

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

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INCARNATION'S MYSTERIUM
John Paul II

**PASTORAL EXHORTATION OF THE
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE
GREAT JUBILEE YEAR 2000**
CBCP

**A RENEWED CHURCH IN ASIA:
VISION AND CHALLENGE**
+Orlando Quevedo, OMI

**THE MISSION OF THE ORDER
OF PREACHERS TODAY**
Chris McVey, OP



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The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.
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

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Table of Contents

EDITORIAL	309	THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM
ENCYCLICAL		
<i>John Paul II</i>	311	INCARNATIONIS MYSTERIUM
PASTORAL WORDS		
<i>Jaime Card. Sin, DD</i>	335	HOMILY ON THE OCCASION OF THE THANKSGIVING MASS FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF PEDRO CALUNGSOD
<i>CBCP</i>	338	PASTORAL EXHORTATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE GREAT JUBILEE YEAR 2000
<i>+Orlando Quevedo, OMI</i>	344	TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR
	350	A RENEWED CHURCH IN ASIA: VISION AND CHALLENGE
DOCUMENTATION		
<i>+Orlando Quevedo, OMI</i>	356	THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000
<i>Henry D' Souza</i>	360	CONCLUDING ADDRESS AT THE 7TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF FABC
<i>Chiara Lubich</i>	368	THE SPIRITUALITY FOR COMMON LIVING
<i>Chris McVey, OP</i>	379	THE MISSION OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS TODAY
WORDS FROM THE PAST		
<i>Charles Bransom, Jr.</i>	398	PHILIPPINE EPISCOPOLOGY - ADDENDA-CORRIGENDA, 1999

CONSULTATIVE WORDS

<i>Javier Gonzalez, OP</i>	401	ON THE LECTORATE MINISTRY
	403	ON INTERSTICES

GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW

<i>Efren Rivera, OP</i>	404	HOMILETIC AND BIBLIARASAL POINTERS FOR JULY-AUGUST 2000
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The Ministry of Preaching for the Third Millennium

VICENTE CAJILIG, OP

One challenge facing the Church in the Philippines is the formation of the community in the word of God. This underscores, therefore, the preaching ministry in the parishes in the first decade of the new millennium.

The Order of Preachers in the beginning of the millennium has tried to look more closely at this tasks of the Church. The retreats of its members precisely delve deeper on the situation and environment where preaching takes place.

It follows, in its effort to be more grounded in the life of the faithful, a certain process namely: survey in the Churches where homilies are delivered, analysis of the situation, reflection in faith, decision-making, planning and doing course of action. These could be done in a personal way but also in groupings. In fact, if done in groupings, it would be a situation for community building.

In order to effect renewal and to reaffirm the preaching ministry, the profile of the preacher and the content of the message are glanced from different viewpoints: from the perspective of a member of the hierarchy, of a theologian, of the evangelical movements, of professionals, of Filipino youth, and of Christian couples.

The realization that came up is the refocus on the witnessing aspect of the preacher and his ability to make the word of God alive in the hearts of listeners. All preachers, namely, bishops, priests, religious, lay and even youth, when they share the prophetic role of Christ, are hereby encouraged to look into their ministry which makes the word of God enfleshed in men and women, young and old, educated and not educated — meaningful.

Incarnationis Mysterium*

JOHN PAUL II

1. Contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Church prepares to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium. Never more than at this time do we feel the need to make our own the Apostle's hymn of praise and thanksgiving: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will... For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (*Eph* 1:3-5, 9-10).

These words clearly indicate that in Jesus Christ the history of salvation finds its culmination and ultimate meaning. In him, we have all received "grace upon grace" (*Jn* 1:16), having been reconciled with the Father (cf. *Rom* 5:10; 2 *Cor* 5:18).

* Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 29 November, the First Sunday of Advent, in the year of our Lord 1998.

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not an event which can be consigned to the past. The whole of human history in fact stands in reference to him: our own time and the future of the world are illumined by his presence. He is "the Living One" (*Rev* 1:18), "who is, who was and who is to come" (*Rev* 1:4). Before him every knee must bend, in the heavens, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim that he is Lord (cf. *Phil* 2:10-11). In the encounter with Christ, every man discovers the mystery of his own life.¹

Jesus is the genuine newness which surpasses all human expectations and such he remains for ever, from age to age. The Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation which he has accomplished by his Death and Resurrection are therefore the true criterion for evaluating all that happens in time and every effort to make life more human.

2. The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is almost upon us. Ever since my first Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, I have looked towards this occasion with the sole purpose of preparing everyone to be docile to the working of the Spirit.² The event will be celebrated simultaneously in Rome and in all the particular Churches around the world, and it will have, as it were, two centres: on the one hand, the City where Providence chose to place the See of the Successor of Peter, and on the other hand, the Holy Land, where the Son of God was born as man, taking our flesh from a Virgin whose name was Mary (cf. *Lk* 1:27). With equal dignity and significance, therefore, the Jubilee will be celebrated not only in Rome but also in the Land which is rightly called "Holy" because it was there that Jesus was born and died. That Land, in which the first Christian community appeared, is the place where

¹ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

²Cf. No. 1: AAS 71 (1979), 258.

God revealed himself to humanity. It is the Promised Land which has so marked the history of the Jewish People, and is revered by the followers of Islam as well. May the Jubilee serve to advance mutual dialogue until the day when all of us together — Jews, Christians and Moslems — will exchange the greeting of peace in Jerusalem.³

The period of the Jubilee introduces us to the vigorous language which the divine pedagogy of salvation uses to lead man to conversion and penance. These are the beginning and the path of man's healing, and the necessary condition for him to recover what he could never attain by his own strength: God's friendship and grace, the supernatural life which alone can bring fulfillment to the deepest aspirations of the human heart.

The coming of the Third Millennium prompts the Christian community to lift its eyes of faith to embrace new horizons in proclaiming the Kingdom of God. It is imperative therefore at this special time to return more faithfully than ever to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which shed new light upon *the missionary task of the Church* in view of the demands of evangelization today. At the Council, the Church became more deeply conscious both of the mystery which she herself is and of the apostolic mission entrusted to her by the Lord. This awareness commits the community of believers to live in the world knowing that they must be "the leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society, destined to be renewed in Christ and transformed into the family of God".⁴ In order to meet this commitment effectively, the Church must persevere in unity and grow in the life of

³ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Epistle *Redemptionis Anno* (20 April 1984): AAS 76 (1984), 627.

⁴ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 40.

communion.⁵ The imminent approach of the Jubilee offers a powerful stimulus in this direction.

The journey of believers towards the Third Millennium is in no way weighed down by the weariness which the burden of two thousand years of history could bring with it. Rather, Christians feel invigorated, in the knowledge that they bring to the world the true light, Christ the Lord. Proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth, true God and perfect Man, the Church opens to all people the prospect of being "divinized" and thus of becoming more human.⁶ This is the one path which can lead the world to discover its lofty calling and to achieve it fully in the salvation wrought by God.

3. Responding to my Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*,¹ the particular Churches during these years of immediate preparation for the Jubilee are getting ready, through prayer, catechesis and pastoral action of different kinds, for this celebration which is leading the whole Church into a new time of grace and mission. The approach of the Jubilee is also evoking growing interest among those who are searching for a favourable sign to help them discern the traces of God's presence in our time.

The years of preparation for the Jubilee have been placed under the sign of the Most Holy Trinity: through Christ — in the Holy Spirit — to God the Father. In the mystery of the Trinity, the journey of faith has its origin and its final goal, when at last our eyes will contemplate the face of God for ever. In celebrating the Incarnation, we fix our gaze upon the mystery of the Trinity. Jesus of Nazareth, who reveals the Father, has fulfilled the desire hidden in every human heart to know God. What creation preserved as a seal etched

⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 36: AAS 87 (1995), 28.

⁶ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 41.

⁷ Cf. Nos. 39-54: AAS 87 (1995), 31-37.

in it by the creative hand of God and what the ancient Prophets had announced as a promise is disclosed in the revelation of Christ.⁸

Jesus reveals the face of God the Father "compassionate and merciful" (*Jas* 5:11), and with the sending of the Holy Spirit he makes known the mystery of love which is the Trinity. It is the Spirit of Christ who is at work in the Church and in history: we must listen to him in order to recognize the signs of the new times and to make the expectation of the glorified Lord's return ever more vibrant in the hearts of the faithful. The Holy Year must therefore be one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity, the Most High God. At this point, the poetic words of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, come to our aid:

"Glory to God the Father
and to the Son, King of the universe.
Glory to the Spirit,
worthy of praise and all holy.
The Trinity is one God
who created and filled all things:
the heavens with heavenly beings,
the earth with creatures of earth,
the sea, the rivers and springs
with creatures of the waters,
giving life to all things by his Spirit,
that all creatures
might sing the praises of their wise Creator,
who alone gives life and sustains
all life in being.
Above all others, let the creature who reasons

⁸ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 2 and 4.

celebrate him always
as the great King and good Father".⁹

4. May this hymn to the Trinity for the Incarnation of the Son rise with one voice from all who have been baptized and share the same faith in the Lord Jesus. May the ecumenical character of the Jubilee be a concrete sign of the journey which, especially in recent decades, the faithful of the different Churches and Ecclesial Communities have been making. It is only by listening to the Spirit that we shall be able to show forth visibly in full communion the grace of divine adoption which springs from Baptism: all of us children of the one Father. The challenging call of the Apostle rings out again for us today: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (*Eph* 4:4-6). To use the words of Saint Irenaeus: after receiving the Word of God as rain falling from heaven we cannot allow ourselves to present to the world an image of dry earth; nor can we ever claim to be one bread if we prevent the scattered flour from becoming one through the action of the water which has been poured on us.¹⁰

Every Jubilee Year is like an invitation to a wedding feast. From the different Churches and Ecclesial Communities throughout the world, let us all hasten to the feast now being prepared; let us bring with us everything that already unites us and, by fixing our gaze on Christ alone, let us grow in the unity which is the fruit of the Spirit. The present task of the Bishop of Rome, as the Successor of Peter, is to make the invitation to the Jubilee celebration all the more insistent, in order that the two thousandth anniversary of the central mystery of the Christian faith may be

⁹ *Dogmatic Poems*, XXXI, Hymnus alias: PG 37, 510-511.

¹⁰ Cf. *Adversus Haereses*, III, 17: PG 7, 930.

experienced as a journey of reconciliation and a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church, the sacrament "of intimate union with God and the unity of the entire human race".¹¹

5. How many historic memories the Jubilee evokes! We can recall the year 1300 when, responding to the wish of the people of Rome, Pope Boniface VIII solemnly inaugurated the first Jubilee in history. Resuming an ancient tradition which offered "abundant remission and pardon of sins" to those who visited Saint Peter's Basilica in the Eternal City, he wished on that occasion to grant "a pardon of sins which would be not only more abundant, but complete".¹² From that time onwards, the Church has always celebrated Jubilees as significant steps on her journey towards the fullness of Christ.

History shows how enthusiastically the People of God have entered into the Holy Years, seeing them as a time when Jesus' invitation to conversion makes itself more deeply felt. In this long experience there have been abuses and misunderstandings, but the testimonies of true faith and sincere charity have been very much greater. An exemplary witness to this is Saint Philip Neri who, for the Jubilee of 1550, established the "Roman charity" as a tangible sign of welcome to pilgrims. A long story of holiness could be told on the basis of the Jubilee experience and the fruits of conversion which the grace of pardon has produced in so many believers.

6. During my Pontificate, I have had the joy of proclaiming in 1983 the Extraordinary Jubilee for the 1950 years since the Redemption of the human race. Accomplished in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, this mystery is the consummation of an event

¹¹ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

¹² Bull *Antiquorum Habet* (22 February 1300): *Papal Bullarium Romanum* III/2, p. 94.

which has its beginning in the Incarnation of the Son of God. The coming Jubilee, therefore, can well be considered "Great", and the Church declares her fervent desire to embrace all believers in order to offer them the joy of reconciliation. From the whole Church there will rise the hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Father, who in his incomparable love has granted us in Christ to be "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (*Eph* 2:19). On the occasion of this great feast, a warm invitation to share our joy goes out to the followers of other religions, as it does to those who are far from faith in God. As brothers and sisters in the one human family, may we cross together the threshold of a new millennium that will demand effort and responsibility on the part of all.

For us believers, the Jubilee Year will highlight the Redemption accomplished by Christ in his Death and Resurrection. After this Death, no one can be separated from the love of God (cf. *Rm* 8:21-39), except through their own fault. The grace of mercy is offered to everyone, so that all who have been reconciled may also be "saved by his life" (*Rm* 5:10).

/ therefore decree that the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 will begin on Christmas Eve 1999, with the opening of the holy door in Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, a few hours before the inaugural celebration planned for Jerusalem and Bethlehem and the opening of the holy door in each of the other Patriarchal Basilicas of Rome. At Saint Paul's Basilica, the holy door will be opened on Tuesday, 18 January, when the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins, as a way of emphasizing the distinctive ecumenical character of this Jubilee.

I also decree that in the particular Churches the Jubilee will begin on the most holy day of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, with a solemn Eucharistic Liturgy presided over by the diocesan Bishop in the Cathedral, as also in the Co-Cathedral where the Bishop may

delegate someone else to preside at the celebration. Since the rite of the opening of the holy door is proper to the Vatican Basilica and the other Patriarchal Basilicas, it would be appropriate that the opening of the Jubilee in the individual Dioceses be done by having the *statio* in one church and a procession from there to the Cathedral, by liturgical reverencing of the Book of the Gospels and a reading of parts of this Bull, in accordance with the directives of the "Ritual for the Celebration of the Great Jubilee in Particular Churches".

May Christmas 1999 be for everyone a feast filled with light, the prelude to an especially deep experience of grace and divine mercy, which will continue until the *closing of the Jubilee Year on the day of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 6 January 2001*. Let all the faithful welcome the invitation of the angels who ceaselessly proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (*Lk* 2:14). Thus the Christmas season will be the pulsing heart of the Holy Year, bringing to the life of the Church an infusion of the copious gifts of the Spirit for a new evangelization.

7. In the course of its history, the institution of the Jubilee has been enriched by signs which attest to the faith and foster the devotion of the Christian people. Among these, the first is the notion of *pilgrimage*, which is linked to the situation of man who readily describes his life as a journey. From birth to death, the condition of each individual is that of the *homo viator*. Sacred Scripture, for its part, often attests to the special significance of setting out to go to sacred places. There was a tradition that the Israelite go on pilgrimage to the city where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, or visit the shrine at Bethel (cf. *Jgs* 20:18), or the one at Shiloh where the prayer of Samuel's mother, Hannah, was heard (cf. *1 Sam* 1:3). Willingly subjecting himself to the Law, Jesus too went with Mary and Joseph as a pilgrim to the Holy City of Jerusalem (cf. *Lk* 2:41). The history of the Church is the living account of

an unfinished pilgrimage. To journey to the city of Saints Peter and Paul, to the Holy Land, or to the old and new shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the Saints: this is the goal of countless members of the faithful who find nourishment for their devotion in this way. Pilgrimages have always been a significant part of the life of the faithful, assuming different cultural forms in different ages. A pilgrimage evokes the believer's personal journey in the footsteps of the Redeemer: it is an exercise of practical asceticism, of repentance for human weaknesses, of constant vigilance over one's own frailty, of interior preparation for a change of heart, through vigils, fasting and prayer, the pilgrim progresses along the path of Christian perfection, striving to attain, with the support of God's grace, "the state of the perfect man, to the measure of the full maturity of Christ" (*Eph* 4:13).

8. In addition to pilgrimage, there is the sign of the holy door, opened for the first time in the Basilica of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran during the Jubilee of 1423. It evokes the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. Jesus said: "I am the door" (*Jn* 10:7), in order to make it clear that no one can come to the Father except through him. This designation which Jesus applies to himself testifies to the fact that he alone is the Saviour sent by the Father. There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: "This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter" (*Ps* 118:20).

To focus upon the door is to recall the responsibility of every believer to cross its threshold. To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us. It is a decision which presumes freedom to choose and also the courage to leave something behind, in the knowledge that what is gained is divine life (cf. *Mt* 13:44-46). It is in this spirit that the Pope will be the

first to pass through the holy door on the night between 24 and 25 December 1999. Crossing its threshold, he will show to the Church and to the world the Holy Gospel, the wellspring of life and hope for the coming Third Millennium. Through the holy door, symbolically more spacious at the end of a millennium,¹³ Christ will lead us more deeply into the Church, his Body and his Bride. In this way we see how rich in meaning are the words of the Apostle Peter when he writes that, united to Christ, we too are built, like living stones, "into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (1 Pt 2:5).

9. Another distinctive sign, and one familiar to the faithful, is the indulgence, which is one of the constitutive elements of the Jubilee. The indulgence discloses the fullness of the Father's mercy, who offers everyone his love, expressed primarily in the forgiveness of sins. Normally, God the Father grants his pardon through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.¹⁴ Free and conscious surrender to grave sin, in fact, separates the believer from the life of grace with God and therefore excludes the believer from the holiness to which he is called. Having received from Christ the power to forgive in his name (cf. Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23), the Church is in the world as the living presence of the love of God who leans down to every human weakness in order to gather it into the embrace of his mercy. It is precisely through the ministry of the Church that God diffuses his mercy in the world, by means of that precious gift which from very ancient times has been called "indulgence".

The Sacrament of Penance offers the sinner "a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification"¹⁵ won by the

¹³ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Milletmiu Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 33: AAS 87 (1995), 25.

