrait of Jesus is more concrete than that of Matthew. While we find Matthew generalizing in 4:23-35, Mark narrates what happens in one synagogue in Capernaum. Matthew also says, like Mark, that the teaching of Jesus makes a deep impression on the people, "because he taught them with authority, and not like (their own) scribes" (Mt 7:29). But Matthew says this after giving us samples of Christ's teaching in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of his book. Mark does not give any sample at this point. Mark is content to convey two important points, namely (1) that Jesus is a powerful teacher and (2) he is a powerful exorcist.

MEANING, o Jesus is **THE PROPHET** prophesied by Moses to take his place, and to whom the people have to **LISTEN** and him they have to **OBEY**. Teaching and prophecy, though distinct functions, have many things in common. In fact, they are hardly distinguishable if the teaching comes from God. The main

element in biblical prophecy is not that something that will come in the future is already announced. Biblical prophecy obtains its specificity from the fact that the prophet speaks in the name of God. When the people recognize that Jesus' teaching has *authority* it means that it is more than human, it comes from God, and Jesus is speaking in the name of God. In other words, he is a prophet.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** Participants in Bibliarasal can ask themselves if they could identify with the "*people*" mentioned in the Gospel passage. Are they *spellbound* by the teaching of Jesus? Do they see that this teaching is more than human and has *authority*? Are they *amazed* by Jesus' power to exorcise?

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) In the Old Testament, to prophesize was a ministry reserved for some people chosen by the Spirit of God. In the New Testament, every Christian participates in the prophetic function of Christ. Every Christian is a prophet because of her/his union with Christ and because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in her/himself. Have you exercised the charism of prophecy? (2) Does your lifestyle allow you to be preoccupied with the things of the Lord?

## HOMILY

### GOD'S WORD IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE

**THEME.** The teaching that goes on in the Church must be prophetic, that is, it must transmit the Word of God, and it must give guidance to people's lives in their present-day situations.

**OUR CONDITION.** We are tired of listening to teachings that are "canned" or "de cajon." But people never tire when they are in touch with the Word of God.

#### **STORY. THE HOLY SCRIPT, THE SCRIPTWRITER**

The Italian movie director, Passolini, once had to spend the night in a room where there was no other reading material except the Gospel according to Matthew. For lack of anything else to do, he decided to read the book. As he read it, his fascination grew for he realized that the Gospel, as is, could serve as the script of a movie. That night, he decided that he will make that movie. For his cast he decided not to take any of the well known actors or actresses, but to choose ordinary folk whom he will coach just a little bit.

What Passolini produced was the movie masterpiece that goes by the title, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew." Indeed it is a masterpiece — better than "King of Kings," a Hollywood production — because the Scriptwriter is no other than the Holy Spirit. Besides, the ordinary folk who acted in it were also well disposed to follow the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Other people have since taken the cue from Passolini's experiment. The Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate in the Philippines is presently circulating a video movie of the life of Jesus based on the Gospel according to St. Luke — "The Jesus Film". The Acts of the Apostles, word for word, is also available in video. It is part of an ambitious project called "The

Visual Bible." When people see the Jesus film, many of them are moved to tears.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Pope John Paul II has reminded us to pay attention to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that asserts that Scriptures or the Word of God must be the soul of Theology and of all the preaching in the Church. Only in this way will our teaching be truly like that of Christ — prophetic..unlike the teaching of the Jewish Scribes... something that elicits a response from the people.

**OUR RESPONSE.** We are to continue satisfying our hunger for the Word of God. Every neighborhood is to have a Bibliarasal Group and at least one member of every family is to attend Bibliarasal once a week.

**<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> B FEBRUARY 6, 2000  
5TH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME, B**

**JOB 7:1-4, 6-7**

Job expresses a very pessimistic view of life, but in v. 7 he makes an implied plea to God to alleviate human suffering.

**I CORINTHIANS 9:16-19, 22-23** Charity for those with scrupulous conscience dictates the giving up of one's rights (in the case discussed by Paul, the right to eat meat brought from the market). One must make oneself "all things to all people."

**MARK 1:29-39**

This passage is like God's answer to Job's plea. God has sent Jesus to alleviate human misery. This is symbolized by the cure of Simon's mother-in-law.

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** This passage describes human life as a wretched state: it is a forced military service... a drudgery for which the laborer gets almost no salary... a miserable slavery. The last verse implies that only God can alleviate this misery, and man has to plead for his mercy.

**Second Reading.** The text is found in that section of 1 Corinthians wherein Paul discusses the licitness for Christians to eat meat bought from the market and which probably had been offered to idols. St. Paul says this can be done in good conscience, but Paul explains that charity for those with scrupulous conscience might in practice dictate the giving up of one's rights. He elaborates on this by telling his readers how he himself, for the sake of his apostolate and his charity for others, had given up some of his rights (for example, that of demanding material support from his converts), and had in fact made himself *"all things to all men in order to save at least some of them"* (v. 22b). It is because of this statement that this reading is most appropriate for urging both ordained ministers and lay apostles to give all they've got for the spreading of the Good News.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o Five points could be considered in this short passage: (1) the cure of Simon's mother-in-law; (2) the fact that she immediately served Jesus and the apostolic group after her cure; (3) Jesus as healer and exorcist attracting "the whole town" to his door; (4) Jesus rising early in the morning to go off to a lonely place to pray; (5) Jesus' awareness to having sent to proclaim the Good News to all the towns and villages of Galilee/Israel.

MEANING. <> Jesus *"raised up"* Simon's mother-in-law (v. 31) possibly as a foreshadowing of humankind's final resurrection from sin and death, to be worked by Christ on the last day.

