

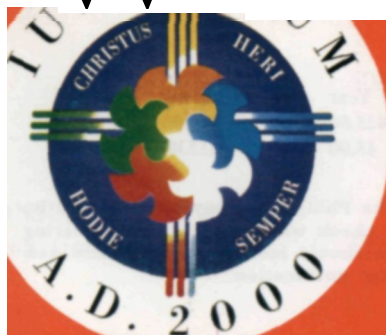
BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

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**ON-GOING FORMATION
OF THE CLERGY**

Vicente Cajilig, OP

**THE PRIEST AND THE
CHRISTIAN MILLENNIUM**

Congregation for the Clergy

**THE CO-ESSENTIALITY BETWEEN THE
INSTITUTIONAL AND CHARISMATIC
DIMENSION OF THE CHURCH**

Emmanuel Mijares

PRESUMED DEATH OF SPOUSE

Javier Gonzalez, OP

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

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On-going Formation of the Clergy **VICENTE CAJILIG, OP**

The 7th Plenary Assembly of the Federation Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) held in Thailand early this year dealt on the formation of the clergy in a very thorough manner. It first handled the process of formation that the ministers of God should undergo but it made a more urgent call regarding the on-going formation of those who are already in the ministry.

The continuing formation according on the subject matter should consider the following:

- 1) *Apprenticeship* — (first 3-5 years of priestly ministry)
 - a. *1st Year*: normally, a stage of happy experiences, hence the following are recommended:
 - *They are to be appointed to a carefully selected experienced pastor.*
 - *They should not be overloaded with pastoral assignments.*
 - *They should have regular reviews with the pastor concerned and with their peer group.*
 - *The bishop should invite them for personal contacts and affirm them.*

b. Other years of apprenticeship

- *Regular views of programmes covering all areas of pastoral life are to be drawn up especially by the apprentice-priests themselves with the help of the program director.*
- *They should develop links with their fellow priests in the monthly deanery and presbyteral meetings.*

- 2) *Mid-life* — Programmes for mid-life should help promote the human growth of the priests on this stage. This stage should be an opportunity for them to recognize and assess the areas of human development that seeks deepening, clarifying or venturing particularly the trust and fear issues commonly disturb the commitment of the clergymen. The programme therefore must likewise review the life-style of the priests. It should also consider the needs of the diocese, aimed towards greater commitment to the vocation.
- 3) *Golden Years: Senior Clergy* — This is the happy period when one can enjoy the fruits of past endeavors. The priests on this stage are the assets of the diocese — thus, their rich experiences should be appreciated and shared, their advice and guidance sought. However, their security needs must be given special attention too.
- 4) *The Years of Retirement* — The retired priests continues to contribute to the diocese with his wide experience and lifestyle. The diocese has the responsibility to appreciate their presence and affirm their sense of belonging through emotional, material support and when necessary, a creation of foundation for the purpose.
- 5) *Programs Accommodated to Priests with Special Need* — The diocese to assist the priests in need must tap experts in the fields of psychology and spirituality. Specialized center should be established.

As individuals or even as a body of the Presbyterium, the clergy should take them as their special concern to find out as to what level they belong. Their superiors must be sensitive to the expressed need of their priests (religious or diocesan).

The pastoral skills must not be neglected. Some areas that need attention are the following:

1. Effective, dynamic and attractive style of preaching the Word of God.
2. Attention to Healing Ministry.
3. Solemn yet participative Liturgical celebrations.
4. More intense prayerful & discerning life.
5. Capability for three-fold dialogue (culture, poor, religions).
6. Discernment and guidance skills for the emerging charisms of the community.

Finally, what is envisioned therefore for the Church of Asia is a fully integral and updated on-going formation of the ministers of God which call for the involvement of the entire community in the creative process. The priests, together with the laity, shall project an *Asian Image of the Church*.

The Priest and the Third Christian Millennium

CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY

Vatican City, 19 March 1999
Solemnity of St. Joseph
Patron of the Universal Church

*Your Eminence,
Your Excellency,*

The entire Church prepares to enter the third millennium since the Incarnation of the Word in a spirit of penance, and, by the continued Apostolic solicitude of the Successor of Peter, is stimulated to an ever more lively recollection of the will of her divine Founder.