¹⁴ Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2 December 1984), 28-34: AAS 11 (1985), 250-273.

¹⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1446.

sacrifice of Christ. The sinner thus enters the life of God anew and shares fully in the life of the Church. Confessing his own sins, the believer truly receives pardon and can once more take part in the Eucharist as the sign that he has again found communion with the Father and with his Church. From the first centuries, however, the Church has always been profoundly convinced that pardon, freely granted by God, implies in consequence a real change of life, the gradual elimination of evil within, a renewal in our way of living. The sacramental action had to be combined with an existential act, with a real cleansing from fault, precisely what is called penance. Pardon does not imply that this existential process becomes superfluous, but rather that it acquires a meaning, that it is accepted and welcomed.

Reconciliation with God does not mean that there are no enduring consequences of sin from which we must be purified. It is precisely in this context that the indulgence becomes important, since it is an expression of the "total gift of the mercy of God".¹⁶ With the indulgence, the repentant sinner receives a remission of the temporal punishment due for the sins already forgiven as regards the fault.

10. Because it offends the holiness and justice of God and scorns God's personal friendship with man, sin has a twofold consequence. In the first place, if it is grave, it involves deprivation of communion with God and, in consequence, exclusion from a share in eternal life. To the repentant sinner, however, God in his mercy grants pardon of grave sin and remission of the "eternal punishment" which it would bring.

In the second place, "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Bull. Aperite portas Redemptori* (6 January 1983), 8: AAS 75 (1983), 98.

here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin",¹⁷ and this expiation removes whatever impedes full communion with God and with one's brothers and sisters.

Revelation also teaches that the Christian is not alone on the path of conversion. In Christ and through Christ, his life is linked by a mysterious bond to the lives of all other Christians in the supernatural union of the Mystical Body. This establishes among the faithful a marvelous exchange of spiritual gifts, in virtue of which the holiness of one benefits others in a way far exceeding the harm which the sin of one has inflicted upon others. There are people who leave in their wake a surfeit of love, of suffering borne well, of purity and truth, which involves and sustains others. This is the reality of "vicariousness", upon which the entire mystery of Christ is founded. His superabundant love saves us all. Yet it is part of the grandeur of Christ's love not to leave us in the condition of passive recipients, but to draw us into his saving work and, in particular, into his Passion. This is said in the famous passage of the Letter to the Colossians: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church" (1:24).

This profound truth is also wonderfully expressed in a passage of the Book of Revelation, where the Church is described as a bride dressed in a simple robe of white linen, the finest linen, bright and pure. And Saint John says: "The fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints" (*Rev* 19:8). In fact, in the lives of the saints the bright linen is woven to become the robe of eternal life.

Everything comes from Christ, but since we belong to him, whatever is ours also becomes his and acquires a healing power. This is what is meant by "the treasures of the Church", which are

¹⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1472.

the good works of the saints. To pray in order to gain the indulgence means to enter into this spiritual communion and therefore to open oneself totally to others. In the spiritual realm, too, no one lives for himself alone. And salutary concern for the salvation of one's own soul is freed from fear and selfishness only when it becomes concern for the salvation of others as well. This is the reality of the communion of saints, the mystery of "vicarious life", of prayer as the means of union with Christ and his saints. He takes us with him in order that we may weave with him the white robe of the new humanity, the robe of bright linen which clothes the Bride of Christ.

This doctrine on indulgences therefore "teaches firstly how sad and bitter it is to have abandoned the Lord God (cf. *Jer* 2:19). When they gain indulgences, the faithful understand that by their own strength they would not be able to make good the evil which by sinning they have done to themselves and to the entire community, and therefore they are stirred to saving deeds of humility".¹⁸ Furthermore, the truth about the communion of saints which unites believers to Christ and to one another, reveals how much each of us can help others — living or dead — to become ever more intimately united with the Father in heaven.

Drawing on these doctrinal reasons and interpreting the motherly intuition of the Church, I decree that throughout the entire Jubilee all the faithful, properly prepared, be able to make abundant use of the gift of the indulgence, according to the directives which accompany this Bull (cf. attached decree).

11. These signs have long been part of the traditional celebration of Jubilees. Nor will the People of God fail to recognize other possible signs of the mercy of God at work in the Jubilee.

¹⁸ Paolo VI, Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* (1 January 1967), 9: *MS* 59 (1967), 18.

In my Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, I suggested some which may help people to live the exceptional grace of the Jubilee with greater fervour.¹⁹ I recall them briefly here.

First of all, the sign of the *purification of memory*; this calls everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian.

By its nature, the Holy Year is a time when we are called to conversion. This is the first word of the preaching of Jesus, which significantly enough is linked with readiness to believe: "Repent and believe the Good News" (*Mk* 1:15). The imperative put by Christ flows from realization of the fact that "the time is fulfilled" (*Mk* 1:15). The fulfillment of God's time becomes a summons to conversion, which is in the first place an effect of grace. It is the Spirit who impels each of us to "return into ourselves" and to see the need to go back to the Father's house (cf. *Lk* 15:17-20). Examination of conscience is therefore one of the most decisive moments of life. It places each individual before the truth of his own life. Thus he discovers the distance which separates his deeds from the ideal which he had set himself.

The history of the Church is a history of holiness. The New Testament strongly states this mark of the baptized: they are "saints" to the extent that, being separate from the world insofar as the latter is subject to the Evil One, they consecrate themselves to worshipping the one true God. In fact, this holiness is evident not only in the lives of the many Saints and *Beati* recognized by the Church, but also in the lives of the immense host of unknown men and women whose number it is impossible to calculate (cf. *Rev* 7:9). Their lives attest to the truth of the Gospel and offer the world a visible sign that perfection is possible. Yet it must be acknowl-

Cf. Nos. 33.37.51: AAS 87 (1995), 25-26; 29-30; 36.

edged that history also records events which constitute a counter-testimony to Christianity. Because of the bond which unites us to one another in the Mystical Body, all of us, though not personally responsible and without encroaching on the judgement of God who alone knows every heart, bear the burden of the errors and faults of those who have gone before us. Yet we too, sons and daughters of the Church, have sinned and have hindered the Bride of Christ from shining forth in all her beauty. Our sin has impeded the Spirit's working in the hearts of many people. Our meagre faith has meant that many have lapsed into apathy and been driven away from a true encounter with Christ.

As the Successor of Peter, I ask that in this year of mercy the Church, strong in the holiness which she receives from her Lord, should kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters. All have sinned and none can claim righteousness before God (cf. *1 Kgs* 8:46). Let it be said once more without fear: "We have sinned" (*Jer* 3:25), but let us keep alive the certainty that "where sin increased, grace abounded even more" (*Rom* 5:20).

The embrace which the Father reserves for repentant sinners who go to him will be our just reward for the humble recognition of our own faults and the faults of others, a recognition based upon awareness of the profound bond which unites all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Christians are invited to acknowledge, before God and before those offended by their actions, the faults which they have committed. Let them do so without seeking anything in return, but strengthened only by "the love of God which has been poured into our hearts" (*Rom* 5:5). At the same time, there will be no lack of fair-minded people able to recognize that past and present history also records incidents of exclusion, injustice and persecution directed against the sons and daughters of the Church.

Let no one in this Jubilee year wish to exclude himself from the Father's embrace. Let no one behave like the elder brother in the Gospel parable who refuses to enter the house to celebrate (cf. *Lk* 15:25-30). May the joy of forgiveness be stronger and greater than any resentment. Thus the Bride will shine before the eyes of the world with the beauty and holiness which come from the Lord's grace. For two thousand years, the Church has been the cradle in which Mary places Jesus and entrusts him to the adoration and contemplation of all peoples. May the humility of the Bride cause to shine forth still more brightly the glory and power of the Eucharist, which she celebrates and treasures in her heart. In the sign of the consecrated Bread and Wine, Christ Jesus risen and glorified, the light of the nations (cf. *Lk* 2:32), reveals the enduring reality of his Incarnation. He remains living and real in our midst in order to nourish the faithful with his Body and Blood.

Let us therefore look to the future. The merciful Father takes no account of the sins for which we are truly sorry (cf. *Is* 38:17). He is now doing something new, and in the love which forgives he anticipates the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, so that there may be a renewed commitment to Christian witness in the world of the next millennium, let faith be refreshed, let hope increase and let charity exert itself still more.

12. One sign of the mercy of God which is especially necessary today is the sign of charity, which opens our eyes to the needs of those who are poor and excluded. Such is the situation affecting vast sectors of society and casting its shadow of death upon whole peoples. The human race is facing forms of slavery which are new and more subtle than those of the past; and for too many people freedom remains a word without meaning. Some nations, especially the poorer ones, are oppressed by a debt so huge that repayment is practically impossible. It is clear, therefore, that there can be no real progress without effective cooperation between the peoples of every language, race, nationality and religion. The

abuses of power which result in some dominating others must stop: such abuses are sinful and unjust. Whoever is concerned to accumulate treasure only on earth (cf. *Mt* 6:19) "is not rich in the sight of God" (*Lk* 12:21).

There is also a need to create a new culture of international solidarity and cooperation, where all — particularly the wealthy nations and the private sector — accept responsibility for an economic model which serves everyone. There should be no more postponement of the time when the poor Lazarus can sit beside the rich man to share the same banquet and be forced no more to feed on the scraps that fall from the table (cf. *Lk* 16:19-31). Extreme poverty is a source of violence, bitterness and scandal; and to eradicate it is to do the work of justice and therefore the work of peace.

The Jubilee is a further summons to conversion of heart through a change of life. It is a reminder to all that they should give absolute importance neither to the goods of the earth, since these are not God, nor to man's domination or claim to domination, since the earth belongs to God and to him alone: "the earth is mine and you are strangers and sojourners with me" (*Lev* 25:23). May this year of grace touch the hearts of those who hold in their hands the fate of the world's peoples!

13. A sign of the truth of Christian love, ageless but especially powerful today, is *the memory of the martyrs*. Their witness must not be forgotten. They are the ones who have proclaimed the Gospel by giving their lives for love. The martyr, especially in our own days, is a sign of that greater love which sums up all other values. The martyr's life reflects the extraordinary words uttered by Christ on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (*Lk* 23:34). The believer who has seriously pondered his Christian vocation, including what Revelation has to say about the possibility of martyrdom, cannot exclude it from his own life's

horizon. The two thousand years since the birth of Christ are marked by the ever-present witness of the martyrs.

This century now drawing to a close has known very many martyrs, especially because of Nazism, Communism, and racial or tribal conflicts. People from every sector of society have suffered for their faith, paying with their blood for their fidelity to Christ and the Church, or courageously facing interminable years of imprisonment and privations of every kind because they refused to yield to an ideology which had become a pitiless dictatorial regime. From the psychological point of view, martyrdom is the most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith, for faith can give a human face even to the most violent of deaths and show its beauty even in the midst of the most atrocious persecutions.

Filled with grace during the coming Jubilee year, we shall be able with new strength to raise the hymn of thanksgiving to the Father, singing: *Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus*. Yes, this is the host of those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (*Rev* 7:14). For this reason the Church in every corner of the earth must remain anchored in the testimony of the martyrs and jealously guard their memory. May the People of God, confirmed in faith by the example of these true champions of every age, language and nation, cross with full confidence the threshold of the Third Millennium. In the hearts of the faithful, may admiration for their martyrdom be matched by the desire to follow their example, with God's grace, should circumstances require it.

14. The joy of the Jubilee would not be complete if our gaze did not turn to her who in full obedience to the Father gave birth to the Son of God in the flesh for our sake. For Mary "the time to give birth" came to pass in Bethlehem (*Lk* 2:6), and filled with the Spirit she brought forth the First-Born of the new creation. Called to be the Mother of God, from the day of the virginal

conception Mary lived the fullness of her motherhood, crowning it on Calvary at the foot of the Cross. There, by the wondrous gift of Christ, she also became the Mother of the Church, and showed to everyone the way that leads to the Son.

Woman of silence, given to listening, docile in the hands of the Father, the Virgin Mary is invoked as "blessed" by all generations, for she recognized the marvels accomplished in her by the Holy Spirit. The nations will never grow weary of invoking the Mother of mercy and will always find refuge under her protection. May she who with Jesus her son and Joseph her spouse went on pilgrimage to the holy Temple of God, guard the steps of all those who will be pilgrims in this Jubilee Year. And through the coming months may she deign to intercede intensely for the Christian people, so that abundant grace and mercy may be theirs, as they rejoice at the two thousand years since the birth of their Saviour.

Let the praise of the Church rise to God the Father in the Holy Spirit for the gift of salvation in Christ the Lord, both now and for evermore.

CONDITIONS FOR GAINING THE JUBILEE INDULGENCE

By the present decree, which implements the will of the Holy Father expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, and by virtue of faculties granted by the same Supreme Pontiff, the Apostolic Penitentiary defines the discipline to be observed for gaining the Jubilee indulgence.

All the faithful, properly prepared, can fully enjoy, throughout the Jubilee, the gift of the indulgence, in accordance with the following norms.

While indulgences granted either generally or by special rescript remain in force during the Great Jubilee, it should be noted that the Jubilee indulgence also can be applied in suffrage to the souls of the deceased: such an offering constitutes an outstanding act of supernatural charity, in virtue of the bond which, in the Mystical Body of Christ, unites the faithful still on pilgrimage here below and those who have already ended their earthly journey. Then too, the rule that a plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day remains in force during the entire Jubilee year.²⁰

The high point of the Jubilee is the encounter with God the Father, through Christ the Saviour present in his Church and in a special way in the Sacraments. For this reason, the whole Jubilee journey, prepared for by pilgrimage, has as its starting point and its conclusion the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist, the paschal mystery of Christ, our peace and our reconciliation: this is the transforming encounter which opens us to the gift of the indulgence for ourselves and for others.

²⁰ Cf. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1986, Norm. 21, § 1.

After worthily celebrating sacramental confession, which ordinarily, according to the norm of Canon 960 of the Code of Canon Law and of Canon 720 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, must be individual and complete, each member of the faithful, having fulfilled the required conditions, can receive or apply the gift of the plenary indulgence during a suitable period of time, even daily, without needing to go to confession again. It is fitting however that the faithful should frequently receive the grace of the Sacrament of Penance, in order to grow in conversion and in purity of heart.²¹ Participation in the Eucharist, which is required for all indulgences, should properly take place on the same day as the prescribed works are performed.²²

These two culminating moments must be accompanied, first of all, by the witness of communion with the Church, manifested by prayer for the intentions of the Roman Pontiff, and also by acts of charity and penance, following the indications given below: these acts are meant to express the true conversion of heart to which communion with Christ in the Sacraments leads. Christ is truly our forgiveness and the expiation of our sins (cf. *1 Jn* 2:2). By pouring into the hearts of the faithful the Holy Spirit who is the "remission of all sin",²³ he guides each individual towards a filial and trusting encounter with the Father of mercies. From this encounter springs a commitment to conversion and renewal, to ecclesial communion and to charity towards our brothers and sisters.

Likewise confirmed for the coming Jubilee is the norm whereby confessors can commute, on behalf of those legitimately impeded, both the work prescribed and the conditions required.²⁴ Cloistered men and women religious, the infirm and all those who

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, Norm. 23, §§ 1-2.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, Norm. 23, § 3.

²³ « Quia ipse est fons misericordie omnium peccatorum»: *Missale Romanum*, Super oblata, Sabato, post Octavam Venerabilis Paschae.

²⁴ Cf. *Enchiridion*, Norm. 27.

for whatever reason are not able to, leave their own house, can parry out, in lieu of a visit to a certain Church, a visit to the chapel of their house; should even this be impossible for them, they can gain the indulgence by spiritually uniting themselves with those carrying out the prescribed work in the ordinary manner and by offering to God their prayers, sufferings and discomforts. With regard to the required conditions, the faithful can gain the Jubilee indulgence:

1) *In Rome*, if they make a pious pilgrimage to one of the Patriarchal basilicas, namely, the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican, the Archbasilica of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major and the, Basilica of Saint Paul on the Ostian Way, and there take part devoutly in Holy Mass or another liturgical celebration such as Lauds or Vespers, or some pious exercise (e.g., the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, the recitation of the *Akathistos* Hymn in honour of the Mother of God); furthermore, if they visit, as a group or individually, one of the four Patriarchal Basilicas and there spend some time in Eucharistic adoration and pious meditations, ending with the "Our Father", the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To the four Patriarchal Basilicas are added, on this special occasion of the Great Jubilee, the following further places, under the same conditions: the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in Campo Verano, the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love, and the Christian Catacombs.²⁵

2) *In the Holy Land*, if, keeping the same conditions, they visit the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

Cf. *Ench. Indulg.*, Grant 14.

3) *In other ecclesiastical territories*, if they make a sacred pilgrimage to the Cathedral Church or to other Churches or places designated by the Ordinary, and there assist devoutly at a liturgical celebration or other pious exercise, such as those mentioned above for the City of Rome; in addition, if they visit, in a group or individually, the Cathedral Church or a Shrine designated by the Ordinary, and there spend some time in pious meditation, ending with the "Our Father", the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4) *In any place*, if they visit for a suitable time their brothers and sisters in need or in difficulty (the sick, the imprisoned, the elderly living alone, the handicapped, etc.), as if making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. *Mt* 25:34-36), and fulfilling the usual spiritual and sacramental conditions and saying the usual prayers. The faithful will certainly wish to repeat these visits throughout the Holy Year, since on each occasion they can gain the plenary indulgence, although obviously not more than once a day.