The detail about the mother-in-law serving Christ and his disciples immediately after her cure suggests (a) the completeness of her cure and (b) the service expected of those who have been saved by Christ.

It should also be noted that Jesus rejects Simon's suggestion that he capitalize on his present popularity (*everybody is looking for you*, v. 37), and that Jesus refuses to limit his ministry to just one place (vv. 38-39). He is an itinerant preacher.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** This passage is a very good opportunity for those who have been *cured by charismatic healers or because of persistent prayer* to share about their experience. Experiences of *exorcism* could also be shared.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing.** (1) Do the person, words and deeds of Jesus Christ clarify for you why there is misery and evil in the world? (2) Have you some experiences of the need for apostles to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the people to whom they direct their apostolate?

## **HOMILY**

### **JESUS CHRIST, NUMBER ONE HEALER**

**THEME.** Jesus came to be a Healer and Exorcist to alleviate the misery of humankind and save it from sin. In some way, we can be like him too.

**OUR CONDITION.** In quite a number of places in the Philippines, away from the public eye, some form of "shamanism" is still being practiced: see the book of Fr. Leonardo Mercado, Doing Filipino Theology. Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1997.

## **STORY. THE ATTRACTION OF SHAMANS**

Early Spanish chroniclers who reported on indigenous religious practices in the Philippines mentioned people that the Tagalogs called "*catalonan*" and the Visayans called "*babaylan*". These archaic terms, however, are no longer used in the current Philippine languages. Their equivalents would be the terms used for local traditional healers. For example, Tagalogs use the terms "*langkap*" and "*sinasapian*," while Ilocanos use the term "*naluganan*." Some anthropologists refer to them as Philippine Shamans, although other scholars would reserve the terms "shaman" and "shamanism" to religious phenomena among the Mongolians and Eskimos.

Shamans are people who go into a state of trance. During that trance, the shaman enters into an "*altered state of consciousness (ASC)*" and can leave her/his body to journey to other realms and thereby acquire "knowledge or power" and thereby "help the people of their community." During the trance the shaman can communicate with good and evil spirits and with the dead. ***Every shaman is a healer.*** Moreover, they have other roles that differ from society to society. They can serve as priest, diviner or seer, magician, storyteller, etc. Shamans in not a few Philippine tribal groups act as their guides and leaders. In Philippine history, some leaders of religious movements against the Spaniards were shamans.

In the past, the Church did all it could to stamp out shamanism in the Philippines. The Church was successful to the extent that shamanism is shunned by mainstream Philippine society. But shamanism continues among tribal Filipinos, who are now pro-

tected by the laws of our land. Besides, shamanistic healing continues among present-day Filipino psychic surgeons who have gained reputations in far-flung places of this globe. Groups of Germans, Swiss, English, Americans, Australians, etc. come to our country to seek them out in the hope of being healed.

Even within the Catholic Church there is now a re-evaluation of shamanism by theologians. It can not be totally bad. There are some values in shamanism that can be accepted in the Filipino Catholic religion and in the Christian faith. Just what these values have to emerge from a careful study that may take a long time.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Should we encourage Christians to become shamans? I don't think so. I think we can only go as far as saying that we can encourage people who are shamans, have been shamans, or are prone to becoming shamans to become charismatic Christian healers instead. A necessary condition for this is a total conversion to Jesus Christ, a surrender to him as Lord and Savior, a recognition that he is the Number One Healer and Exorcist.

Ordinary Christians should strive to be healers (and exorcists) by loving as Jesus loved. Afterall, it was because of love that Jesus became the Number One Healer. It was because of love that he came to this world to share the human condition. It was because of love that he healed people through his touch and his prayer or words. It was because of love that he finally stretched his arms on the cross to free all people of the past, present and future, from sin.

Jesus Christ was not a shaman. Notice that in the Gospel reading, his time of prayer is carefully distinguished from his healing ministry. He was never in a trance when he healed. Nor did he use psychic powers to heal or exorcise. He simply used his Word and his Touch.



Christ came to cure humankind not just by performing miracles of healing — these were just signs. They point to the fact that humankind really gets cured of its basic sickness, selfishness, when people realize that they have to care for one another. One person may not be able to respond to all the needs of another person, but it is enough to respond in the measure one is capable of. It is enough to respond from one's heart.

**OUR RESPONSE.** Let us thank Jesus Christ for his example and follow his path of healing people through love. We need not become shamans. We do have to learn to love Jesus with our whole being, and love people after his example, that is, love them to the point of healing them from the sickness of sin and evil.

<O JUBILEE YEAR ♪> 8) FEBRUARY 13, 2000  
6TH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME, B

**LEVITICUS 13:1-2, 44-46** The mosaic law making  
lepers outcasts of society.

**I CORINTHIANS 10:31 - 11:1** Christians must construct  
rather than obstruct community.

**MARK 1:40-45** Jesus touches a leper and  
cures him.

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** The diseases lumped under the category of "leprosy" in the Bible rarely included Hansen's disease, which is what "leprosy" means nowadays. They were usually skin diseases of an infectious nature although eventually curable. The cure for Hansen's disease, on the other hand, has been found only in modern times. The text of Leviticus makes a leper in the broad, ancient sense, an outcast of society. This severe treatment was due to

the belief that infectious diseases were due to a corruptive evil force, and a person influenced by such corruption is not fit to worship God nor fit to keep the company of those who worship God.