The plenary indulgence of the Jubilee can also be gained through actions which express in a practical and generous way the penitential spirit which is, as it were, the heart of the Jubilee. This would include abstaining for at least one whole day from unnecessary consumption (e.g., from smoking or alcohol, or fasting or practicing abstinence according to the general rules of the Church and the norms laid down by the Bishops' Conferences) and donating a proportionate sum of money to the poor; supporting by a significant contribution works of a religious or social nature (especially for the benefit of abandoned children, young people in trouble, the elderly in need, foreigners in various countries seeking better living conditions); devoting a suitable portion of personal free time to activities benefiting the community, or other similar forms of personal sacrifice.

Homily on the Occasion of the Thanksgiving Mass for the Beatification of Pedro Calungsod

JAIME CARD. SIN, DD

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At this very moment in Rome, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, is presiding at the Beatification Ceremonies of our very own *Kababayan* Pedro Calungsod of Cebu, a young Filipino Catechist and Martyr. Our hearts are filled with gratitude to the Lord for this wonderful gift which happens as we celebrate The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. And not only is Pedro Calungsod a gift to us. He in turn becomes the Filipinos' gift to the Church and to the World. Indeed, it is a time of joy a time of praise, a time of grace for all of us!

Our awareness of Pedro Calungsod comes at a very auspicious time in History. He serves as a wonderful gift and model to the youth of our land, at a time when our faith seeks to affirm divine realities in the face of many struggles, difficulties and temptations. He speaks to today's young people who are called to manifest and concretize their faith and love in Christ, so that like Him, they will find the final meaning of their lives.

Pedro was barely fourteen years old when he left with Blessed Diego Luis De San Vitores to evangelize the Marianas Islands. Did he really understand what he was doing? Did he know the

consequences of this pivotal decision? We do not know the answer. But my dear friends, faith and love most of the time make us do things we really do not understand, or understand fully. Nonetheless, this faith precisely became the beginning of a close and intimate encounter With Jesus, It is this faith which enabled Pedro to endure four long years of journey with the missionaries in that lonely and dangerous land. It is this faith which grew and blossomed to full maturity when he Was called upon to offer the glorious crown of martyrdom. It is this faith which convinced Pedro, at the prime age of eighteen heroically offer his life for the glory of God.

And it is this same faith that we need today. Our young people need to have a strong and courageous faith. Like Pedro, we need Christians who are able to withstand the lures of this world, who are not afraid to lose the favors of men for the sake of the Kingdom. We need witnesses to the saving truths of Christ even if it means suffering and hardships. We need martyrs who bravely uphold what is right, good and just even if the world rejects and disdain them.

Too often, we are blinded by the benefactions of the present world that we tend to forget the life of the world to come. This can be seen in people who simply focus on the present and view the after-life as an illusion. Pedro Calungsod is a testimony both to the reality and meaning of faith within this world, and to the reality still to come. Like Jesus and the other martyrs, Pedro brings back the horizon of the fullness of the Kingdom, of the fulfillment of all those things which God has prepared for those who love Him. Pedro inspires us to stretch bur horizon, not to despise the present realities to see them not as an end, but as a part of over-arching framework which is the salvific plan of God for humanity.

For this reason, Pedro Calungsod serves a challenge to us Filipinos. Our celebrations are not only meant to glorify this Proto-Martyr of the Visayas. Rather, Pedro Calungsod's beatification should be an hour of inspiration for the Church, and a summons

to authenticity and courage. This celebration aspires to enkindle and enliven our Christian faith in the modern times. We are called to know the faith, live the faith, proclaim the faith, persevere in the faith and even die for the faith if necessary. In this way, our celebration has truly achieved its purpose.

As I end, I pray to Blessed Pedro Calungsod, a Filipino, a teen-ager, a Catechist and a Martyr. I entrust to Him our youth, the hope of our nation. Let us pray in this mass, that they too may heed courageously the call of Christ and cherish Him as their true and lasting treasure, so that like Pedro Calungsod, they may go forth and make Jesus shine in every corner of the earth!

A Pastoral Exhortation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines for the Great Jubilee Year 2000

CBCP

OPEN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD

"Aperite mihi portas justitiae" (Psalm 118). "Open for me the doors of righteousness." With these words Pope John Paul II inaugurated the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Christianity, a Holy Year of Pardon and Renewal, a year dedicated to the honor and praise and glory of the Most Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

With the launching of the Holy Year in our respective jurisdictions (dioceses), we ended the countdown to the Year 2000 amid euphoric explosions of welcome to the Third Millennium. In the cities all over the world the midnight clouds of December 31st, 1999 were littered with chandeliers of expensive, but short lived, fireworks and a revelry of commercial extravaganza.

While all that noisy welcome is now forgotten, we as Church embark upon the activities of the Holy Year 2000 as calendared in our respective dioceses. We are reminded in this year of the Trinity that "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under

the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out 'Abba, Father'. So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God" (Gal 4/4-7). This missionary action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is what we remember and celebrate and live in the Holy Year. *Let us open our hearts to the Blessed Trinity*, in whose honor we have convened a Marian Festival in the last week of January this year. Let us open our hearts to the Triune God.

A number of sectoral jubilees or Jubilee Days along with other feasts and celebrations have been calendared for this Holy Year. In all of these events, let us be reminded that the primary objective of the Jubilee Days is *"the strengthening of faith and of the witness of Christians"* (TMA 42) towards the *"New Springtime of Christian life"* {TMA 18}, such as we dreamed to embark upon with the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines ten years ago. At the end of this year we hope and pray that we shall have become "better Christians".

If we may briefly recall: the Old Testament Sabbath/Jubilee Year has left us a number of traditions which we are now challenged to reflect upon and discover how we may apply starting this Jubilee Year as our pathways to the Third Millennium. The present does not only have a linkage with the past, but the past is prophetic of the future. Leviticus 25 in particular mentions these injunctions for the Jewish Jubilee Year: *the release of prisoners, the return of families to their ancestral homes, the rest given to agricultural land, the reduction or cancellation of debts, the restoring of harmony among people on the basis of their respective roles, rights and equal dignity*, (cf. Ex. 23/10; Dt. 15/1-6) These are all interconnected.

Brothers and Sisters, we invite you to reflect on these social traditions in order to see how these can help us establish the "communion of communities" and the "community of disciples who firmly believe in the Lord Jesus" (CBCP Vision).

What do these traditions mean now in the circumstances of our present realities? Jesus must have been thinking about Leviticus 25 when he applied to himself Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4/16-20). That is what the traditions meant for Jesus. What do they mean to us now who are followers of Jesus? *Let us open our hearts to the inspiration of Jesus' example.*

This Jubilee Year, if we want to enter into the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the high point of our faith, we must enter through the Door which is Jesus Christ (Jo. 10/9), we must fix our eyes on Jesus (Luke 4/20), our one and only Redeemer "yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13/8). After all, the Year 2000, the beginning of the Third Millennium is being celebrated to mark his coming into our world, his becoming man, his becoming Emmanuel, God with us, God on our side, to make our story his story too, to make his life the pattern of our life. *Let us open our hearts to Jesus.*

We are in a new beginning. In response to the call of Pope John Paul II, with this Great Jubilee, let us embark on a journey of renewal, of repentance, of mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. Let each one look in his/her own heart and see what sins there are, hindering the entry of the Lord into his/her heart and the renewal of our nation. Let each and all acknowledge their sins and turn their backs to them in sorrow.

The "year of favour" which Jesus announces in the Gospel is for today and everyday. Our Jubilee Days this year are symbolized by the GLORIOUS CROSS that is now being brought from parish to parish to signify our acceptance to become truly a "community of disciples of the Lord." We are happy to note that this journey of the Glorious Cross is an occasion for the re-evangelization and conversion of our people.

In addition to the most important gift of mercy which is the forgiveness of our sins, there is a special gift given in abundance during the year of the Great Jubilee. This is the plenary indulgence which we can avail of by going in pilgrimage to the various pilgrimage sites designated not only in Rome and the Holy Land but also in our respective dioceses.

In the spirit of repentance, we, Your Bishops, announce a National Day of Jubilee Pilgrimage and Fasting for the Poor on April 14 Friday. We ourselves shall lead this National Day of Jubilee Pilgrimage and Fasting for the Poor all over the country for our respective jurisdictions. It will be a special day of pilgrimage with fasting, to atone for our sins, to beg for the mercy of God for our country, for our leaders, our President and his Cabinet members. We shall on that day offer special prayers that our government may uproot the causes of pervasive graft and corruption. It will be a day of fasting in behalf of the poor. Whatever will be saved on that day will be given either to some poor family or the money given to some charitable institution we shall designate.

We firmly believe, however, that change will come, if each one will open his heart to the torrents of grace instore this Holy Year. It is of vital importance that we go into the Third Millennium a different people. We should not concentrate so much on what sort of nation we want to create, but rather on what kind of person each should become on account of the influence of Jesus in his/her life. Our personal conversion and authentic interior renewal must have an impact on the community we live in. With our life, by our life, we must proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

In the past three years of preparation for the Great Jubilee the CBCP has issued Pastoral Letters on Politics, Economics, Culture and Spirituality. We recall them to you now for our Great Jubilee conferences and conventions. In them we will find the pathways for personal and societal renewal so much needed in our journey in the new millennium.

But we must go beyond the signs of Pilgrimages and Indulgence to the on-going renewal of our individual and communal lives by *responding to the missionary call* of the Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, "Ecclesia In Asia". To respond to this missionary call, we must not only care and share, but even dare to face the risks of becoming a missionary church, a repentant and forgiving church, a church forever reaching out to people in greatest need (TMA 42).

On this occasion, we appeal for prayer for the forthcoming Second National Clergy Retreat in Tagaytay City on June 26-July 1 this year, and the National Mission Congress in Cebu City on September 28-October 1 also this year. We hope that these two events as well as the various Conventions and Congresses to be held in our respective dioceses will contribute to the "springtime of Christianity", to "the springtime of holiness". As we "fix our eyes on Jesus", we can not but also fix our eyes on the Eucharist which is his Real Presence in our midst. The Holy Year is also a Eucharistic Year. We hope to end our Jubilee Year with a Eucharistic Congress in our Dioceses.

In this year of the Great Jubilee, we dream of exuberant liberation and renewal. We would like to address in particular those who have caused the suffering and poverty of our brothers and sisters. *May they not only open their hearts to Jesus in Holy Communion but also to the victims of their violence. To close your heart to your neighbor is to close your heart to Jesus.* May we all open our hearts to the call for a Christian social conscience.

In the end, we invite you to keep the joyful spirit of this Holy Year 2000. "It's the time of the Great Jubilee."

"It's a time of joy, a time of peace, a time when hearts are then set free, a time to heal the wounds of division. Open your hearts to the Lord and begin to see the mystery that we are all together as one family. No more walls, no more chains, no more

selfishness and closed doors. For we are in the fullness of God's time."

May Mary, "the Star of Evangelization" guide our steps in this Year of the Great Jubilee which opens for us our journey to the new Millennium.

To Proclaim the Year of the Lord's Favor

+ORLANDO QUEVEDO, OMI

When the fullness of time had come,
God sent forth his Son, born of a woman (Gal 4:4).

Beloved People of God:

God becoming a human being, like us in all things but sin, Jesus — God and Savior — being born of the Blessed Virgin Mary — this joyful and inexplicable mystery of God's overwhelming love for us is the whole reason for the Jubilee Year, 2000.

For this event, we dedicated three full years of preparation, one to God the Son (1997), another to God the Holy Spirit (1998) and a third to God the Father (1999). We learned more about God, who He is to us, what our faith in God means for our everyday life.

1. The Meaning of the Jubilee Year.

In the Old Testament, a Jubilee was a time that God himself set, a time dedicated in a special way to Him (see Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:1-28; Dt 15:1-6). Its roots are in the story of the creation. God took six days to create the whole of creation and then on the seventh day he rested (Gen 2:1-3). This was the origin of the Jewish Sabbath.

A Jubilee Year is a sabbatical event, a time when we are told to:

- reconcile with God and with our fellow human beings;
- restore the dignity of the poor and equality among all men and women;
- restore social justice in the community;
- redeem and renew the land and make it productive;
- reclaim freedom and relieve the debts of others.

All these we should continue to reflect and act upon as individuals and as believing communities.

2. The Beginning of the Jubilee Year, 2000.

The Church begins the Jubilee Year 2000 on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1999, and ends the celebration on 7 January 2001, the Feast of the Epiphany, a little more than a year later. Among the Israelites, the Jubilee year was opened with the blowing of the *yobhel*, the horn of a ram. Hence the word "Jubilee." For us, on Christmas Eve the ringing of bells and the opening of the Holy Door by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in the Basilica of St. Peter, Rome, the mother church of all Christendom, will usher in the Jubilee Year. Through this Holy Door and other Holy Doors in Rome, millions of pilgrims will pass during the Jubilee Year.

In the Archdiocese of Cotabato, a Jubilee Door in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception will also be opened on Christmas Eve. Thus will begin a year-long schedule of Jubilee activities in the Archdiocese.

3. Jubilee Year: A Pilgrimage of Faith and Love.

The Jubilee Year is basically a journey, a pilgrimage of faith and love, to God. It is marked by realization of our sinfulness, by sorrow and contrition, by the forgiveness of sin, by penance and sacrifice, by the doing of good deeds.

This is why one of the more important activities will be the pilgrimage of the faithful from all the parishes to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Cotabato City. It is the mother church of the Archdiocese. The pilgrimage of each parish will express the movement of our return to the "Father's house" and the renewal of our lives.

Parish pilgrimages will begin in April 2000, immediately after Holy Week. Intensive parish education and formation in the faith will precede the pilgrimages.

4. A Year of Renewal: Pastoral Vision and Programs.

In the year 2000 we shall also hold an Archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly. We pray that it will be an event of comprehensive renewal for the Archdiocese. From this assembly we hope to emerge with a renewed vision of the Church in Cotabato, renewed pastoral programs toward the vision, and a plan of systematic implementation of pastoral programs and projects.

Already we are laying down the foundations of a future program for Indigenous Peoples and planning the re-orientation of pastoral programs, movements, and organizations toward the building of Basic Ecclesial Communities. We are envisioning the formation of small, prayerful, family based, grassroots faith-communities of dialogue, peace and justice, and love.

Before us is the vision of the Church of the Poor, so well articulated by the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines in 1991. We take this vision seriously and will strive toward it as systematically as we can.

5. Formation in Faith and Pastoral Issues.

To go along with these pastoral initiatives, the year 2000 will be marked by intensive formation in faith at the parish level, a re-organization and re-orientation of parish decisionmaking struc-

tures as well as pastoral programs, and the training of pastoral workers at all levels, beginning at the archdiocesan level.

At the same time we shall be concerned with specific socio-pastoral issues affecting our lives. Among these are dialogue and the peace process in Mindanao, the Third World Debt, the environment, the death penalty, human rights, globalization and liberalization, education, as well as issues related to marriage and the family.

Our viewpoint will be our faith, our moral and religious teachings. Such engagement with specific issues is part of our vision to renew ways of thinking, values, relationships, and behavior so that we may truly return to God.

We can perceive a grand design for renewal in past Archdiocesan Pastoral Assemblies. Our task as clergy, religious, and laity is to translate in a participatory way the grand design into a pastoral blueprint that our pastoral programs, parishes, movements, and organizations may implement in the first decade of the Third Millennium.

6. Radical Discipleship and the Social Context.

The task before us is nothing more and nothing less than a mission of radical discipleship, a radical following of Jesus. We need to change our mentalities, values, and ways. Too long have we said, "Lord, Lord" but in reality we have worshiped false gods, the gods of power, of possession, and prestige. This worship of false gods explains the scandalous divide between the many poor and the few rich in our country, corruption and graft, the obsession for self-interest, the loss of a sense of shame and sin, the loss of the sacred.

Year after year, the Lord and his Church call us to a sense of responsibility for our sins, to repentance, sorrow, and the forgiveness of sins — to comprehensive renewal of life. We have

been deaf to such calls. Only when crimes become so heinous, and criminals seem to roam around so freely do we raise our voice of grave concern.

We do not see the many appalling sins entrenched in the very structures of our social order. Such sins enable people to destroy the environment, to steal government funds, to oppress women and children, to exploit workers, to use government resources to their own advantage, to neglect the poor, to divorce their faith from their daily life and action.

7. Radical Discipleship, Mary as Mother and Model.

It is time, indeed, to renew our lives. God calls each of us to act, to live what we tell others to do, to dramatize by the example of our lives what we say in words. We can only do this if we are genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus. This is also our vision — that the Church be a community of authentic disciples.

The Mother of Jesus is our example of discipleship. Mary, the young maiden, heard God's word, she kept it in her heart, she pondered it, she obeyed. In total fidelity she lived the word of God in her daily life.

She, too, is our Mother. When we waver in our own keeping of God's word, we need to go to her for help. In Mary we have a Mother-Intercessor. She will not fail us if we seek her assistance.

Conclusion.

At the synagogue of Nazareth, our Lord Jesus quoted the following words from the prophet Isaiah in reference to the Messiah and a Jubilee year:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim

liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Is. 61:1-2).

Then he said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). Our Jubilee Year 2000 points to the time of fulfillment in and by Jesus the Messiah.

Our celebration can only be meaningful if we take to heart what it implies — renewal. We need a deep faith in the Father, a profound love of the Son, an eager hope in the Spirit. We need a resolute "political will" that sees obstacles as challenges and opportunities to deeper love and commitment. Only with God's grace will it be possible for us to reap abundant spiritual fruit in the Jubilee Year and beyond.

Glory to God the Father and to the Son, King of the Universe. Glory to the Holy Spirit, worthy of praise and all holy. (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, d. 389).

A Renewed Church in Asia: Vision and Challenge

+ORLANDO QUEVEDO, OMI

"Glory to God the Father and to the Son, King of the Universe.
Glory to the Spirit, worthy of praise and all holy."
(St. Gregory Nazianzen, d. 389).

At the beginning of this new Millennium, the doxology of the great 4th century Asian theologian-saint, Gregory Nazianzen, comes to mind. The Church in Asia is rooted in the communion of the loving Father, Son and Spirit. The Church is here precisely to journey, together with all the peoples of Asia to the One and Triune God from whom all communion, all unity and harmony, all love and peace springs.

On this common Asian journey, the Church's "only joy is that which comes from sharing with the multitude of Asia's peoples the immense gift which she herself has received — the love of Jesus the Savior. Her one ambition is to continue his mission of service and love, so that all Asians 'may have life and have it abundantly'" (*Ecclesia in Asia* [EA], 1999, no. 50).

In the brief moments that I am privileged to speak in this VII FABC Plenary Assembly, I wish to reflect with you on the vision of a renewed Church in Asia and the challenge that it poses to all of us.

The Vision of a Renewed Church

Since their first meetings in 1970 (Manila) and 1974 (Taipei), Asian Bishops have been convinced that God is speaking through the social, religious, and cultural situation of the peoples of Asia, that God is calling the Church to renewal. That is, if the Church is to fulfill her mission of evangelization.

What might this vision of a renewed Church in Asia be? Allow me to recall seven images or movements toward a renewed Church that Asian Bishops have indicated.

(1) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move from passivity and anxiety to active integral evangelization, hence toward a renewal of the sense of mission* (see V FABC Plenary Assembly, Bandung, 1990). We evangelize because we are grateful to God for sharing his own life with us and because we believe that the Gospel is a leaven of social transformation. We evangelize because we believe in Jesus as Lord and Unique Savior and we must witness to him and the Kingdom he proclaims. We evangelize because we believe that "the Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desire of history and civilization, the center of humankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations" (GS, 45; see Rosales and Arevalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia* [FAPA], 1992, pp. 279-81).

To evangelize, the Church cannot be uninvolved in the joys and sorrows of Asian peoples. She cannot be triumphalistic. She has to be a humble companion and partner of all Asians in the common quest for God, in the struggle for justice and harmony, for a better human life. The Church has to be a lowly servant of the Lord and Asian peoples in the journey to God's Kingdom. She has to be a Church of compassion for the weak and the oppressed (see FAPA, pp. 283-84).

(2) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move from an abstract and non-involved universalism to the building of a "truly local Church",* that enfleshes the "Body of Christ in a given people, a given place and time," a church "incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated." It has to be a church "in dialogue with the great religious traditions of our peoples," in "dialogue with the people, especially the poor" (I FABC Plenary Assembly, Taipei, 1974; FAPA, pp. 14-16).

(3) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move from institution to deep interiority.* With interiority the "experience of God's presence and action is intensified and deepened, the heart opened to the fresh outpouring of love, of peace, goodness, gentleness — of all the fruits of the Holy Spirit" (II FABC Plenary Assembly, Calcutta, 1978; FAPA, p. 32). The Church has to become "fully a true community of prayer — a deeply praying community whose contemplation is inserted in the context of our time and the cultures of our peoples today" (FAPA, p. 31). Integrated into everyday life, "authentic prayer has to engender in Christians a clear witness of service and love" (FAPA, p. 34).

(4) *To renew the Church is to move from individualism toward an authentic community of faith* (III FABC Plenary Assembly, Bangkok, 1982). Its communion is rooted in the life of Trinity. It has to be a community of authentic participation and co-responsibility, one with its pastors, and linked "to other communities of faith and to the one and universal communion" of the holy Church of the Lord (FAPA, p. 56). The movement in Asia toward the Basic Ecclesial Community expresses the deep desire to be such a community of faith. At the parish and the diocesan levels, the Church has to be a "community of communities."

(5) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move from clericalism to lay empowerment* (IV FABC Plenary Assembly, Tokyo, 1986). Empowered by the gifts of the Sacraments and their own personal

talents and skills, it is the laity that can ably bring the Good News of Jesus to bear upon the fields of business and politics, of education and health, of mass media and the world of work. This is their common vocation — to be a Gospel leaven in their own milieu. It requires a spirituality of discipleship.

(6) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move from comfortable and uncritical relationships with the rich and powerful to a "Church of the Poor" and a "Church of the young* (Manila, 1970; FAPA, pp. 5-6). "If we are to place ourselves at the side of the multitudes in our continent, we must in our way of life share something of their poverty," "speak out for the rights of the disadvantaged and powerless, against all forms of injustice" (FAPA, *ibid.*). In this continent of the young, we must become "in them and for them, the 'Church of the young'" (FAPA, p. 6).

(7) *To renew the Church in Asia is to move toward active involvement in generating and serving life in Asian societies* (VI FABC Plenary Assembly, Manila, 1995). Asia is barraged by death dealing forces of injustice, conflicts, and inauthentic economic, political, and cultural developments, inexorably pushed by the forces of globalization. The Church responds and offers a vision of authentic life, life with integrity and dignity, life with compassion, and sensitive care of the earth; a vision of participation and mutuality, of a reverential sense of the mystery and the sacred, of peace and harmony, of solidarity. It is a vision of full life promised by Jesus, to be shared with the multitudes of Asia through our authentic discipleship in service to life.

All these dimensions of renewal should make the Church what she claims to be — a true prophet, a countersign to the prevailing situation in Asia, a pointer to the Father and Son and Spirit, a sign of God's Kingdom now here and yet to come. Credibly, the Church must embark on a journey of renewal so as to live a "new way of being Church."

The Challenge of Vision

This is the vision of Church that the FABC has developed in the past 30 years. Is the vision still valid for the third Millennium?

In the light of the Holy Father's post-synodal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, the FABC vision remains valid and urgent. Without any shadow of doubt, the FABC has been very clear and consistent about its confession of Jesus as the One Lord and Savior. It has also been quite clear that its confession of Jesus is to be proclaimed in Asia through the mode of respectful conversation in faith and love, the mode of dialogue. Has not the Holy Father himself acknowledged this when he observed: "The actual celebration of the Synod itself confirmed the importance of dialogue as a *characteristic mode of the Church's life in Asia*" (EA, 3)?

Imperative and urgent, the FABC vision of a renewed Church poses a challenge to the entire life and mission of the Churches in Asia. With the resources that God gives us, we shall resolutely and patiently pursue our mission of evangelization of which the main agent is the Holy Spirit. With our Asian brothers and sisters of other faiths, we shall continue to help transform our Asian realities and bring them closer to the Kingdom of God.

But we must continually discern what image of Church we are projecting to our Asian brothers and sisters. Do they see us embodying the compassionate self-emptying and self-giving of Jesus the Lord who became a humble servant for our sake? To what extent is the Church in Asia inculturated? Are we bringing a Gospel of Life meaningful and understandable to Asian peoples and cultures? Are we a Church of dialogue? Are we a participatory Church where the laity actively play their role of co-responsibility in the life and mission of the Church? Are we a Church of the poor? Do the youth find a home in the Church? Are we, finally, communities of prayer, men and women of God-experience, Spirit-

led people, whose lives bear witness to communion and transcendence?

In the Third Millennium the ultimate challenge is, in the final analysis, the vision of a renewed Church as an authentic disciple-community. The Church in Asia cannot be an effective sign and proclaimer of Jesus and the Kingdom of God, unless she follows the radical and footsteps of the humble Jesus in his own redeeming servant-journey of the Paschal Mystery.

We cannot credibly and effectively do the tasks of proclamation, inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, ecumenical dialogue, human promotion in the light of the complex realities of Asia; unless words are translated into action, belief into life. Or in other words, unless mission stems from profound communion with the Triune God, apostolic action from the wellsprings of profound spirituality of following Jesus-in-mission.

A formidable challenge, indeed. But the Holy Father himself reassures us with the words of Jesus: "'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Lk. 12:32). The Pope continues, "Those who believe in Christ are still a small minority in this vast and most populous continent. Yet far from being a timid minority, they are lively in faith, full of hope and vitality which only love can bring" (EA, 50).

In this VII FABC Plenary Assembly we pray that we may, indeed, be so.

The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000

+ORLANDO QUEVEDO, OMI

"I therefore decree that *the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 will begin on Christmas Eve 1999*, with the opening of the holy door in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, a few hours before the inaugural celebration planned for Jerusalem and Bethlehem...."

"... until *the closing of the Jubilee Year on the day of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 6 January 2001*" (John Paul II, *Incarnationis Mysterium*, Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, Rome, 29 November 1998)."

With the above decree the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, defined the period of the Great Jubilee Year to celebrate the 2000th year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus. It is from Christmas 1999 to Epiphany 2001, a little more than 365 days. Immediately we can see that for the Church a year, a week, a day - time itself - is less temporal and more symbolic, less secular and more sacred. It is easy for the Church to call a day, a "day of the Lord" in "the Year of the Lord...."

This is because when the "fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive

adoption as children" (Gal. 4, 4). With this mystery of the divine Word becoming flesh, our time — the time in which we are born, live, and die — is now to be understood in the light of eternity, the everlasting "time" of God.

Jesus Christ himself, though born in time, is always the timeless God, who is always "I am" (Jn 8,58), the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1,8; 22,13), "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13,8).

The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 reminds us forcefully of the whole "Christ event," his birth, his life, his message, his saving deed in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, his impact on the whole world, his transformation of us into God's children.

Why declare a Jubilee? The tradition goes back to the Old Testament. In the Book of Leviticus Yahweh tells Moses on Mt. Sinai to celebrate a "sabbatical year" (Lev 25, 1-7). After six years of working on their fields and vineyards, the people must observe the seventh year as a year of complete rest for the land. The dominion of Yahweh over all lands is to be recognized.

The same jubilee has to take place every 50th year, a year to be made holy. It should be year of freedom for all slaves, a year of restoring social justice, especially to the poor, a year of forgiveness and love (see Lev 25; Dt 15, 1-18).

The prophet Isaiah spoke of such a time in the future. Yahweh will send the Messiah "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and release to prisoners, to proclaim *the year of the Lord's favor*" (Is 61, 1-2).

It is this passage that Jesus read at the synagogue of Nazareth. He then said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4, 21). In Jesus, the time of forgiveness and reconciliation, peace, justice and love, of liberation and salvation has come.

The Great Jubilee of the 2000th year of the birth of Jesus must then be a time of deep *conversion* for us, from what we are to what we should be — and can be. This was the very message that Jesus proclaimed, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1,15).

The Great Jubilee is a time of *deepening our faith*, a faith that should be able to see the "signs of the times" and to bring the pulse of "our time" in cadence with God's eternity. In our country, so many are the signs of a faith that is not lived — graft and corruption, criminality, the greed for power and wealth, an eroding sense of what is moral and sacral. Faith is an energy to transform ourselves and our society.

The Great Jubilee has to be a time of *loving*, of forgiving others, of sharing and serving, of *doing justice* to one another, of restoring the right order of things in our society, of *caring* once again *for the earth*. It has to be a time of turning away from, and combating, all things that diminish human dignity, especially those of the poor and the needy. "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land" (Dt 15, 11).

St. Paul tells us to lead a life "worthy of the calling" to which we have been called (Eph 4, 1). We have to do this everyday of our lives. Everyday is a journey, a pilgrimage "through Jesus in the Holy Spirit to the Father."

In this pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God, we have become God's adopted children through Baptism. In the waters of Baptism we have been "buried with Christ" but we have also been "raised with him through faith" (Col 2,12; see Rom 6, 4).

Everyday is an opportunity, a grace from the Father in order for us to make progress on the journey. Everyday brings us either closer to the Father or, sadly, farther away from Him. A day in our lives may glorify Him and sanctify us, or tragically the day

may be squandered away in a greedy search for what pleases us rather than God. The pilgrimage is long. It is difficult. It needs hope and trust in God.

Therefore, on this handy and useful diary book, mark every day of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 with some thought of God. Reflect prayerfully on God's word. Be aware of our social situation. Help restore justice to our land; do a loving deed for another person. Use the day to glorify God through your work.

Mark your diary book daily with a grace that you receive in the Spirit from the Father through his Son, Jesus. From his "fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (Jn 1, 16). Be like Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus, in her humble and loving fidelity to God's will. Daily may you magnify the Lord.

Glory to God the Father and to the Son, King of the Universe.

Glory to the Spirit, worthy of praise and all holy.

(St. Gregory of Nazianzus, d. 389)

Concluding Address at the 7th Plenary Assembly of FABC on the 12th January 2000

HENRY D' SOUZA

I am asked to give some concluding remarks at the end of this 7th Plenary of FABC. I have great pleasure to do so because I have really enjoyed the days we have spent here in Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Centre. I am sure that this has been the experience of all the participants. The idyllic surroundings with a happy blend of modern facilities and attractive natural delights of a lake, peacocks and spacious grounds dotted with trees and flowers have helped immensely to make this week-long Plenary a memorable one. We have to be grateful to Cardinal Mitchai who offered us hospitality — his genius as a builder is obvious and breath-taking. Thank you, Your Eminence. We have to thank the Thai Bishops' Conference, in particular Bishop George Phimpisan the President, for the warm welcome and the excellent arrangements planned to the least and last of the details from the Airport to the venue, from the day to day management of meals and room service to the confirmation of tickets, tour arrangements, liturgies, prayer facilities, auditorium and happy hours. I do not know the names of all who have helped — Mr. Chainarong the Vice President of St. John's University, the sisters, the support staff at the office and at the Dining rooms, everyone — to all a big Thank You. By all appearances, this 7th Plenary Assembly has been a great success

from every point of view, including the record attendance of participants and the very valuable and encouraging inputs we have received. The presence of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal J. Tomko, was a sign of the special interest, which the Congregation takes in FABC and its desire to offer it every encouragement. We are also happy for the presence of our other foreign dignitaries as Msgr. Michel of Koln and Fr. Schaluck, the delegate of Missio.

Our daily labours were sanctified by the well-prepared Morning Liturgies and brought to a close with an hour of the restful, soul-soothing prayer of Taize. A very sincere **"Thank You"** for these precious moments to all those who were involved in the Chapel Ministry.

The meeting began with a spectacular film on **"Megatrends Asia"** produced by the Media Commission of Thailand in collaboration with the Office of Social Communications. The film gave a broad perspective within which the reflections and discussions would proceed. This was complemented by the Keynote Address of Archbishop Quevedo. In seven steps for renewing the Church, he challenged the Assembly to move from passive to active evangelization in a spirit of service without triumphalism. He invited the Churches in Asia to move to interiority from institutionalism and to lay involvement and participation in our missionary efforts. We were called to be a servant Church, self-emptying and inculturated in Asia, an authentic disciple Community.

The voice of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples was refreshing to hear. We have been privileged to know of and to believe in Jesus the Saviour, the Word become flesh to proclaim God's love and to make us children of God. Only a strong Christology will enthuse our missionary efforts, even as a weak Christology weakens the sense of mission. He paid rich tribute to Asian missionaries both foreign and local, who have

laboured unstintedly, and even today are totally committed to the great tasks of evangelization even at the cost and risk of their lives.

The thought provoking lecture of Fr. Luis Tagle challenged us to an healthy engagement with the **geography of ideas**, where the cultural, social and human situation gives birth to new forms of renewal. Moreover he encouraged us to dare to dream. In Jesus Christ renewal is already offered and given, whether we reject or receive the gift; the renewal already affects and has an impact in Asia and humanity, and it awaits to be incarnated into the lives of the peoples of Asia, if only we would dare to enter into the mystery accomplished in Jesus Christ.

Fr. S. Arokiasamy spoke on **"the Emerging demands of mission at the turn of the century"**. He sensitized the participants of this 7th Plenary to the various imperatives on the paths of evangelization. They ranged from sharing the faith to witnessing, from the triple dialogue with the poor, cultures and religions to the ecological issues and the claims of peace and harmony. The assembled bishops went into 23 workshops for close and intense discussion, decision and future planning.

An unexpected and interesting item emerged on the first two days when the Assembly was treated to an expose on the Church in China by Bishop Zen the Coadjutor of Hongkong and to the Church in Pakistan by Group Captain Cecil Chowdhury. They opened windows into the life of Churches so little known to most of the Bishops of Asia. The stories of heroism on the part of the simple lay Catholics in China were moving and demonstrated the power of the Spirit in the midst of human weakness. The participants were assisted to look at the Muslim country of Pakistan through the eyes of a practicing Lay Catholic.

By the time the workshop sessions were completed the bishops were only too open to listen to the reports from the FABC Offices. Each report indicated the great variety of ministry in which FABC was involved.

The Office of Evangelization reported on its activities in Mission, Bible, Liturgy and missionary animation of children. The newly appointed Executive Secretary for the Office has begun a regular bulletin entitled "**Proclaim**" and promised a seminar on "**Spirituality and liturgy**" in the near future.

The report of the Office of laity was given by a lady and a young man. Its record across the past 4 years was impressive. The Office has helped to build up awareness at grassroots on the indispensable role of the laity and youth, including women.