**Second Reading.** The passage is the conclusion of Paul's solution to the Corinthian controversy about meat offered to idols. Paul rises above the particular question to exhort his readers (1) to do everything for the glory of God, 10:31; and (2) to take care not to set up obstacles to communal growth but rather to cooperate for the common good, 10:32-33, or, in more contemporary language, not to build walls but rather bridges between people, not to obstruct but to construct.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o The passage belongs to a block of Markan material that Luke follows closely until, eight passages after this, he introduces Jesus' Inaugural discourse (compare Mk 1:21 - 3:19 with Lk 4:31 - 6:19). The cure doesn't happen at Capernaum but somewhere else. (According to Matthew, it took place after Jesus descended from the hill where he preached his Inaugural Discourse, see Mt 8:1).

MEANING, o The cure of a leper by Jesus shows that he has the power to save even those who, by Mosaic Law, have been excluded from the community — those who, today, we call the "outcasts of society." Jesus' saving power brings them "back to the fold."

The fact that Jesus instructed the cured man to follow the prescriptions of Mosaic Law for his re-admittance to Jewish society shows that Jesus was not against the established social order even when it was imperfect. However, by his words and works he showed that certain values like LOVE and COMPASSION must be preferred over the established practices of society.

For catechetical purposes it should be noted that people are "**cleansed**" by Christian baptism. After baptism, therefore, Christians should follow the example of the cured leper who "**went off and began to proclaim the whole matter freely, making the story public.**" The Greek word used here, *keryssein* calls to mind the **Kerygma** which is the core of the Good News. Baptized Christians should be fervent and bold enough to proclaim this Good News.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** In today's Gospel Reading Jesus is presented as someone who is **approachable**. Group members can share on this point: Am I myself an approachable person? Have I known Bishops, priests, lay leaders who are approachable people, or have I had the contrary experience? **o Jesus stretched out his hand to touch the leper.** That was something no self-respecting religious leader at the time of Jesus would do. For them, that was totally taboo. But Jesus breaks the taboo, because for him **COMPASSION** has greater value. Is it the same with me? Am I, like Jesus, compassionate? < > Jesus took a risk in practicing compassion, and he had to pay a price. In the end, the price was crucifixion. Am I willing to pay a price for imitating Jesus? **o** Share your answers to these questions with your Bibliarasal group.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing.** (1) In God's plan, some religious practices like those in today's passage from Leviticus only had a temporary character. Eventually, they had to cease. Could this be true also of some religious practices in the new Testament? (For example, do women have to wear a veil?) (2) Some people emphasize the individual character of one's faith,

and indeed this cannot be denied. But more and more, in our days, the Church wants us to be more aware of the predominantly communitarian character of the Christian faith. God wants to save us *as members of a community* and not just on a one-on-one basis. Do you think of salvation as communitarian, or as a totally individual matter?

## HOMILY

### A PRE-VALENTINE'S DAY REFLECTION

**THEME.** Christ's love was not a romantic love but a compassionate love.

**OUR CONDITION.** We have a natural inclination for romantic love, the love celebrated on St. Valentine's day. But that kind of love cannot save us. Instead, it sometimes becomes an obstacle to salvation. We should learn to put romantic love under control. In God's plan it should never go against the sixth and ninth commandments. What should predominate in our Christian life is the compassionate love we learn from Jesus.

### **STORY.                    A DAY FOR THE BIRDS**

February 14 is St. Valentine's day. Who is this St. Valentine? History tells us nothing about him. All we have are legends, old and new or revised. There are in fact two old legends about two St. Valentines. One says he lived in Rome and was martyred in Rome. Another says he lived in Terni, was martyred in Rome, and then his relics were brought back to Terhi.

For most people, the interesting question is why a Christian martyr is mixed up with a celebration of romantic love. The answer is that there is really no connection. It's just a calendar coincidence. The day traditionally assigned to St. Valentine is February 14. That coincides with the "second fortnight of the second month," and

that, according to English and French folklore, is the day when birds begin to mate. So, in imitation of the birds, young men and young women pair off for a romantic tryst.

There is also a custom for young men to send a love note to one's lady love on St. Valentine's day — anonymously. Many interesting things can happen when such an anonymous letter, well written, is received by several young women, as shown in the hit movie, "The Love Letter."

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Some people, especially those who have seen the play or the movie, "Jesus Christ Superstar," have asked whether Jesus was ever romantically in love with a woman. After all, they say, Jesus was a true man.

Let us examine this question briefly. Jesus was a true man, yes. But he was *not just a man*. There is heresy hidden in such a phrase. It's a heresy condemned by the Church since earliest times. Jesus is true God and true man — all the time. Not God sometimes and man sometimes. Not even man *plus* something else — not a *superman* nor a *superstar*. Rather, he was such a being that his humanity and his divinity blended in perfect harmony inasmuch as they were rooted in just one person.

Jesus Christ was the exact opposite of a "split personality." He was a being who combined two natures in perfect harmony and had no need for any complementary being in order to experience the fullness of life.

Now, romantic love is based on the human feeling that one needs someone else, a complimentary being, in order to experience the fullness of life. Romantic love is born of the feeling that one is not complete in oneself. Romantic love is the search for one's "better half in life.

It follows that romantic love was something not needed by Jesus. His being was already complete. He was not a "half but

a "whole." His humanity was already made "whole" by its union with his divinity, and in this sense he was a "whole being" in a way none of us could ever be. In this sense he is the "unique man."

If Jesus had no romantic love, did he ever have a truly human love? Yes, he did. The Bible speaks of his "compassion." It is the kind of love painted in the story of today's gospel reading.

If we would only try to imitate the kind of love we see in Jesus as he had "compassion" on the leper who needed a cure, we can be sure we will all come closer to the perfection of the "romantic love" that appeals so much to all of us.

**OUR RESPONSE.** So, as we prepare for St. Valentine's day and at the same time reflect on today's gospel reading, let us ask Jesus to teach us how to love.

**<Q JUBILEE YEAR {}> 9)      FEBRUARY 20, 2000  
7TH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME**

**ISAIAH 43:18-19, 21-22, 24-25      V. 18-19** warn against merely praising God's past redemptive acts without seeing how they affect the present.

**I CORINTHIANS 1:18-22      V. 20:** "Whatever promises God has made have been fulfilled in (Christ); therefore it is through him that we address our Amen to God when we worship together."

**MARK 2:1-12**      The cure of a paralytic is narrated in this passage as a "work" or "sign" that proves the power of Jesus to forgive sins.

## A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

**First Reading.** Isaiah 43 is part of 'The Book of Consolation of Israel,' also more commonly referred to by biblical scholars as "Deutero-Isaiah" (Is 40:1 - 55:13). In 43:14-21 the author speaks of the *new exodus*. Verses 18-19 warn against merely praising God's past redemptive acts, without seeing how they affect the present. In verses 22-28 the author poetically describes the ingratitude of Israel. Not only have the Israelites failed to render true worship to God; in addition, they have "burdened (God) with their sins, troubled him with their iniquities." It is as if they have made God their *servant* who has to clean up after them (vv. 24b-25),

**Second Reading.** Paul's adversaries at Corinth accused him of making grandiose plans but fulfilling none of them; as an example, they pointed to Paul's failure to return to Corinth before going to Macedonia. In 2 Corinthians chs. 1-2, Paul explains that he did not immediately return to Corinth out of *prudence* and *charity*. Not out of insincerity. He argues for his sincerity by pointing to the incontrovertible fact that he had become a follower of Christ and is, therefore, bound to be like Christ in sincerity.

As in previous instances, Paul rises above the particular question he was explaining to his reader, and makes reflections which are valid for Christian life in all times and places. He points out that God fulfilled all his promises "*through Christ*." God once said to the Israelites: YES, I will give you everything that is good for you. Jesus Christ is the concrete and final coming true of that "YES,"

Paul goes on to say that he, personally, will follow God's way of saying "yes" through Christ. That is to say that he, in his turn, will say "yes" to God through Christ. For him, this means that how and when the "yes" will take place will depend on what

directions Christ will give, directions that will certainly be based not only on justice but also on prudence and charity.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o Relating the Gospel Reading to the First reading, we can see that God does become the "servant" of mankind by becoming a human being who, while among human beings, wanted "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28).

MEANING, o Jesus Christ, taking the sins of mankind upon himself to expiate for them, was given the authority to forgive sins. He claimed this authority both by his words and his deeds. The cure of a paralytic as narrated in today's Gospel Reading is very clearly intended as a "work" or "sign" which proves that Jesus has power to forgive sins.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** At the beginning of the story for today, the people flock to Jesus not in order to see him performing miracles but *to listen to the word of God*. Members of the Bibliarasal Group should ask themselves: what really attracts me to Jesus — his being a TEACHER or his being a WONDER WORKER. Those who are attracted to Jesus as a Wonder Worker should further ask themselves: what is a greater wonder: *getting cured from physical illness*, or *having one's sins forgiven*? o Since a Bibliarasal Group should be trying to build community, its members should also reflect on the role played by the *four* persons who carried the paralytic to Jesus, who decided to take the extraordinary measure of opening the roof in order to bring the paralytic to the presence of Jesus. It might be helpful to take these four symbolically as representing the



**FOUR PILLARS OF A BASIC COMMUNITY WHICH ARE: CARING, SHARING, AFFIRMATION AND MUTUAL FORGIVENESS.** Do a sharing on this.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing.** (1) The Church, the New People of God, should be a GRATEFUL PEOPLE in contrast to the ungrateful people reproved in today's First Reading. Has this been achieved? (2) When we make promises to God and/or to members of our community, do we count on Christ to enable us to fulfill our promises?

## **HOMILY**

### **SPIRITUAL HEALING AND PHYSICAL HEALING ARE CONNECTED**

**THEME.** Physical healing is possible when spiritual healing or forgiveness of sin has been given by Christ.

**OUR CONDITION.** When someone in our family gets critically ill nowadays, we rush him or her to the hospital. Fortunately here in the Philippines, most hospitals have a chaplain who can give the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to critical patients. In most cases this writer has known, more of the people who get the anointing and hence the forgiveness of sins, overcome the crisis and survive, than those who do not get the benefits of this sacrament.

### **STORY. LAME GIRL AND LAME HORSE GET WELL TOGETHER**

There is a beautiful story of a lame girl who befriends a lame horse. Because of this friendship, both of them started to hope for full recovery. For that to be achieved, a doctor helped the girl and a veterinarian helped the horse. But the story shows that

the eventual complete healing of both the girl and the horse was not due to science but to the moral force the girl gained by making a big sacrifice. She generously lent her rehabilitated horse to her number one competitor who was very badly in need of the prize money in the horse riding contest they joined.

Two men competed to be the girl's hero: a doctor and a supposedly good-for-nothing stable hand who helped build up the girl's moral strength. At the end of the story, it is the "spiritual doctor" who turned out to be the real hero — and became the girl's step-father by marrying her mother.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Only God, the Creator, can instantly remake a physically devastated human being by a simple pronouncement, just as only God, the Supreme Lawgiver, can forgive sins by his own authority. By curing the paralyzed man through a simple command, Jesus showed that God, the Creator, was at work in him. Since there is only one God, it therefore follows that he, in reality, is at the same time God, the Supreme Lawgiver, who can forgive sins.