The Office of Social Communications used the slide projector and computer technology to convey its message more impressively. A fervent appeal was made for greater awareness of the role of social communications on every level of mission activity and its importance for missionary work and the need for the Church to enter into the culture of the Media. The significant impact of Radio Veritas in the communities of other faiths all over Asia was graphically proven through the million and half letters received over the last 10 years and the 100,000 letters received annually. Its hope was to broadcast the liberating values of the Gospel to the peoples of Asia, not only through its present terrestrial methodology, but even through the use of the new technologies which would make communications more reliable and clearer.

The Office of Theological concerns (OTC) made it clear that it was not an Old Theologians Club but an active and reflective department of FABC promoting Asian Theological reflection on vital topics of concern. The need of a Woman Theologian was still to be implemented to which the lady representatives in the Assembly gave a hearty welcoming "Amen". Asian Theologians should be affirmed by the words of the Pope in *Ecclesia in Asia*. No. 22: "**The Synod expressed encouragement to theologians in their delicate work of developing an inculturated theology, especially in the area of Christology. They noted that "this**

theologizing is to be carried out with courage, in faithfulness to the scriptures and to the Church's Tradition, in sincere adherence to the Magisterium and with an awareness of pastoral realities".

The Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy has been particularly helpful for seminaries and the updating of needs in formation. An Asian Institute for formators is planned and efforts are being made to find a suitable site easily accessible for Asians.

The Office of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs has been very active in giving shape to an Ecumenical vision in Asia. The structural connection between the CCA and the Office has been fruitful with joint meetings being organized during the past 4 years. A study of the recent documents on the **"Gift of Authority"** and the **"declaration on Justification"** is being planned with the Office of Theological Concerns.

The Office of Human Development has gone ahead with its multi-farious activities always looking for an integral evangelization covering the human person in his/her totality. Its various publications are impressive. The Office is deeply conscious that the social involvement of the Church is the most apparent face of Jesus in Asia.

As the workshop reports came to an end, the participants of this 7th Plenary felt a sense of satisfaction even of elation. While there was some comment that the sense of mission was on the wane it was immediately pointed out that this statement had to be qualified. The traditional forms of mission in Asia may not be too evident and perhaps may not be even possible today. But there was a strong engagement with the world in its various dimensions and the new way of being Church was clearly evidenced in the reflections, suggestions and pointers for pastoral action. The participants were ever conscious that the Church did not have the monopoly of Christ's Spirit. In the pluralistic socio-political,

cultural and religious context of Asia, the Church is committed to the gospel of the Kingdom of God and acknowledges that the same Kingdom is at work in the socio-political situations and in the cultural and religious traditions in Asia. In dialogue with the realities, the Church seeks to bring to light the face of Jesus who came to dwell among us by being born in Asia. **"Within the complex realities of Asia, the Church's unique contribution to the peoples of the continent is the proclamation of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the one and only Saviour of all peoples"** (EA no. 10)

The participants recommended more concrete structures so as to have more effective pastoral initiatives. Offices/Committees/desks were proposed for Women, Migrants and refugees, the renewal movements and small communities, the Family, Catholic Professionals and Youth. A permanent institution for seminary formation was also proposed. More attention was demanded to promote missionary associations and societies and the possibility of *Fidei Donum* priests. The erosion of values demanded immediate attention as many of the leaders in Asia were from our own Schools and Colleges. Strengthening Civil Society to monitor the governance of a country and to sharpen the understanding and pursuit of the common good should also be on the agenda during the coming years.

This was indeed a full and challenging Agenda for FABC. It indicated the response of the participants to ask the Church to dare to engage the world — through professionals, through Advocacy, through youth, through Basic Ecclesial Communities, through better-formed priests.

The next meeting of the joint bodies Central Committee, Standing Committee, Chairmen and members of Offices will want to chalk out concrete and time-bound programmes of action.

Neither did the participants forget the sufferings of the Church in East Timor and also in Indonesia and elsewhere. Valuable insights were shared by Archbishop Petrus and Ms. Marilou. A big thank you to them. Solidarity with these Churches and the other Churches which are persecuted or in suffering as in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar where they walk in the midst of fog, mist and storm, was and is assured by our prayers and whatever else may be possible at the level of the individual Conferences and local bishops.

The magnificent display at the stadium in Thammaset University was breath-taking in its precision of planning and execution. Held as a Jubilee 2000 celebration, the concert performance was in honour of the 6th Cycle Anniversary of the Blessed King of Thailand. The massive turnout, the solemn liturgy, the interspersed bands, drill displays and singing, the portrayal of **Salvation History** in light and sound, the thundering full-throated execution of Handel's **Alleluia** and the fireworks won universal acclaim from all the bishops and an admiration for the Church of Thailand, particularly of the Archdiocese of Bangkok. Our sincere Congratulations and warm thanks for a memorable evening.

During the Open Forum, the Assembly was treated to an expose by two lay experts, Mr. Anselm See of S. Korea and Mr. Raj Kumar of India. Both are involved with Pax Romana. They opened up the challenging fields to which Lay Professionals and Intellectuals are invited today. From a silent majority to a critical constructive minority, from being only good Christians in the Church, they were now being invited to become good citizens in society. From the margins of Church and civil societies, they were encouraged to step into the frontiers of the Kingdom of God. Reading the signs of the times, contextualizing their day-to-day spirituality, they would concretize the 3 dialogues of Asia of the poor, of cultures and religion, by a fourth dialogue of life, exercised in their homes, workplaces and public fora. As the Assembly heard these committed and experienced lay experts the new role of

Advocacy and its possibilities became all too apparent. The BBC & SCC could become the primary locus for advocacy. BCCs joined together could become a huge force for renewal in the Church. The scope is unlimited. With the fast changing times the need is all the more urgent to build up advocacy. We need urgently a cadre of laity, globally connected, spiritually rich and culturally rooted. May this dream become an urgent pastoral priority and a reality at the dawn of the new millennium.

This morning's session on ASIPA was encouraging and enlightening. It makes the Assembly understand how to have a new way of bring Church in Asia. The Gospel Sharing methodology of ASIPA opens up a new era of evangelization. We can form a more committed community that is constantly evangelizing itself and going ahead in mission. May the ASIPA methodology receive a new thrust as a primary fruit of this 7th Assembly.

The final statement took up the time and energy of several sessions. The Drafting Committee spent hours in writing and re-writing, confirming and fine tuning sentences, paragraphs, and ideas. A full-throated and enthusiastic applause is due to each of them.

Finally a word of thanks to our ever-green Fr. Ed Malone the Executive Secretary of FABC. The success of this week-long Plenary Assembly and of the FABC itself owes so much to his dedicated, efficient and competent work. A sincere Thank You Fr. Ed Malone.

And so the curtain comes down on this 7th Plenary Assembly of the FABC.

The Millennium Jubilee has begun. Visions and dreams have been articulated and spelt out. Jesus walks with us on our pilgrim journey. Mary his Mother keeps us under her mantle of love and protection. May the prayer of the Holy Father be fulfilled that in this 3rd Christian Millennium a great harvest of Faith will be reaped in this vast and vital continent of Asia.

The Spirituality for Common Living*

CHIARA LUBICH

Distinguished Delegates,
Brothers and Sisters of Every Religion,

My cordial greetings to each and every one of you. And my heartfelt thanks to the Secretary General of the WCRP for having invited me, on behalf of the Assembly Preparatory Committee and the International Executive Committee, to address this Assembly on its final day with some reflections and experiences on the theme: "The Spirituality for Common Living."

First of all, it has been an honor for me to participate in such an important event. During these days, we have felt the weight of an enormous responsibility: that of representing our religious traditions in what is the most decisive challenge of this and the coming millennium: the building of a new and peaceful world.

The different problems examined, the plans of action in favor of peace, the final declaration of this Assembly call us all to a commitment which we might feel is beyond our strength and means.

* Address to the Seventh World Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Amman, Jordan 29 November 1999.

This is why it is essential to keep in mind the great ideals that prompted us to meet because only by believing in these will we be able to face the challenges of the future.

We know that what urged the enlightened founders of the Conference and what continues to draw all of us here is the love of peace. We are here because, like them, we are convinced that, in spite of everything, peace is possible, and that it is the only feasible path for a future worthy of the highest human values.

We are here because we are deeply convinced that working for peace corresponds to our innermost vocation, to the most profound aspirations of the human heart, and, in a word, to our being women and men of religion.

Faced with the great modern challenges of technology, of ethnic conflicts, of poverty and the violation of human rights, "religions must draw forth spiritual strength from within themselves so as to help humanity today and lead it toward solidarity and peace."¹

Each one of us, prompted by his or her own religious faith, is certainly engaged in this bold endeavor. We all have had positive and negative experiences and have shared them with others in these days so as to propose new solutions to problems and to pursue new incentives in favor of peace.

Allow me, then, to offer you my personal experience with people of all ages, languages, races, religions and ethnic groups around the world. It is an experience of common living and common action which can provide a key for building a harmonious and peaceful human society.

Several years ago I was invited to Japan by a large Buddhist lay Movement. Many of its young members asked me a series of

¹ P. Rossano, *Religioni in dialogo per la pace*, Brescia, 1991, p. 161.

questions, one more challenging than the next. One of the questions was:

"In your opinion, what is the meaning of the word 'peace'?"

The notes I had prepared to answer that question contained just a few words: "Peace is the result of unity. When there is unity between ourselves and God, there is inner peace. When there is unity among brothers and sisters, there is peace in the family. When there is unity among peoples, there is peace in the world."

But the young people persisted with other questions: "Yes, unity is important, but how can we accomplish it?" Another brief answer: "To accomplish unity, we must be united to God by doing his will. We need to further unity among generations, and among big and small communities. We need to foster unity between the rich and the poor (promoting by all means some form of sharing); we need to encourage unity among people of different races, of different nations; we need to unite, in so far as is possible, those who follow different religions and different ideologies."

These were the notes I wrote on that occasion with the intention of expanding on this subject later. However, I never had the opportunity. Today might be the moment to do so and to consider them in the light of an experience of life.

The Focolare Movement which I represent has been in existence for over fifty years, yet we continuously marvel at how the spiritual path God has marked out for us crosses all the other spiritual paths. While maintaining its own identity, this path allows us to meet and understand the great religious traditions of humanity.

In other words, as we listened and obeyed the Spirit, we learned an art which is sorely needed in today's world: the *art of loving*.

Eric Fromm, a great psychologist of our times, once wrote: "Our civilization very rarely seeks to learn the art of loving; despite

the desperate search for love, everything else is considered to be more important: success, prestige, money, power. We use almost all our energy in pursuit of these goals and almost none in learning the art of loving."²

This was not the case—thanks to help from Above—for me and millions of people I know. Therefore, I would like to share with you some key points of that art of loving which we have learned and tried to put into practice in family life, in society, within nations and in international relations.

It is an art that we always need to practice and renew. This will give more meaning, indeed, full meaning to everything we do.

The first step, the first understanding we had about this new lifestyle dates back to World War II. Face to face with the collapse of our ideals and the loss of all our material possessions, we felt that we had to cling to something that would not pass away, something that no bomb could destroy: God. We chose him as the only ideal of our life, believing, in spite of everything, in his love as a Father, in his love for all people on earth.

But it was not enough to believe in the love of God, not enough to have chosen him as our Ideal. The Father's presence, his loving care, calls each person to be a true child of his. This means to love the Father in return and to live, day by day, according to the Father's loving plan; in other words, doing his will.

And we know that a father's first wish for his children, all his children, is that they treat each other as brothers and sisters, that they care for and love one another.

This art of loving requires that we love everyone, as God does, making no distinction between people who are pleasant or unpleas-

² Eric Fromm, *L'arte di amare, Il saggiaiore*, Milan, 1971, p. 18.

ant, attractive or unattractive, fellow-citizens or foreigners; black or white or yellow; European or American, African or Asian, Christian or Jew, Muslim or Hindu. To use a familiar expression, we can say that love knows no form of discrimination.

For a Christian, moreover, everyone must be loved because it is Christ whom we love in each person. He himself will one day say to us: "You did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

We found this same faith in the love God has for his creation in many brothers and sisters of other religions, starting with those that trace their roots back to Abraham. These religions affirm the unity of humankind, God's care for all humanity, and the duty of every human being to act, like the Creator, with immense mercy toward all.

A Muslim maxim affirms: "God forgives a hundred times, but he reserves his greatest mercy for those whose piety has spared the smallest of his creatures."³

And what should we say of the boundless compassion for every living being taught by Buddha who said to his first disciples: "Oh Monks, you should work for the well-being of many, for the happiness of many, moved by compassion for the world, for the wellbeing ... of humanity."⁴

This then is the first point of the art of loving: *to love everyone, without exception*. We are called to do this by our religious convictions, by the love that God himself has put into our hearts.

But this love has another characteristic which is known by many because it is affirmed in all the sacred books. If this point alone were practiced, it would be enough to make the whole world one family: to love each person as yourself, to do to others what

³ G.M. Guzzetti, *Islam in preghiera*, Rome, 1991, p. 136.

⁴ Mahagga, 19.

you would have them do to you, and not do to others what you would not have them do to you. It is the so-called Golden Rule, very well expressed by Gandhi when he affirmed: "You and I are one and the same thing. I cannot hurt you without harming myself."⁵

From this principle flows a norm which, if applied, could by itself provide the greatest impetus towards bringing harmony among individuals and groups, within families as well as States. Just think what the world would be like if not only individuals, but also peoples, ethnic groups, and States were to practice the Golden Rule. For example, "Love the other's country as your own."

I was able to share this dream of ours with people involved in politics including some in governmental positions. Results confirm that this message touched many hearts.

However, politicians themselves and all those who have responsibility for the common good need our support. They need to see that there are people of different traditions, cultures and convictions who, going beyond all barriers, are in contact with one another, who look after one another and help one another to face the problems of everyday life.

Another step in the art of loving is perhaps the most demanding of all. It tests the authenticity and purity of love, therefore its real capacity to generate peace. It is to *be first in loving*, that is, not waiting for the other person to take the first step, to be the first to move, to take the initiative.

This way of loving lays us open to risks. However, if we want to love as God does and develop the capacity to love which God has put in our hearts, we must do as he did. He did not wait for us to love him. Rather, he showed us always and in a thousand ways that he loves us first, regardless of our response.

⁵ Quoted from Wilhelm Miihs, *Parole del cuore*, Milan, 1996, p.82.

We have been created as a gift for one another. This is fulfilled when we strive to love our brothers and sisters with a love that is ready to make the first move without waiting to be loved in return. This is what all the great founders of religions teach us with their lives. Buddha, for example, "not only taught non-violence and peace. He stood on the battlefield and personally intervened to prevent war between peoples and religions."⁶

Jesus exemplified this. It was he who said: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13). And he indeed gave his life.

Furthermore, when two or more persons are ready to make the first move toward the other, love becomes mutual, and this is the most solid foundation for peace and unity in the world. It can give life to the universal human family that surpasses a limited notion of an international community, a universal human family in which relationships among individuals, groups, and nations break down whatever divisions and barriers may exist.

Clearly, today whoever wants to move the existing mountains of hatred and violence faces a huge and heavy task. But—this is important—what is beyond the strength of millions of separate, isolated individuals begins to appear possible when people have made reciprocal love, mutual understanding and unity the motivating force of their lives.

There is a reason, a key, and a name for all this. When we of different religions enter into dialogue, that is, when we are open and our dialogue is substantiated by kindness, mutual esteem and respect, we also open ourselves up to God. In the words of John Paul II, "we let God be present in our midst."⁷

⁶ W. Rahula, *L'insegnamento di Buddha*, Rome, 1996, p. 102.

⁷ John Paul II, Discourse to non-Christian representatives in Madras, India, 5 February 1986, *L' Osservatore Romano* (Weekly English Edition) 10 February 1986, p. 14.

This is the result of our mutual love and the hidden force giving vigor and success to our efforts for peace. The Gospel announces to Christians that if two or more are united in genuine love, Christ himself, who is Peace, is present among them and therefore in each one of them. And what greater guarantee than the presence of God, what greater opportunity can there be for those who want to be instruments of brotherhood and peace?

Mutual love and unity give great joy to those who practice it. However, it calls for commitment, daily training and sacrifice. And this is where a particular word in the language of Christians appears striking and luminous. It's one that the world does not want to hear, a word it considers foolish, absurd, futile. This word is the cross.

Nothing good, nothing useful, nothing fruitful for the world can be achieved without meeting and accepting weariness and suffering; in a word, without the cross.

Dedicating one's life to the cause of peace is a commitment not to be taken lightly! It calls for courage, for knowing how to suffer.

Actually, was it not the memory of the pain and suffering of World War II that gave rise to the United Nations?

And was it not the memory of the absurd sufferings people inflicted on one another, and the desire to heal all conflicts precisely in the name of religion, that gave life to the World Conference on Religion and Peace?

But let's go back to the "art of loving." There is one last point I would like to tell you about which teaches us how to put into practice true love toward others.

It consists of three little words: *make yourself one*.

"Making ourselves one" with others means making their worries, their thoughts, their sufferings, their joys, our own.

"Making ourselves one" applies first of all to interreligious dialogue. It has been written that: "to know the other's religion implies walking in the other's shoes, seeing the world as he or she sees it, grasping what it means for the other to be Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, etc."⁸

"Living the other," furthermore, embraces all aspects of life and is the greatest expression of love:

- because by living in this way we are dead to ourselves, to our ego and to all attachments;
- because we can achieve "nothingness of self to which great spiritualities aspire, and become empty of self out of love by welcoming the other;
- because we give space to the other, who will always find room in our heart;
- and because we will relate to others always open to learning from them because we really do have something to learn.

Clearly, all this is not only kindness and understanding; it is not just a method to promote "interpersonal relationships," or a strategy for consensus building or for selling one's agenda. Love has only one goal: to give of itself completely and selflessly.