**OUR RESPONSE.** Let us put our trust in Christ for both our spiritual and physical healing. When critically ill, let us avail of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick for our spiritual and physical recovery.

**<0 JUBILEE YEAR Q> 10) FEBRUARY 27, 2000  
8TH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME**

**HOSEA 2:16-17, 21-22**

God as a Bridegroom deeply in love with Israel, his Bride, was a symbolism used forcefully by the prophet Hosea. In spite of Israel's infidelities, God still loves her and plans a new marriage covenant with her.

**1H CORINTHIANS 3:1-6**

Alluding to the practice whereby one community recommends a preacher to another community by means of a letter, Paul claims that what recommends him is better than a mere letter because it is the living witness of the Christians he formed.

**MARK 2:18-22**

Jesus recalls to his audience that a bridegroom's friends rejoice with him during the wedding feast. The implication is clear. A wedding is being celebrated between Christ and his people (the Church). Christ's friends (disciples) have the right to rejoice with him.

### **A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3**

**First Reading.** God's *HESED* (TENDER LOVE) and *EMETH* (FAITHFULNESS) are promised to Israel in spite of her unworthiness.

**Second Reading.** The good Christians of Corinth (the majority of the community) were like the good fruit that shows that the tree (Paul) is good (see Mt 7:17-18). Paul however, expresses this in his own way. He says that the good Corinthian Christians are like letters written by Christ to authenticate Paul's credentials as an apostle.

From this jumping board, Paul rises to principles: God is to be credited for any preacher's success in ministry because without God's moving spirit" the preacher is useless. Jumping from commendatory letters to the letter of the Law, Paul gives, as it were, a sneak preview of what he will explain in Galatians and Romans regarding the superiority of the New Covenant, dominated by grace, over the Old Covenant, dominated by Law.

**Gospel Reading.** BACKGROUND, o The Old Testament marriage symbolism is transformed in the New Testament to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church (see especially Ephesians 5:21-33). Practices connected with marriage are also used by Christ to explain his actions or ideas.

MEANING, o Customarily, a bridegroom's friends rejoice with him during the wedding feast. Christ is a bridegroom celebrating his wedding with the the "daughter of Sion", the people faithful to God. Therefore, Christ's friends, his disciples, have the right to rejoice with him. Christ's religion is not one of gloom but a life of joy.

## **B. REFLECTION POINTS**

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

**Pointers for sharing on the Gospel Reading.** Since the Jewish people were required to fast only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the frequent fasting of the Pharisees were acts of

*optional devotion*, and could not be held up as a standard for Christ and his disciples. This is a good occasion for members of a Bibliarasal Group to weigh *the importance of being a disciple of Christ as against the role of devotional practices in a given religion*. Even in the Christian religion, devotional practices like rosaries, novenas, processions, and the like, belong to a secondary level of spiritual life. To be truly a disciple of Christ, one must adopt the Christian world-view which is the desire to *harmonize the old and the new, the joyful and the sorrowful*. Share your experiences and insights on these points.

**Questions connected with the First and Second Readings, to be touched on, if possible, during the sharing:** (1) If Christians really want to live up to the dignity of being the people spoused by God, they must possess the values that constitute the BEAUTY OF GOD'S BRIDE: INTEGRITY, JUSTICE, TENDERNESS, LOVE, FAITHFULNESS. Do you radiate these values in your life? (2) If you are really "*a letter of Christ (to other people)... a letter written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God*" what kind of life should you lead?

## HOMILY

### DON'T CRY

**THEME.** Disciples of Christ should rejoice when he is present.

**OUR CONDITION.** When the world around us prefers a gloomy or tearful mood, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

### STORY. CUSTOMS ON CRYING

There is an old American song about someone who goes to a wedding and discovers: "your mother was crying, your father was crying" and so he starts crying too. It is implied in the song

that crying is the sentimental thing for parents and close friends to do at a wedding.

In the Philippines, however, it is considered a bad omen for the newly weds when their parents cry at their wedding.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** In the biblical mentality, joy and a wedding celebration are practically synonymous terms. In our Gospel Reading today, Jesus justifies the joyful conduct of his disciples by saying that they are like friends who rejoice with the bridegroom at his wedding feast. By saying this, Jesus implies that he is the Bridegroom.

If that is so, who is the Bride? None other than the Church, as St. Paul expressly says in his letter to the Ephesians (5:21-33). Now, when we say "the Church," do not think only of nuns and priests and bishops. We, the Christian people, are the Church.

The symbolism may be somewhat incongruous when the one referred to as the Bride of Christ is a man. So, let the metaphor fade and think of the reality. Each and every Christian, at her or his baptism, made a covenant with Christ. That covenant, on the Christian's part, is a promise of fidelity to Christ; on the part of Christ, it is a promise of fidelity to the Christian that s/he will be given all the necessary help to enjoy the privilege of being a child of God.

Few of us Christians have been completely faithful to our Covenant or marriage with Christ. By our sins of all kinds we have been unfaithful to him. Spiritually, most of us are adulterers who have violated the fidelity promised to Christ. And yet Christ remains faithful to us. Such is his love for us.

**OUR RESPONSE.** Let us ask Jesus Christ today for the grace to be more and more faithful to him. Let us try our best always to give him joy.

# INDEX OF BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

January-December 1999

Volume LXXIV, Nos. 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

## I. Authors

AGUILOS, RAMON STEPHEN

The Ten-Year History of St. John

The Evangelist School of Theology . . . , - . . . 19

BARETT, DAVID B.

Status Of Global Mission, 1999,

In Context of 20th and 21st Centuries . . , 555

BRANSOM, CHARLES JR.

Philippine Episcopology —

Addenda-Corrigenda 1998 . . . . . \* , , , , , . 346

CAJILIG, VICENTE (OP.)

Editorial for January-February 1999 issue . . . \* 2

Editorial for March-April 1999 issue. . . . . 134

Editorial for May-June 1999 issue. . . . . 291

Editorial for July-August 1999 issue . . . . . -. 419

Editorial for September-October 1999 issue . . . 535

Editorial for November-December 1999 issue. . 645

Christian Humanism and the Mosaic

of Asian Cultures. . . . . 373

CBCP

A Letter on the Occasion of the Visit of

the Relics of St. Therese of Lisieux . . . . . 709

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Elected CBCP Officers for the Millennium . . . . .      | 701 |
| Indigenous Peoples and the Church                       |     |
| Journeying towards the Great Jubilee. . . . .           | 333 |
| Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Culture , , , , , ,  | 300 |
| Pastoral Letter on Filipino Spirituality . . ® . . . *  | 536 |
| Pastoral Letter on Human Rights . - , • , , . , . . . , | 335 |
| Pastoral Letter on Pornography .. . . . . .             | 705 |
| New Bishops of the Philippines:                         |     |
| Most Rev. Joel Z. Baylon . . . . . , , , , , . . . . .  | 444 |
| Most Rev. Antonieto D. Cabajog . . . . .                | 629 |
| Most Rev. Angelito R. Lampon. . . . .                   | 448 |
| Most Rev. Honesto F. Ongtioco. . . . .                  | 634 |
| Most Rev. Jose S. Palma . . . . .                       | 638 |

# CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Regulations for Doctrinal Examination. . . . . | 436 |
|--|-----|

## DE TORRE, JOSEPH

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Natural Law and Human Rights                       |     |
| In the Tradition of Francisco de Vitoria           |     |
| (1486-1546). . . . . , . . . . .                   | 50  |
| The Concerns of the Church                         |     |
| in the Twenty Years of Paul II's Pontificate . . . | 683 |

## ECFL-CBCP

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Internationa] Interfaith Conference on the Family . | 458 |
|---|-----|

## FABC-OSC

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Recommendation on Planning and Organizing: |     |
| A Public Relations Office for Bishops'     |     |
| Conference. . . . .                        | 296 |



## GARCIA, EXCELSO (O.P.)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Application of Indulgences. . . . .                  | 717 |
| Forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer . . . . .           | 381 |
| Notorious Rejection of the Catholic Faith . . . . .  | 714 |
| Publication of a Marriage. . . . .                   | 590 |
| Requirements and Conditions for Indulgences. . . . . | 588 |
| Revival and Convalidation of Marriage. . . . .       | 499 |
| Secret Celebration of Marriage . . . . .             | 248 |
| When Bination is Allowed . . . . .                   | 96  |

## GOMEZ, FAUSTO (O.P.)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Bioethics and Theological Bioethics: Promoting<br>Human Life. . . . .          | 566 |
| <i>Fides Et Ratio</i> : A Hymn to Faith and Reason by<br>John Paul II. . . . . | 359 |
| The Death Penalty in Human and Christian<br>Perspective. . . . .               | 73  |

## GONZALEZ, JAVIER (O.P.)

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Contracting Marriage in the Church. . . . . | 31 |
|---|----|

## HILATA, VICENTE

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Servant of God for the Church of Capiz . . . . . | 463 |
|--|-----|