This is not a Utopia. For more than half a century millions of people have tried to live like this. It can be considered an example of that common living in the name of religion which is the very title of this Assembly.

⁸ Cf. F. Whaling, *Christian Theology and World Religions: A Global Approach*, London, 1986, pp. 130-131.

I have endeavored to share with you the cornerstones of a spirituality, which, although born in one church, in one particular religion, is universal and can be lived, in one way or another, by everyone.

In fact, this spirituality has given rise to a number of fruitful dialogues: with Christians from many churches, with believers of different religions and people of many cultures. Together we move toward the fullness of truth for which all of us strive.

Because of this spirituality, men and women of almost every nation of the world are slowly but surely trying to be, in their environments, seeds of a new people, of a world at peace, a more united world, people committed especially to those who are the weakest, the poorest.

Because of this spirituality, we felt the responsibility to be present here in this meeting among believers of different religions to contribute to the efforts which all people of good will are making in favor of peaceful co-existence.

But, in order to demonstrate how the dream of the art of loving can come true, and to confirm from experience what has been said, let me mention two worldwide initiatives.

One is in the political world. It gathers hundreds of politicians of every party, nation and culture in order to focus on the greatest human values and promote them in government and society. This initiative supports in a non-partisan way all efforts, in both national and international relationships, aimed at bringing about in the legislative and social realms values such as justice, peace, and solidarity.

There is a general consensus on the part of leading figures in international life on the need to re-articulate the meaning of reciprocity and to make it one of the cornerstones of international relations. It is a reciprocity which calls us to go beyond the old

or new logic of particular alliances, and establish instead relations with all, as true love requires. It asks us to take the initiative, without pre-conditions and expectations. It leads us to see the other as our other self and therefore to view every type of initiative in these terms, whether it concerns disarmament, development, or cooperation.

It is a reciprocity that can lead those actively involved in international concerns to identify with others and with their needs and potential; not only in emergency situations but in the circumstances of everyday life.

It is not enough to exclude war. Conditions must be created wherein people can love the other's country as they love their own, in a reciprocal, unselfish exchange of gifts.

The second concrete initiative is taking place in many countries and is aimed at uprooting poverty and injustice. It involves entrepreneurs and workers. It is the economy of sharing: a system of business management that requires not only competence, but a keen sense of solidarity with all and, in particular, with those most in need. In the economy of sharing, profits are divided into three parts. One part is reinvested in the business; another part is given to the poor, and a third part is used to form people in this lifestyle, people renewed by love. There are now 700 such businesses throughout the world.

These are two small examples of how the art of loving can be applied with surprising results in the fields of politics and economics.

Thank you for your kind attention.

May God, the Father of all, bless those who are working "at the closing of the century and for the coming millennium, to build a civilization worthy of the human person,"⁹ a civilization of love.

⁹ John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano* (Weekly English Edition), 11 October 1995, p. 10.

The Mission of the Order Today: The Vision of Our Constitutions, General Chapters and Letters of the Master of the Order

CHRIS MCVEY, OP

Introduction: I have been asked to speak about the mission of the Order in the vision Constitutions, General Chapters, and Letters of the Master of the Order. To do so in a comprehensive way in a limited amount of time, demands some selectivity. I would like to begin at the beginning of the history of what MH Vicaire describes as 'the first strictly missionary order in the Church.' The founding of the Order was conditioned by circumstances, but especially by one person's response to these circumstances. 'It is,' writes Vicaire, 'in St. Dominic's *own heart* that we have to look for the first stage towards the founding of the Friars Preacher.' The Master, in his most recent letter, describes Dominic's whole life as 'moulded by response to situations he never anticipated. This merciful man was at the mercy of others, vulnerable to their needs' (*Letter to Our Brothers and Sisters in Initial Formation*, IDI, 373, May 1999).

St. Dominic: According to Vicaire, Dominic's most striking gift was this compassion: his vulnerability to the sufferings of others. It is this vulnerability and sensitivity to the needs of others that determined the very structure of the order he founded: Dominic wept, and the Order was born. One writer has stated that it was

not just the presence of universities that sent early Dominicans into the cities but also a desire to be 'brothers' to the dislocated poor (M Hellwig, 'Mendicant Orders,' *Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*). Jordan of Saxony described Dominic as 'a gospel man,' and Vicaire develops this image by distinguishing two initial apostolic moments: one, 'mission,' the other, 'communion,' and identifies both in Dominic's structuring of the Order. From 'mission,' he took the office and name of preacher, insisted the friars travel two by two on foot, that they make profession to the Master of the Order and not to Rule or Book, and that they daily abandon themselves to Providence. From 'communion' he derived common life, public liturgy, study, formation in mutual inter-dependence, the role of chapters and common observance. (Cf. his *The Genius of St. Dominic*, ed by Peter B. Lobo OP, Nagbut, Dominican Publications, nd)

Above all, as a gifted organizer, he had a sense of the Church: an awareness of its structures, its needs, its unity, but especially, its possibilities. It is this awareness of possibilities that led him — in Liam Walsh's phrase — 'to stretch the canonical categories,' by founding a community, not of monks or canons, bound to one place, but 'friars,' whose 'cloister,' as one contemporary critic complained, 'was the world.' His Order was to be a group of preachers with a universal mission, not delegated by a bishop or subordinate to him within his diocese, but preachers by profession in the Order of Preachers, thus becoming, as the Fundamental Constitution states (n III): 'consecrated totally to God and in particular... dedicated in a new way to the universal Church, being appointed entirely for the complete evangelization of the Word of God.' There is a demanding wholeheartedness in this description, reminiscent of a character in a Walker Percy novel who looks back at his life as he contemplates a lazy cat: 'All at once he realized where he had gone wrong, there was the cat sitting in the sun 100% cat, and as for himself, he had never been 100%

anything in his whole life' We, as Dominicans, have no other choice than to be 100% our whole lives.

The Fundamental Constitution: It is remarkable to see how these initial impulses have remained part of our legislation. Fundamental Constitution I quotes Honorius III's letter to Dominic: '...You have given yourselves to the proclamation of the Word of God, preaching the name of Jesus throughout the world.' It is for this reason that the Order 'is known from the beginning to have been instituted especially for preaching and the salvation of souls,' so that the brothers must follow 'in the footsteps of the Saviour as gospel men speaking among themselves or their neighbors either with God or about God' (n II). The very structure of the Order 'arises from its mission and fraternal communion' (n VI) and these elements in our life 'contribute not only to the glory of God and our sanctification, but serve directly the salvation of humankind, since they prepare harmoniously for preaching, furnish its incentive, form its character, and in turn are influenced by it' (n IV). Mention is also made in the FC (n V) of 'the prophetic office' as 'our special function,' and of the 'universal character' of the Order deriving from its mission.'

The Constitution: In the Constitutions, mission is considered the 'universal mission of preaching,' and LCO 30-31 links this with the need for 'apostolic poverty,' in fact and spirit, so that 'we ourselves may be conquerors of greed by conformity with Christ.' What this means is 'a frugality which unites us more closely with the poor to be evangelized... (and) a liberality toward the brothers and our neighbors, since for the kingdom of God, especially for the needs of study and of the ministry of salvation, we gladly spend our resources...' (31,11). The purpose of our study 'should aim principally and ardently at this, that we might be able to be useful to the souls of our neighbors' (77,1). Our ministry of the Word is 'a prophetic task' (99,1), and brothers are sent to all, but 'especially the poor' (98,1). For our ministry to be effective, 'it

is necessary not only to consider the circumstances and aspirations of those whom we address, but also to establish a living relationship with them... Consequently, the brothers should learn to recognize the Spirit working in the midst of the people of God, and to perceive the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, by which human nature is more fully revealed, and new paths are opened to truth' (99, II).

Also of importance is what LCO says preaching and our mission as 'a *communitarian* task, pertaining primarily to the whole community' (100,1), so that 'the whole community becomes responsible for it' (100,111). Other constitutions urge cooperation with the bishop (101,1), with other priests and religious (101,11) and with the laity (101,111). *Collaboration* with those of good will is also urged upon the brethren, as well as the study of the human virtues and methods of dialogue required for such cooperation (101,IV). The Constitutions recommend particular concern for the religious and human problems of the poor (109,1) and a relevance in order to respond more suitably to their needs (109,11). Brothers should, in addition, discern those values which provide 'pathways toward a more vivid perception of God' as found in changing society, whether, 'from the advance of the sciences, the arts, or human culture' (110).

Recent General Chapters: General Chapters are wonderful gatherings and I have been blessed to have been part of three of them, one elective (Rome), one of provincials (Oakland), and as one of three moderators of a chapter of diffinitors (Calaruega). It is hard to communicate the experience of brotherhood, or the enthusiasm, excitement and hope that is generated in general chapters. Some of this can, however, be discovered in the *Acta* of each chapter — and surely one of our greatest faults is that these do not find greater distribution in communities — or if they do, that so few of us actually read them. The *Acta* not only provide direction for the future but also fairly good indications of where the Order is at a given moment.

Quezon City (1977) defined four priorities for the Order. Acknowledging the fact of pluralism, QC gave as first priority, *catechesis in diverse cultures and places*. Aware that this new and different situation called for a new approach, the chapter identified the second as, *our own political-cultural policy*, i.e., the training and preparation required for preaching in this new world. The third priority was *social justice*, and the fourth, *use of the media* as a way of proclaiming the gospel.

Walberberg (1980) addressed *the adaptation of our apostolic activities according to the needs of today*, and offered some 'specific notes' Dominican mission and preaching should have. This should be *prophetic*, addressing today's questions: 'Our preaching was most effective when the Order knew how to discern the signs of the times during turbulent periods of history' (W 17,A,1). These signs today are the cries of the poor, the oppressed, the dejected, the crucified and those who suffer persecution: in them God speaks (W 17,A,1). Preaching is made credible by *poverty*. The two are so intimately connected that poverty is not only abnegation but also witness, a sign of authenticity in a world where the division between rich and poor grows daily. 'In such a world, if we seem to have more contact with the rich than the poor, our preaching is no worthy of belief' (W 17,A,2). Our preaching should be marked by *compassion*. It is only compassion that can lead us to humility in our preaching, by which we listen as well as speak, receive as well as give... are evangelized as well as evangelize (W 17,A,3). Dominican preaching is always founded on a deep and scientific *study of theology*. 'Today, amid growing poverty and the scandal of injustice, our theological reflection ought to prepare us to penetrate the profound significance of these things in the mystery of divine providence, and help us find the best way to communicate the gospel' (W 17,A,4). We also made a brave statement on the intellectual and academic freedom required for theological investigation.

The elective chapter of *Rome* (1983) was a very dramatic one, with the election of Albert Nolan and the discussion that resulted in a brave statement of support for Fr. Schillebeeckx — at that moment under investigation by the CDF — as well as for Pere Chenu and Cingar, thanking them for their service to the Order and to the Church, 'notwithstanding difficulties,' and proposing them as models for the young. Both these events had a powerful influence on the chapter's direction. Although the chapter considered Africa, Latin America and Asia, it declared the word, 'missions,' to be obsolete, and it is in Rome that we began to speak of 'the mission of the Order' (R,c III).

At *Avila* (1986), in the country of Dominic himself, 'man of the frontier,' the chapter went one step further, and affirmed as the *specific mission* of the Order *evangelization on the frontiers*. And it named those frontiers where we are to be and live out our charism. There is a conscious ordering among them, which I hadn't noticed, but which Felicísimo Martínez, describes as based on those situations which are furthest removed from the impact of the gospel, the first being, *the frontier between life and death* of the challenges of justice and peace. This is the criterion which verifies our mission. Without this commitment our preaching is hollow. The second is *the frontier between humanity and inhumanity* or the great challenge of the marginalised. Without this solidarity with the marginalised, we can neither preach nor experience the reign of God. The third frontier is *Christian experience* of the challenge of the great world religions. Without questioning our traditional concepts, models and attitudes about mission and evangelization it is not possible to enter into dialogue with believers of other faith traditions. Dominic's goal of mission was to go beyond the boundaries of established Christianity. This is still the challenge. *The frontier of religious experience* or the challenge of secular ideologies is the fourth. Many questions raised by modern thought remain unanswered; what is necessary today is a theological

dialogue with the ideologies which attempt to answer some of these questions. The final frontier is the *frontier of the Church* or the challenge of other Christians and the sects. Unity of believers is a noble goal but there is also a richness within the different Christian traditions that is a challenge to reconciliation and dialogue (A,I,22,1-5).

Oakland, in 1989, spoke of preaching as 'the distinctive sign and constitutive reality of our Order,' and recalled the words of Damian Byrne, who said, 'We are a reminder to the whole Church of the importance of preaching...' *Oakland* challenged us: 'Do we hear the call coming from the world of today?' Are we not rather 'in need of a profound conversion if we want to discover the truthfulness of our life, the strength and full meaning of our vocation as preachers?' This conversion *O* described as a conversion from 'comfort and security (which) produce a mentality opposed to any change.' We must recapture 'Dominic's spirit of itinerancy and mobility... and rediscover that poverty which frees us for the Spirit and makes us open to the cries of those in misery.' Quoting *W* (77,e), *O* asks if we are truly convinced that 'we can only reach human beings in their totality by working together as men and women, brothers and sisters...?' (*O* 43,1) The chapter reminds us of the need of humility before the mystery of truth: without that humility before God's Word and before God's people, we can do great harm.

The chapter draws several consequences from what it means to preach today. 'Like Dominic, we are not afraid to listen to God's Word as it unfolds in today's changing world. We are called by our preaching to aid in the building of a culture of truth and relationship to replace a culture of lies... to discern what is dying and what is coming to life, what is salvation and what is not, what is truth and what is illusion or lie.' The chapter 'accepts the consequences of living dialogically in a pluriform world...' and recognizes study of this world to be of utmost necessity: 'It is a

world that invites us, for we are called especially to those areas of need in which the Church finds it difficult to respond.' (O 43, I-II) As Fr. Schillebeeckx has said, 'to do good theology one must listen to many voices.'

The 1992 Elective Chapter in *Mexico City*, in the chapter on Preaching (Caput IV) begins with a consideration of the actual situations and challenges to the apostolic life in the Order: secularization and the spiritual quest; ecumenical and interreligious; inculturation; justice and peace; media; the mission of the Order in Europe; new foundations. 'Our willingness (to meet these challenges) is born of a confidence that somewhere in the Dominican heart are the requirements to meet this urgent calling. The seeds of our tradition are ready to burst forth again into flower if only there are courageous and generous hearts to house them.' MC emphasises four strengths from our tradition: 1. *Mobility* = Readiness to move without excessive material, cultural or intellectual baggage; 2. *Respect and Concern for Others* = Readiness to meet people where they are; 3. *Openness* = Welcoming others to join and preach with us; readiness to listen and learn; 4. *Community* = We never act alone (MC 51).

The chapter also offers a general policy about *new foundations*: 'Our religious vows are considered *missionary vows* in that they require of us a willingness to serve the universal Church in all parts of the world. Also, at the beginning, Dominic dispersed his friars so that they might commit themselves wherever the demands were most urgent. This is why we... retain this same freedom in respect to buildings, even structures, and to be constantly ready to be transferred: *mobility must remain a characteristic of the Order in the service of its mission.*' Mexico City also described new invitations for foundations as 'testing the health of our provinces,' in that they challenge us to rethink present apostolates in order to respond to new situations of mission. Criteria for choosing new foundations are also given: 'We should choose those places where

prophetic preaching, solidarity with the poor, teaching and theological formation are possible and needed... (MC 104).

Calaruega (1995) describes today's challenge to preaching as a culture of the 'heart of stone,' and adds new elements to this analysis of contemporary society: non-Christian religiosity, nihilism and post-Christian culture; violence and fear; tribalism, nationalism, racism; the power of the 'all-embracing market,' and allied to this, individualism. In the Dominican response, the chapter discerns an incarnational pattern, which it sees as a model of what it will mean to be a preacher in the 21st century. These three elements of evangelization are 1. *Commitment to sharing the lives of those to whom they wish to speak about Christ*; 2. The second stage follows this implantation, when brothers *engage in critical theological reflection, searching for the meaning of the Word of God*; 3. The third stage is one in which *more outgoing apostolic activity is possible, projects are planned, executed, and assessed*. (C 20.7)

Against the background of the four priorities and preceding chapters, the chapter examines anew three dimensions of Dominican life: *poverty, itinerancy, and dialogue*. By *poverty*, we learn to speak the language of the marginalised and, deprived of those goods which correspond to human dignity, we are empowered to proclaim the word of compassion. *Itinerancy* is not merely a spatial concept involving readiness to travel, but a *mobility* that is social, cultural, ideological and economic. This is not to be understood as an additional priority, but rather an aspect of Dominican spirituality which must inform all our attempts to pursue the four priorities. Citing the example of Dominic and Thomas, who preferred conversation and teaching, the chapter demands that 'every Dominican should see *dialogue* as a way of life demanding openness and readiness to adapt in our search for truth. As a preparation for a *life of dialogue*, we should avoid all temptations to sectarian ways of thought, and cultivate a deep sense of compassion and belonging to every person and situation in the world. // *is meeting the other*

on the journey of life that leads us in the path of truth.' The section concludes with remarks on three main areas of dialogue: ecumenical, inter-faith, and cultural (C 20.8-13).

Bologna (1998) was the inheritor of previous chapters, in that the theme of the chapter itself was the *Mission of the Order*. This mission 'class the Order to go courageously beyond those frontiers that separate poor from rich, women from men, (and from) diverse Christian faith communities and other religions.' The chapter situates this mission at the fault lines (in Pierre Claverie's words, *les lignes de fracture* = the lines of brokenness) of humanity, 'which go across our world so often marked by injustice and the violence of racial, social and religious conflicts.' Our Order 'seeks to discover the truth of the presence of Jesus in encounters with *the other*. Our mission in service of *the whole truth* toward which only the Spirit... can lead us, requires of us an openness to dialogue, by which we place ourselves at the service of *the other*, ready to listen to them and to let ourselves be transformed by them — and to give our lives so that our brothers, our sisters, may live' (B 33). In the words of St. John Chrysostom, patron of preachers, 'It might be possible for a person to love and not risk danger, but this is not the case with us.'

Not for the first time, the chapter describes the qualities of mission. It is a mission *shared* with brothers and sisters of the Order. It is a mission which *seeks dialogue* with different cultures and religions on all the continents. It is an *intellectual mission* which is rooted in the study and contemplation of the Word of God, and which receives its dynamism from *compassion* (B 33).

Letters of the Master of the Order: We will consider Timothy's letters to the Order, but it would not really be just to omit the influence of *Vincent de Couesnongle* and *Damian Byrne*. It is their vision of family and of mission that has led us to where we are now. Fr. Vincent described Dominic's desire to go to the Cumans

as 'a frame of mind, a power, a driving force in what is deepest in us, which always leaves us dissatisfied with what we are and what we do.' And he asked, 'If that cry of Brother Dominic — / *am going to the Cuman* — were alive in us, if it tormented us all the time, would not our communities, and our life with God for other people be totally different from what they are?' (Cf. his *Confidence for the Future*, Dublin: DP, 1982) The writer, Charles Peguy, believed 'All of us stand on the breach. We are all stationed at the frontier. The frontier is everywhere.' That may well be true, but it requires a frame of mind of 'mental itinerancy' to recognize a frontier for what it is. To my mind, it was Damian who had a broad sense of the accomplishments of the Order, how one thing leads to another, and of the possibilities that exist. In a talk in Manila in 1987, he spoke of Dominic's three concerns: the poor (for whom he sold his books), *sinner*s (for whom he groaned and wept during long vigils), and the *unevangelized* (to whom he sold his books), and how these concerns are expressed in the different congresses of Dominican women and men. These, in turn, have had their effect on general chapters. The First International Mission Congress in Madrid in 1973 influenced the 1974 chapter of Naples' legislation extending voting rights to mission vicariates.

The Second Congress in Madrid in 1982 influenced Rome in 83, and the deliberations of the Third Congress in Mexico City in 91 found their way into the Mexico City Chapter of 92 (The Message from Recent Congresses and Chapters,' *The Dominican Mission Here and Now*, ed. Fausto Gomez, OP, Manila: UST, 1988), This process is ongoing. The report of the meeting of the commission *de Missione Ordinis* presented to the Bologna chapter can be clearly seen in the *Acta*, and the Congress on Interfaith Dialogue to be held for the Order in Thailand in 2001 will surely influence the theme and discussion of the general chapter to be held at Providence College in the same year.

Timothy Radcliffe, Shortly after his election, was asked by a journalist what he would look for in someone joining the Order. He replied, 'A certain *passion for life*; a wish to share the life of the poor; to passionately understand the scriptures... that he want passionately to care for people. *To want something passionately*: that would be the start' (Desmond O' Grady, OSV, 2 May 93). If there is one word that describes Timothy it is this word, passion, and his passion enlivens everything he writes. His *Letters*, as far as I know, go through three or four drafts. They are delights, treasure-houses for community study or for pilfering by indigent retreat-masters. They are everything you would expect - and more - for they also reveal the heart of a man passionately in love with the Order.

It is this passionate concern for others (another word for 'mission') that is the leitmotif of the letters. He has written on the Vows (*Vowed to Mission*: 1994), on study (*The Wellspring of Hope*: 1996), on Government (*Dominican Freedom and Responsibility*: 1997), and on Community (*The Promise of Life*: 1998). The newest letter to the Order is on Formation (*Letter to Our Brothers and Sister in Initial Formation*: 1999). From the letters, we can catch some of his fire for mission. In the first letter, he states his intention: 'If we are to face the immense and exciting challenges of today, and renew that sense of the *adventure* of religious life, then we will have to look at many aspects of our life as an Order...' In this letter on the *Vows*, he explores only one question: 'How can the vows that we have made be a source of life and dynamism, and sustain us in our preaching?' 'The vows,' he writes, 'are means towards us becoming people who are truly *missionary*.' The vows are '—ther-centered,' ordered to *caritas*, and are themselves a preaching and a counter-cultural witness. *Obedience*, he describes as 'an openness of the mind,' a careful listening and a self-giving to common projects. *Chastity*, besides making us free and mobile for the mission of the Order, helps us to love

each other as friends, to be *unpossessive* yet *generative* in creating equality. *Poverty* he links with the eucharist: 'To ask how we may and should be poor, is to ask how we should live eucharistically,' becoming *invisible*, *vulnerable*, aware of the giftedness of everything in our life (*Vowed to Mission*, IDI, 319, April 1994). Bishop Paul Andreotti OP, some years before he died, gave wise advice to Italian and American friars in Pakistan. To those of us chose to remain he asked us to be very clear about our motivation: 'I believe what Jesus is offering us is a way of dying.'

'A life of study is one of the ways in which we may grow in that love which *bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things*' (1 Cor 13.7). In his letter on *Study*, he declares it time 'to renew the love affair between the Order and study... To study is itself an act of hope, since it expresses our confidence that there is a meaning to our lives and the sufferings of our people.' And the Annunciation, he sees a 'a powerful symbol of what it means to be a student,' distinguishing three moments: the moment of *attentiveness*; the moment of *fertility* ('Houses of study should be like maternity ward!'); and when people were without hope, God gives this third moment of *hope for the future*. 'True study,' writes Timothy, 'makes mendicants of us.' We are led to the thrilling discovery that we do not know what this text means, that we have become ignorant and needy, and so we wait, in intelligent receptivity for what will be given. 'Pascal's *dictum* about 'three degrees of latitude reverse[ing] the whole of jurisprudence,' is true of theology as well, and one of the most intriguing passages in the letter, and most important in a context of mission, is the section on 'The Breaking of Idols,' where, for Timothy, 'Teaching theology is not just a matter of communicating information, but of accompanying students as they face the loss of God, the disappearance of a well-known and loved person, so as to discover God as the source of all who has given himself to us in his Son. Then we can indeed say, Blessed are those who mourn; they shall be comforted' (The

Wellspring of Hope - Study and the Annunciation of the Good News, IDI, 337, January 1996).

The letter on Government (*Dominican Freedom and Responsibility*, IDI, 353, July-August 1997) also has an incarnational basis: 'All government within the Order has as its goal the bringing forth of the Word of God, the prolongation of the Incarnation. The test of good government is whether it is at the service of this mission... Our democratic institutions enable us to grasp responsibility or to evade it. We can elect superiors who may dare to ask more of us than we feel we may give, or we choose a brother who will leave us in peace.'

In this first section on 'Freedom for Mission,' (1.1), he concludes, '...If mission is the end of all government, then what is its beginning? ...If government is the exercise of responsibility, then this ultimately expresses our response to the one who has revealed his glory to us. Contemplation of the only begotten Son is the root of all mission, and so the mainspring of all government. Without this stillness there is no movement. All government brings us from contemplation to mission. Without it, then we practice mere administration.' After addressing basic principles, he moves on to consideration of the different levels of government. And in this final section on the *wider common good* (3.4.b), he speaks of the Master's duty to promote the unity of the Order where it is weak, and in houses under his immediate jurisdiction. 'Many brethren,' he writes, 'especially the young, have a deep and growing sense of this common mission of the Order to which we are called. How then,' he asks, 'we are to deepen our participation in the common mission of the Order?' This asks of us that we 'grow together in the grace and truth of the Incarnate Word.' 1. "We are called to the utter gracious generosity of the Word... (This) implies the redefinition of the priorities of the province in the light of the needs of our common mission"; 2. 'It demands of us that we live in truth... We have made profession to the Master of the Order for

the Order's mission... Sometimes we must express our deepest identity as Dominicans by being released for the mission beyond the boundaries of our province'; 3. 'It asks of us that we truthfully seek to know what our resources are for the common mission. This requires of us great mutual trust... But ultimately our common mission demands of us trust and mutual confidence, grace and truth.'

The first part of Timothy's letter on community, *The Promise of Life* (IDI, 361, April 1998), begins with his commenting on the 'abundant life,' promised in Jn 10.10, and the creating of a Dominican 'ecosystem' to foster this abundant life. *Apostolic life*, *affective life* and the *life of prayer* belong to the fullness of any life that is truly human and Dominican. This leads him to frame a basic question: 'How can we help each other as we face transformation, so as to become apostles of life?'

The apostolic life and preaching is, as Yves Congar said, 'a vocation that is the substance of my life and being.' The apostolic life is our way of life, but it is a life that 'necessarily tears us apart. This is its pain and the source of its fertility. For the Word of God, whose life the apostles share, reaches out to all that is farthest from God and embraces it... The life of God is stretched open to find a space for all that we are; he becomes like us in all things but sin. He takes upon himself our doubts and fears; he enters into our experience of absurdity, that *wilderness* in which all meaning is lost. So for us to live the apostolic life fully is to find that we are too are torn open, stretched out. To be a preacher... is to bear within our lives that distance between the life of God and that which is furthest away, alienated and hurt... We have no word which offers meaning to people's lives, unless we have been touched by their doubts, and glimpsed the abyss' (1.1).

'So,' writes Timothy, 'the apostolic life does not offer us a balanced and healthy "lifestyle," with good career prospects. It unbalances us, tips us into that which is most other. If we share the life of the Word of God in this way, then we are hollowed out, opened up, so that there is the space and silence for a new word to be born, as if for the first time.' Later in letter, he quotes Meister Eckhart: *Stand firm, and do not waver from your emptiness.* It is this kind of tension the apostolic life invites us to live. 'We have promised to build our lives with our Dominican brothers and sisters. *For us henceforth to be human, to be ourselves, is to be one of the preaching brethren, we have no other life-story.* Here is our home and we can have no other. But the impetus of the apostolic life propels us into *different worlds.*'

Timothy's newest letter — perhaps because written as encouragement for those in initial formation — offers an overview of Dominican life and mission and recapitulates many previous themes. Thus, our life is '*response*' to a 'threefold call' from the Risen Lord, from the brethren and sisters, and from 'the demands of mission.' In this life, following the Risen Lord means '*passing through moments of loss,*' yet 'we have to lose Christ if we are to find him again... We have to let him go, be desolate, grieve for his absence, so that we may discover God closer to us than we could ever have imagined. If we do not go through that experience, then we will be stuck in a childish and infantile relationship with God.' 'To be a preacher is to share [like Mary Magdalene] all the moments in the Easter garden: *desolation, interrogation, revelation.*'

He speaks of what it means to be a brother, how the tensions among are 'ultimately fruitful and necessary for the vitality of the Order,' for this helps us 'take the road again.' What 'holds us together is way of life which allows for great diversity and flexibility, *a common mission*, and form of government that gives a voice to each person.' Yet 'our common mission has priority

over my private agenda.' 'Becoming a preacher... is being formed as someone who can hear the Lord, and speak a word that offers life.' 'The Order... is a life that forms [us]as... preacher[s],.. and make[s] us capable of *attention and proclamation* in ways that we cannot anticipate.' He speaks of this as '*a formation in compassion*, an education of the heart and the mind that breaks down everything within us that is stony-hearted, arrogant and judgmental' (*Letter to Our Brothers and Sisters in Initial Formation*, IDI, 373, May 1999). All of the Master's emphases reoccur in this letter, slightly nuanced: conversion, a passionate caring; adventure, risk, itinerancy, identity, 'taking to the road again'; compassion vulnerability, pain and loss; stillness, attentiveness and openness to the *Other*; revelation, sharing discoveries, encouragement, a word of hope, meaning; a communitarian word.

The Challenge: I would like to end by quoting from the *Report of the Commission de Missione Ordinis*. 'We can have the impression that some of us undertake a prudent evaluation of each without favoring their present engagements and, if it is appropriate, to give up with generosity those engagements which, however good they may be, hinder the renewal of the apostolate in our provinces and houses?' The question is thus posed to each brother and to each community: from what must we free ourselves? By what means can we make ourselves more available for *missio*?' (4.3.2. *Beyond the Bounds*).

"Whoever hears not the music, thinks the dancers mad." When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is always created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure, who are willing to take risks. And whom others think reckless and mad. People thought Jesus *out of his mind* (Mk 3.21), so far from the norms, so eccentric was his behaviour. If we have to be "fully here and fully somewhere else," in this world, perhaps we need to be a bit more abnormal, more eccentric, unbalanced and off-centre. What are we doing now which can make others

thinks we are out of our minds? Were we living what we preach, were our lives a true service of the gospel, throwing us unto the roads beyond frontiers, then we might be seen as *out of our minds*, and a touch of gospel madness joyfully dwell in us' (4.3.3. *A Final Word: Madness*).

The vision of the Constitutions, General Chapters and the Master gives an indication of where we as an Order are now and also a description of the different worlds where we should be. This vision gives us, in summary, the *What*, *Why*, *Where* and *How* of the Order's mission.

What: It is a universal mission of preaching, incarnational, responding to contemporary needs; it is a mission with others; and a mission that is an adventure, always new and creative.

Why: We are gospel men; for us it is a question of identity, which comes to us from our usefulness to others; the vows are by their nature missionary, and the task is urgent: hope to the broken and building relationship.

Where: On the frontiers, often beyond the boundaries of one's own province, on the lines of brokenness, often in the wilderness, in solidarity with the poor, the sinner, the unevangelized.

How: By acknowledging our own need of conversion; by our humility before the truth of others and being willing to learn, by being discerning and attentive students; by our poverty — which makes us itinerant and mobile — thus able to be passionately concerned about others; and by our own vulnerability and readiness to die to old truths to discover the truth of God at work in our world. By our 'standing firm, and not wavering from our emptiness.'

This is where the Order is now and where it wants to go. Where do we stand, as a province, against this vision? Here are some aids to reflection:

1. Do I/we acknowledge my/our own need of conversion? From what?
2. How do I identify myself? My province? On what does my/our identity depend?
3. Where am I/Are we on the lines of brokenness?
4. In my present mission, where is the urgency, the passion, the adventure? Where is the madness?
5. Who are my Cumans?
6. What do I/we have to die to in order to live?

Philippine Episcopology - Addenda-Corrigenda, 1999

CHARLES BRANSOM, JR.

The following list updates entries in the "Philippine Episcopology" previously published in the *Boletin* and continues the "Episcopology" with the details of the episcopal ordinations of those bishops consecrated subsequent to the final installment and the previous lists of Addenda-Corrigenda.

- N. 108 **Manuel Mascarinas y Morgia** - resigned from Tagbilaran 3 July 1976.
- N. 146 **Antonio Mabutas y Lloren** - died at Davao City 22 April 1999.
- N. 155 **Julio Xavier Labayen, O.C.D.** - the spelling of his last name is corrected; the date of the episcopal ordination was 8 September 1966, not 9 September, and it took place in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, Quezon City.
- N. 179 **Miguel Purugganan y Gatan** - named Bishop of Ilagan 21 January 1974; resigned 26 July 1999.
- N. 182 **Ricardo J. Vidal** - Archbishop of Lipa 22 August 1973.
- N. 186 **Miguel C. Cinches, S.V.D.** - consecrated in Quezon City, Christ the King Seminary.

- N. 191 **Onesimo Cadiz Gondoncillo** - born at *Jimalalud*; Bishop of Tagbilaran 3 July 1976.
- N. 196 **Alberto Piamonte y Jover** - born at Iloilo City (Jaro) 21 November 1934; named Titular Bishop of Gubaliana December 28, 1974; died 17 December 1998 at Iloilo City.
- N. 209 **Nestor C. Carino** - the consecration took place at Legazpi, in Saint Gregory the Great Cathedral.
- N. 210 **Edmundo M. Abaya** - Archbishop of Nueva Segovia 22 May 1999.
- N. 216 **Salvador Q. Quizon** - the consecration took place at Taal, in the Basilica of Saint Martin of Tours.
- N. 218 **George Eli Dion, O.M.I.** - died 12 February 1999 at Tamontaka.
- N. 222 **Orlando Beltran Quevedo, O.M.I.**
- N. 229 **Christian Vicente F. Noel** - the consecration took place in the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral.

The following consecration appeared in Vol. LXVI, Nos. 722-723, page 94. The name of the archdiocese of the first co-consecrator, as well as the name and diocese of the second co-consecrator, were inadvertently omitted. The venue of the consecration, San Fernando Cathedral, has been added. The consecration is reprinted here in toto.

- N.251 1987, 4 July, at San Fernando, San Fernando Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Oscar V. Cruz, Archbishop of San Fernando and Msgr. Paciano Aniceto y Basilio, Bishop of Iba consecrated Msgr. **Jesus Galang y Castro**, Titular Bishop of Tibiuca, Auxiliary of San Fernando, born at Tarlac 25 December 1932; priest 17 March 1962; named 23 May 1987; Bishop of Urdaneta 7 December 1991.