## JOHN PAUL H

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Communion means Gaining<br>Strength and Richness from Universality . . . . . | 646 |
| <i>Fides Et Ratio</i> . . . . .  | 136 |
| Introduction . . . . .   | 137 |
| Chapter I: The Revelation of God's Wisdom . . . . .                          | 144 |
| Chapter II: <i>Credo Ut Intellegem</i> . . . . .                             | 154 |
| Chapter HJ: <i>Intellego Ut Credam</i> . . . . .                             | 162 |
| Chapter IV: The Relationship between Faith<br>and Reason. . . . .            | 173 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter V: The Magisterium's Interventions<br>in Philosophical Matters. . . . .              | 188 |
| Chapter VI: The Interaction between Philosophy<br>and Theology . . . . .                     | 203 |
| Chapter VII: Current Requirement and Tasks . .   | 219 |
| Conclusion . . . . .   | 240 |
| <i>Inter Munera Academiarum.</i> . . . .   | 421 |
| Message for Doctrinal Examination . . . . .  | 427 |
| Message for the XXXI <sup>H</sup> World Communications<br>Day. . . . .                       | 292 |
| JOHNSON, TODD  |     |
| Status of Global Mission, 1999,<br>In Context of 20th and 21st Centuries. . . . .            | 555 |
| KROEGER, JAMES <i>QAM.</i> )   |     |
| Renewing Missionary Commitment . . . . « . . .   | 693 |
| MARIAN MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY CROSS  |     |
| Decree of Canonical Erection/History/<br>List of Members . . . * . . . . .                   | 91  |
| MARTINO, RENATO (ARCH.)  |     |
| Death Penalty is Cruel and Unnecessary . . . .   | 558 |
| MCDERMOTT, JOHN (S.J.)   |     |
| Theological Significance of the Indulgence . . . .   | 488 |
| OVERSEAS MINISTRIES STUDY CENTER   |     |
| Status Of Global Mission, 1998:<br>In Context of 20th and 21st Centuries . <sub>15</sub> . . | 88  |
| PUTZU, SALVATORRE  |     |
| Profile of a Catechist . . . . .   | 9   |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| RAMOS, VERGS  |     |
| Thoughts and Reflections on Priestly Life . . . .   | 377 |
| REBOLLO, MAXIMUJANO (O.P.)  |     |
| Relevance of Philosophy in Priestly Formation<br>according to " <i>Fides Et Ratio</i> " . . . . . | 479 |
| RIVERA, EFREN (O.P.)  |     |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>March-April 1999 . . . . .                              | 104 |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>May-June 1999 . . . . .                                 | 255 |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>July-August 1999 . . . . .                              | 386 |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>September-October 1999 . . . . .                        | 506 |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>November-December 1999 . . . . .                        | 597 |
| Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for<br>January-February 2000 . . . . .                         | 718 |
| SALA, GIOVANNI (S.J.)   |     |
| The Drama of the Separation of Faith<br>and Reason. . . . .                                       | 578 |
| SAMAH, JOHN   |     |
| Holy Year 2000: Biblical Origins of Jubilee . . . .   | 469 |
| The Easter Vigil Proclaiming the Light<br>of the World . . . . .                                  | 356 |
| SANTIAGO, LUCIANO PR.   |     |
| The Pastoral Covenant: Theological<br>and Practical Aspects. . . . .                              | 11  |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| SIN, JAIME (Card.)   |     |
| Clarification on the Question of "Women-Special Ministers of Holy Communion". . . . .    | 551 |
| Filipino Values, Christian Virtues . . . . .   | 452 |
| Paring Pilipino, Biyaya Sa Bayan. . . . .  | 5   |
| Pastoral Instruction on the Reception of Holy Communion . . . . . , , , . . .            | 548 |
| Some Guidelines on the Sacrament of Confirmation. . . . . , , , , . . .                  | 454 |
| The Day of the Lord is Ours Too. . . . .   | 111 |
| Vigilance is the Price for Freedom . . . . .   | 553 |
| TEJERO, PEDRO (O.P.)   |     |
| The Priestly Character. . . . .  | 651 |
| TINOKO, JOSE MA. (O.P.)  |     |
| The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000: Juridico-Pastoral Aspects of its Celebration . . . . | 349 |
| VILLARROEL, FIDEL (O.P.)   |     |
| The <i>Aguinaldo</i> Masses: Origins, Setbacks and Survival . . . . . , , , . .          | 654 |

## n. Sections and Topics

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| CASES & INQUIRIES  |     |
| Application of Indulgences . . . * , » , , , * , » , , * . . . | 717 |
| Forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer . . . , . # , , , . . .       | 381 |
| Notorious Rejection of the Catholic Faith . . . . .            | 714 |
| Publication of a Marriage. . . . .                             | 590 |
| Requirements and Conditions for Indulgences . . .              | 588 |
| Revival and Convalidation of Marriage . . . . .                | 499 |
| Secret Celebration of Marriage . * . . . . , . * , . . .       | 248 |
| When Bination is Allowed. . . . . , . . . . .                  | 96  |

## DOCUMENTATION

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| A Letter on the Occasion of the Visit of<br>the Relics of St. Therese of Lisieux. . . . .  | 709 |
| Clarification on the Question of "Women-<br>Special Ministers of Holy Communion". , , -, * | 551 |
| Decree of Canonical Erection/History/<br>List of Members. . . . .                          | 91  |
| Elected CBCP Officers For the Millennium : , , , ,   | 701 |
| Filipino Values, Christian Virtues . . . . . , , , , -, *                                  | 452 |
| Indigenous Peoples and the Church<br>Journeying towards the Great Jubilee. . . . .         | 333 |
| International Interfaith Conference<br>on the Family . . . . . k< , , , :                  | 458 |
| New Bishops of the Philippines:  |     |
| Most Rev. Joel Z. Baylon . . . . .   | 444 |
| Most Rev. Antonieto D. Cabajog . . . . .   | 629 |
| Most Rev. Angelito R. Lampon. . . . .  | 448 |
| Most Rev. Honesto F. Ongtioco . . . . . , , , ,  | 634 |
| Most Rev. Jose S. Palma . . . . .  | 638 |
| Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Culture. . . . .  | 300 |
| Pastoral Instruction on the Reception<br>of Holy Communion. . . . .                        | 548 |
| Pastoral Letter on Filipino Spirituality . , * , , ,                                       | 536 |
| Pastoral Letter on Human Rights . . , * . . . .  | 335 |
| Pastoral Letter on Pornography . . . . .   | 705 |
| Recommendation on Planning and Organizing:   |     |
| A Public Relations Office for Bishops'<br>Conference. . . . .                              | 296 |
| Some Guidelines on the Sacrament<br>of Confirmation. . . . .                               | 454 |
| Status of Global Mission, 1998:  |     |
| In Context of 20th and 21st Centuries . . . .  | 88  |
| Status Of Global Mission, 1999,  |     |
| In Context of 20th and 21st Centuries . . . .  | 555 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Vigilance is the Price for Freedom. . . . . | 553 |
|---|-----|

## EDITORIAL

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Year of God the Father: 1999. . . . .                   | , < „, „, „, %     |
| Faith and Reason: Two Wings of Man . •« . . . .         | 134                |
| Culture of Wisdom. . . . .                              | 291                |
| Western in Lifestyle... But Asian at Heart. . . .       | 4^0                |
| <i>Ang Landas ng Pagpapakabanal</i> . . . , * , * , . . | , «                |
| Priest: Man of Communion. . . . .                       | ij , ; , ; , „ ^>- |