N. 254 **Maximiano Cruz y Tuazon** - resigned 13 January 1999.

N. 259 **Warlito Cajandig y Itucas** - born 31 January 1944.

The following consecration also appeared in Vol. LXVI, Nos. 722-723, page 96. The name of the archdiocese of the second co-consecrator was misspelled and the month of birth of Bishop Baquial was inadvertently omitted. The consecration is also reprinted here in toto.

N. 257 1988, 6 April, at Tagbilaran, Cathedral of Saint Joseph the Worker. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Antonio Mabutas y Lloren, Archbishop of Davao and Msgr. Onesimo Gordoncillo y Cadiz, Archbishop of Capiz consecrated Msgr. **Alfredo Baquial y Banluta**, Titular Bishop of Bavagaliana, Auxiliary of Davao, born at Tagbilaran 28 May 1941; priest 28 May 1966; named 2 February 1988; died 1 March 1993.

N. 277 **Jose Paala Salazar, O.P.**

N. 279 **Sergio Utleg y Lasam** - succeeded to Ilagan 26 July 1999.

N. 285 **Jose S. Palma** - Bishop of Calbayog 13 January 1999.

N. 288 1999, 16 March, at Tagbilaran, Cathedral of Saint Joseph the Worker.

Cardinal Ricardo J. Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, assisted by Msgr. Carmelo Dominador Morelos y Flores, Archbishop of Zamboanga, and by Msgr. Jesus B. Tuquib, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro consecrated Msgr. **Antonieto Dumagan Cabajog**, Titular Bishop of Reperi, Auxiliary of Cebu, born at Botoc (Tagbilaran) 10 May 1956; priest 9 April 1981; named 13 January 1999.

Cases & Inquiries

JAVIER GONZALEZ, OP

ON THE LECTORATE MINISTRY

Q. I am writing because I would like to ask a question about the Ministry of the Lectorate. I am a former seminarian at San Carlos Seminary, and at present a teacher of Christian Life Education. Before I left the seminary, I was installed a lector. I know that this "minor order" then is now a lay ministry. But I am not sure of the implications of my leaving the seminary. Is the installation permanent? Can I exercise that ministry in my parish, for example?

A. In your query about the implications of your leaving the seminary after having been installed a lector—a "minor order" then and a "ministry" now—you are actually asking two questions: (1) whether your installation was permanent; (2) whether you can presently exercise the ministry in your parish.

As far as I know there is no "official" answers to your questions. Thus, the following is my own opinion on the matter, subject always to *meliore iudicio*:

You were installed as lector on "permanent" bases or "in a stable manner"; so strictly speaking you "are" still a lector, in the same way that a priest who has obtained papal dispensation from priesthood "is" still a priest, although he has lost the right to exercise that order. Therefore, in the case you wanted to act as an installed lector the only thing needed would be the permission (renewable) of your Ordinary to exercise that ministry, without being necessary to be installed anew.

In accordance with the present norms, you would have to submit a written request to the Ordinary (or Major Superior of clerical institute), who will be the one to accept it, after seeing to it that the requisites for the ministry are fulfilled.

The document I have found to substantiate this stand is one entitled "The Ministries in the Church" (1973), from the Italian Episcopal Conference. Referring to the stable ministries of Lectorate and Acolytate, in its n. 18 says [my literal translation from Italian]: "In order to provide for the eventual suspensions or exclusions from the exercise of the ministries, these could be conferred "ad tempus" (for three or five years), remaining clear that *the faculty to exercise them is renewable, without renewing the rite*, and that the Bishop can always declare the cessation because of unworthiness." And more specific for your case, in its n. 31 the same document states: *"It may happen that during the Seminary period some leave the Institution. In this case, they cease "eo ipso" from the received ministries (of lectorate/acolytate), keeping always intact the faculty of the Bishop to reconfirm them in the office, upon request of the persons themselves and of the community in which they are reinserted."*

ON INTERSTICES

Q. I want to ask you a question concerning the so-called Interstices. Can the six months interval between the diaconate and priesthood be dispensed by the local Ordinary?

A. To this question on whether the six months interval between the diaconate and priesthood can be dispensed by the local Ordinary, my answer is *in the affirmative*.

The diocesan Bishop has presently the power to dispense from this universal law, based on the general principle of canon 87, §1, which says that *"Whenever he judges that it contributes to their spiritual welfare, the diocesan Bishop can dispense the faithful from disciplinary laws, both universal laws and those particular laws made by the supreme- ecclesiastical authority for his territory or his subjects. He cannot dispense from procedural laws or from penal laws, nor from those laws whose dispensation is specially reserved to the Apostolic See or to some other authority."* (c. 87 §D

The dispensation from this specific requirement is not reserved to the Apostolic See. The only exception on the matter we have in the Code is the dispensation from beyond one year from the age required [23 for diaconate and 25 for priesthood], which is reserved to the Apostolic See (c.1031 §4).

A corollary then of the aforementioned would be that, for a sufficient reason, the local Ordinary can in particular cases confer priesthood on his subjects after a shorter interval of time or even immediately after having ordained them deacons.

Homiletic and Bibliarasal

July - August 2000

EFREN RIVERA, OP

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 28) JULY 2, 2000
JUBILEE FORECOLOGY. STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Unified Theme: God's Generosity in Giving Life.

**Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24 The living God gives life to all
his creatures**
2 Corinthians 8:7-9. 13-15 A lesson in generous almsgiving
Mark 5:21-43
or 5:21-24. 35-43 The child is not dead but asleep

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to "Biblical Notes for Homilies," Boletín
Eclesiástico de Filipinas Vol. L, n. 557 p. 260-262.*

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. Since today is the Jubilee Day for Ecology and the Stewardship of creation, Wis 1:14 is most providential; it says: God "fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, and there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the nether world on earth." It is Satan, using the foolishness and greed of human beings, who is causing our environmental problems. So, in ecological matters, ask yourself: are you on the side of Life (God), or of Death (Satan)? <> With regard to life, God's generosity becomes overwhelming with the coming of Jesus Christ. Life is not only given; it is also restored when lost. Do you thank God and Jesus Christ enough for the physical and spiritual life they have given you? Share your answers with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. In the First Reading, "life" is understood not only as human life but as the life of any creature in the world. However, we must not forget that other forms of life were made by God to enhance the well-being of the human creature. This is balanced by the fact that God appointed man to be the steward of the whole of creation (see *Gen* ch. 1). In this connection it is good to keep in mind what the Pope said in *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 7: In some parts of Asia, nuclear power plants are constructed "with an eye to cost and efficiency but with little regard for the safety of people and the integrity of the environment."

2. "*The Environment*" is one of the topics discussed in Chapter VI of *Ecclesia in Asia*, see n. 41. For a summary, see BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 p. 200.

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Unified Theme: Why Do People Reject Prophets?

Ezeckiel 2:2-5	The sons are defiant and obstinate and they shall know that there is a prophet among them
2 Corinthians 12:7-10	My weakness are my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me.
Mark 6:1-6	A prophet is only despised in his own country

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

We refer our readers to Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas, Vol. XLVII, No. 526, p. 341.

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

Pointers for sharing on the unified theme. A prophet speaks to God's people in God's name. He must get a vocation for this. And he must be ready to experience rejection by the people. Where do you stand? Are you a prophet? or are you among those who reject prophets? Share your answers with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. *Ecclesia in Asia* says: "It is indeed a mystery why the Savior of the world, born in Asia, has until now remained largely unknown to the people of the continent. The Synod would be a

providential opportunity for the Church in Asia to reflect further on this mystery and to make a renewed commitment to the mission of making Jesus Christ better known to all."

2. Following the observation of the Bishops in the special Synod for Asia, the Pope laments that "Jesus is often perceived as foreign to Asia. It is paradoxical that most Asians tend to regard Jesus - born on Asian soil - as a Western rather than an Asian figure." The proposed solution to this problem is INCULTURATION. For their homilies, preachers should pick up some points in *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 20 to 22, summarized in BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000, p. 185-188.

<{} **JUBILEE YEAR** {}> 30) **JULY 16, 2000**
15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Unified Theme: Challenge or Good News to the People.

Amos 7:12-15	Go prophesy to my people
Ephesians 1:3-14	Before the world was made, God chose us
Mark 6:7-13	The Twelve sent to preach repentance, exorcise, heal

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinos
Vol. XLVII, No. 526, p. 341-342.*

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. God's prophets are actually bearers of Good News, but first the people must repent from their sins. So, first, the prophets challenge the people to reform their lives. Some resent this, others respond humbly. How have you responded to preaching? Did you resent the challenge? Did you humble yourself and ask for mercy? Was Satan exorcized from you? Were you healed? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. *Christian Life as Proclamation.* "Mission is contemplative action and active contemplation. Therefore, a missionary who has no deep experience of God in prayer and contemplation will have little spiritual influence or missionary success." (*Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 23).

2. *Ecclesia in Asia* points out that since the proclamation and inculturation of the Gospel "involves the entire People of God, the role of the laity is of paramount importance. It is they above all who are called to transform society, in collaboration with the Bishops, clergy and religious, by infusing the "mind of Christ" into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the secular world in which they live." (See n. 22).

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}>

31) JULY 23. 2000

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Unified Theme: Pastoral Care

Jeremiah 23:1-6 The remnant of my flock I will gather
and will raise up shepherds

Ephesians 2:13-18 Christ is the peace between us, and has
made two into one.

Mark 6:30-34 They were like sheep without a
shepherd.

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas
Vol. XLVII N. 526, p. 342-343.*

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. Selected pastors (bishops) of churches in Asia met with the Pope in the Special Synod for Asia which was celebrated in Rome from April 18 to May 14 1998. The results of the Synod were shared by the Pope in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, promulgated in a visit of the Pope to New Delhi, India, on November 6, 1999. Have you done anything to learn about the contents of this document? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. Preachers should explain to the faithful what *Ecclesia in Asia* says in n. 43 regarding the need for Pastors in the Church. The document explains that, on one hand, all the baptized, that is, including the laity, are deputed to take part in continuing the saving mission of Christ, and they have been empowered for this by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it has been the will of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to endow some chosen people with functions and charisms so that the common mission of everyone could be better accomplished. These chosen ones endowed with specific functions and charisms are the Apostles and their successors, namely the Bishops, who in turn have taken priests as their associates.

2. Lay people are to be urged to encourage vocations to the priesthood, and to support seminaries.

<{} **JUBILEE YEAR** {}> 32) **JULY 30, 2000**

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B.

Last Sunday of July: FIL-MISSION SUNDAY
(*John 6, Bread of Life series, begins*)

Unified Theme: **Communion and Mission**
(*See Ecclesia in Asia 24*)

2 Kings 4:42-44 **They will eat and have some more left.**
Ephesians 4:1-6 **One bread, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.**

John 6:1-15 **Jesus gave out as much as was wanted to all who were sitting ready.**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas
Vol XLVII, n. 526, p. 343-344.*

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. Providentially, today is Fil-Mission Sunday and also the Sunday of the year when we are reminded that, for us, there is but "One bread, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." This brings us to the teaching of *Ecclesia in Asia*: "It is an essential demand of life in Christ that whoever enters into communion with the Lord is expected to bear fruit. 'He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit' (Jn 15:5). So true is this that the person who does not bear fruit does not remain in communion: 'Each branch of mine that bears no fruit [my Father] takes away' (Jn 15:2). Communion with Jesus, which gives rise to communion of Christians among themselves, is the indispensable condition for bearing fruit; and communion with others, which is the gift of Christ and his Spirit, is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give. In this sense, communion and mission are inseparably connected." (n. 24). Do you understand this teaching? Think about it for a while and then share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. For five consecutive Sundays (interrupted by the Feast of the Lord's Transfiguration which takes the place of the 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, year 2000) the Gospel readings will be from John ch. 6. It starts with John's narration of the multiplication of the bread, marked by the fact that it was the five barley loaves (bread of the poor) and two fish of a YOUNGSTER, A BOY, that

became, by the power of Jesus, the source of nourishment for 5,000 "men". This will be the jumping board for the Discourse(s) on the Bread of Life that will be set forth in the following Sundays. \diamond It seems appropriate for the preacher to refer to what *Ecclesia in Asia* says about the need for Christians in Asia to try to alleviate and ultimately conquer the distressing poverty of millions of Asians (see *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 34 *Preferential Love of the Poor*, summarized in the BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 issue, p. 198).

2. Another appropriate topic to preach on is the bond bringing Communion and Mission together, see *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 24, summarized in the BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 issue, p. 191-192.

<{} **JUBILEE YEAR** {}> 33) **AUGUST 6,2000**

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Unified Theme: **Like Christ, His Church Can Be Transfigured**

Daniel 7:9-10. 13-14	On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship.
2 Peter 1:16-19	Jesus was honored and glorified by God the Father.
Mark 9:2-10	"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him."

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

For Biblical Notes on the Transfiguration, Mk 9:2-10, we refer our readers to BEF Vol XLVII, no. 523, p. 131.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. Let us look forward to the Transformation/Transfiguration of Asia through New Evangelization in the Third Millennium. *Ecclesia in Asia* says: "Trusting in the Lord who will not fail those whom he has called, the Church in Asia joyfully makes her pilgrim way into the Third Millennium. Her only joy is that which comes from sharing with the multitude of Asia's peoples the immense gift which she herself received — the love of Jesus the Savior. Her one ambition is to continue his mission of service and love, so that all Asians 'may have life and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10)." (n. 50). What do you think Catholic Filipinos can do so that in the Third Christian Millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in Asia? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. In the spirit of the Lord's Transfiguration, preachers for this Sunday can express the Church's optimism that "just as in the first millennium the Cross was planted on the soil of Europe, and in the second on that of the American and Africa, we can pray that in the Third Christian Millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in (Asia) this vast and vital continent." See *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 1.

2. The preacher can elaborate of the following words of *Ecclesia in Asia* (n. 50): "Those who believe in Christ are still a small minority in (Asia) this vast and most populous continent. Yet far from being a timid minority, they are lively in faith, full of the hope and vitality which only love can bring. In their humble and courageous way, they have influenced the cultures and societies of Asia, especially the lives of the poor and the helpless, many of whom do not share the Catholic faith."

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 34) AUGUST 13, 2000
On Tuesday, August 15. Solemnity of the Assumption
of Mary, begins
THE JUBILEE OF THE YOUTH (AUG. 15-20)

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B
(John 6, Bread of Life series no. 3)

Unified Theme: We Have Been Drawn Closer to God's Heart.

1 Kings 19:4-8	Strengthened by the food he walked until he reached the mountain of God
Ephesians 4:30-5:2	Follow Christ by loving as he loved
John 6:41-51	I am the living bread which has come down from heaven

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinos
Vol. XLVII, n. 527, p. 425-426.*

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. We who have faith in Jesus Christ can be reassured that we have been drawn by the Father himself closer to his own heart, (see Jn 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him...") Do you have any personal experience that backs this up? Share it with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. "The peoples of Asia need Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Asia is thirsting for the living water that Jesus alone can give (see Jn 4:10-15). The disciples of Christ in Asia must therefore be unstinting in their efforts to fulfill the mission they have received from the Lord, who has promised to be with them to the end of the age (cf. Mt 28:20).

2. In today's Gospel Jesus calls himself the "Living Bread." Many other images can be used. The Asian Bishops "stressed many times the need to evangelize in a way that appeals to the sensibilities of Asian peoples, and they suggested images of Jesus which would be intelligible to Asian minds and cultures and, at the same time, faithful to Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Among them were 'Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the Poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient one.'"

<{} **JUBILEE YEAR** {}> 35) AUGUST 20, 2000

20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

(John 6, Bread of Life series no. 4)

Unified Theme: Jesus, God's Answer to Those Who Want Life.

Proverbs 9:1-6	Leave your folly and you will live, walk in the ways of perfection
Ephesians 5:15-20	Be careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent, and not like senseless people.
John 6:51-58	Anyone who eats this bread will live forever

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas
Vol. XLVII, n. 527, p. 426.*

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

Pointers for sharing on the unified theme: The theme of the special Synod for Asia was chosen by the Pope himself and expressed in the words: *Jesus Christ the Savior and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia: "That they may have Life and have it abundantly" (.In 10:10).* See *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 2. Have you noticed in yourself and in people around you a desire for more life? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. The Pope, in calling for the celebration of the special Synod for Asia, hoped that the Synod might "illustrate and explain more fully the truth that Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and the sole Redeemer of the world, to be clearly distinguished from the founders of other great religions." See *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 2. Asian preachers are to explain this in their homilies.

2. A good topic for today's sermon could also be: "The Gospel of Life." See *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 35, summarized in the BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 issue, p. 198.

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 36) AUGUST 27, 2000

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

(*John 6, Bread of Life series no. 5, end.*)

Unified Theme: To Find God, Go to Christ and His Church

Joshua 24:1-2. 15-17. 18 **We will serve the Lord, for he is our God**

Ephesians 5:21-32 **The mystery has many implications, it applies to Christ and the Church**

John 6:60-69 **Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

*We refer our readers to Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas
Vol. XLVII, n. 527, p. 427.*

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the unified theme: Jesus gives people a choice: to leave him or to follow him. The choice made by Peter, spokesman of the Twelve Apostles, to follow Christ, is a parallel to the choice made by Joshua, speaking for his family or clan, to serve Yahweh alone. Today, it is the great hope of the universal Church that the multitudes of Asians will choose to follow Jesus Christ. What do you think: is this an impossible dream? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. A good sermon for this Sunday could be "The Gift of Faith," see *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 10, summarized in the BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 issue, p. 180-181.

2. Another good topic for today's sermon is "Jesus Christ: the Truth of Humanity," see *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 13, summarized in the BEF Jan.-Feb. 2000 issue, p. 182-183.