## HOMILIES & BIBLIARASAL

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Ascension (A). . . . .                            | 262                         |
| Baptism of the Lord (B) . . . . .                 | ; < * . , , * . . 730       |
| Corpus Christi . . . . .                          | , , , „ . . . . 273         |
| Easter Sunday .. . . .                            | .119                        |
| Eight Sunday in Ordinary Time (B). . . . .        | .763                        |
| Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .    | 401                         |
| Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . . .    | 277                         |
| Epiphany. . . . .                                 | , . . . 723                 |
| Feast of Sto. Nino. . . . .                       | .735                        |
| Feast of The Holy Family {Jubilee Year} (B) . .   | 625                         |
| Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A). . . . .    | 390                         |
| Fifth Sunday in Lent (A). . . . .                 | .112                        |
| Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B). . . . .        | .748                        |
| Fifth Sunday of Easter (A). . . . .               | 255                         |
| First Sunday of Advent {Jubilee Year} (B) . , . . | 606                         |
| Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .    | 386                         |
| Fourth Sunday in Lent (A). . . . .                | * • . . . . 108             |
| Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B). . . . .       | .744                        |
| Fourth Sunday of Advent {Jubilee Year} (B) . . .  | 619                         |
| Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd) . . . .   | 129                         |
| Most Holy Trinity (A). . . . .                    | > , . . 270                 |
| Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .    | 405                         |
| Passion/Palm Sunday . . . . .                     | , » , * , . . . 116         |
| Pentecost (A B C) . . . . .                       | , . . . , . . . , . . . 266 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| HOMILIES & BIBLIARASAL [Continuation]                             |     |
| Second Sunday of Advent {Jubilee Year} (B) . . . .                | 610 |
| Second Sunday of Easter , . . . . > . « . * , , . . . .           | 123 |
| Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A). . . . .                  | 399 |
| Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B). . . . .                      | 758 |
| Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) , * . . . . ,               | 394 |
| Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B).. . . . .                       | 753 |
| Sixth Sunday of Easter (A). . . . .                               | 259 |
| Solemnity of Christ The King (A) . . . . . , . .                  | 603 |
| Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. . . . .                         | 718 |
| Solemnity of Our Lady's Assumption . . . . .                      | 408 |
| Solemnity of the Immaculate Concepcion<br>{Jubilee Year}. . . . . | 613 |
| Solemnity of the Lord's Birth {Jubilee Year}. . . .               | 622 |
| Third Sunday in Lent (A). . . . .                                 | 104 |
| Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) . . . . .                       | 740 |
| Third Sunday of Advent {Jubilee Year} (B) . * * .                 | 616 |
| Third Sunday of Easter. . . . .                                   | 126 |
| Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . . .                  | 284 |
| Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A). . . . .                    | 526 |
| Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . . .                | 529 |
| Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                 | 597 |
| Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . * - .                | 600 |
| Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . , , . . . .                 | 280 |
| Twenty-Eight Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                  | 520 |
| Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A). . . . .                 | 512 |
| Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . . .                | 411 |
| Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                 | 509 |
| Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                  | 523 |
| Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                 | 414 |
| Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                | 518 |
| Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . . .                | 515 |
| Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) . . . .                  | 505 |

## PASTORAL WORDS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Bioethics and Theological Bioethics: Promoting<br>Human Life. . . . . | 566 |
|---|-----|

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Contracting Marriage in the Church . . . . .  | 31  |
| Death Penalty is Cruel and Unnecessary. . . . .   | 558 |
| <i>Fides Et Ratio: A Hymn to Faith and Reason</i><br>by John Paul II . . . . .                        | 359 |
| Holy Year 2000: Biblical Origins of Jubilee . . .   | 469 |
| Natural Law and Human Rights in the Tradition<br>of Francisco de Vitoria (1486-1546) -... , . , . . . | 50  |
| <i>Paring Pilipino, Biyaya sa Bayan</i> . . . . . , * , * ,   | 5   |
| Profile of a Catechist . . . . . ,  | 9   |
| Relevance of Philosophy in Priestly Formation<br>According to " <i>Fides Et Ratio</i> " ..... . . . . | 479 |
| Renewing Missionary Commitment . . . IS , , , , .   | 693 |
| Servant of God for the Church of Capiz. . . . .   | 463 |
| The <i>Aguinaldo</i> Masses: Origins, Setbacks<br>and Survival. . . . .                               | 654 |
| The Concerns of the Church in the Twenty<br>Years of Paul IPs Pontificate . . . . . e                 | 683 |
| The Death Penalty in Human and Christian<br>Perspective. . . . .                                      | 73  |
| The Drama of the Separation of Faith and<br>Reason . . . . . , ; , ; .                                | 578 |
| The Easter Vigil Proclaiming the Light<br>of the World. . . . .                                       | 356 |
| The Great Jubilee of The Year 2000:<br>Juridico-Pastoral Aspects of its Celebration . . .             | 359 |
| The Pastoral Covenant: Theological and Practical<br>Aspects. . . . .                                  | 11  |
| The Priestly Character. . . . .   | 651 |
| The Ten-Year History of St John the Evangelist<br>School of Theology . . . . .                        | 19  |
| Theological Significance of the Indulgence • , ; .  | 488 |

## WORDS FROM THE PAST

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Philippine Episcopology — Addenda-Corrigenda<br>1998 . . ' . . , ' , , , , . . . . . I ( i m | 346 |
|--|-----|