At its Plenary Assembly of 13-15 October 1998, the Congregation for the Clergy, in a spirit of intimate communion with that objective, decided to entrust the enclosed circular letter to every Ordinary, for transmission to their priests. On that occasion, the Holy Father said. "The prospective of New Evangelization reaches a high point in commitment to the Great Jubilee. Here, providen-

tially, we retrace the paths laid out in Tertio Millennio Adveniente, in the Directories for Priests and Permanent Deacons, in the Instruction on the collaboration of the lay faithful with the pastoral ministry of priests and in the fruits of this Plenaria. With a convinced universal application of these documents, what is expressed by the now familiar term "new evangelization" can be more easily translated into effective reality".

Bearing in mind actual circumstances, this document is designed to lead individual priests as well as presbyterates to an examination of conscience, remembering that, in concrete terms, love means fidelity. This document reiterates the teachings of the Council, and of the Popes and it refers to the other documents already mentioned by the Holy Father. These documents are fundamental for an authentic response to the demands of our time and for an effective mission of evangelization.

The questionnaires at the end of each section are intended as an aid to discerning everyday reality in the light of the teaching contained in the aforementioned documents. It is not intended that any replies should be sent to this Congregation. Priests may use them in whatever manner they find most helpful for them.

We are aware that no missionary activity can be realistically undertaken without the enthusiastic support of priests, who are the first and most valued collaborators of the Order of Bishops. This letter is also intended as a help for priests attending study days, retreats, spiritual exercises and priestly meetings being promoted in each ecclesiastical circumscription during this time of preparation for the Great Jubilee, and especially during the Jubilee Year.

May the Queen of Apostles, the bright Morning Star, guide her beloved priests, sons of her Son, into the path of effective communion, fidelity and generous, integral exercise of their indispensable ministry.

*With sentiments of fraternal esteem, I remain
Yours sincerely in Christ,*

DARIO CARD. CASTRILLÓN HOYOS

Prefect

and CSABA TERNYAK

Titular Archbishop of Eminenziana

Secretary

INTRODUCTION

Catholic doctrinal tradition describes the priest as *teacher of the Word, Minister of the Sacraments and Leader of the Christian community entrusted to him*. This is the starting point of all reflection on the identity and mission of the priest in Church. In the light of *new evangelization*, to which the Holy Spirit calls all the faithful through the person and authority of the Holy Father, this unchanging yet ever-new doctrine must again be reflected upon with faith and hope.

The whole Church is called to greater apostolic commitment which is both personal and communitarian, renewed and generous. Encouraged by the personal example and clear teaching of John Paul II, both pastors and faithful must but realize ever more incisively that the time has come to hasten their preparations, with renewed apostolic spirit, to cross the threshold of the twenty-first century and to throw open the door of history to Jesus Christ, who is our God and only Saviour. Pastors and faithful in the year 2000 are called to proclaim with renewed force: "*Ecce natus est nobis Salvator mundi*."

"In countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a 'new evangelization' or a 're-evangelization.'"² New Evangelization, therefore, is firstly a maternal reaction of the Church to the weakening of the faith

¹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 10 November 1994, n. 38: AAS 87 (1995) 5-41; n. 30.

² John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 33: AAS 83 (1991), p. 279.

and obscuring of the demands of the Christian moral life in the conscience of her children. Many of the baptized live in a world indifferent to religion. While maintaining a certain faith, these practically live a form of religious and moral indifferentism, alienated from Word and Sacraments which are essential for the Christian life. There are others, although born of Christian parents and baptized, who have never received a foundation in the faith and live in practical atheism. The Church looks on all of these with love and is particularly sensitive to the pressing duty to draw these people to that ecclesial communion where, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they rediscover Jesus Christ and the Father.

Together with new evangelization which seeks to rekindle the faith in the Christian conscience of many and cause the joyful proclamation of salvation to resound in society, the Church is also especially conscious of her perennial mission *ad gentes* — the right duty to carry the Gospel to all men who do not yet know Christ or participate in his salvific gifts. For the contemporary Church, Mother and Teacher, the mission *ad gentes* and new evangelization are inseparable aspects of her mandate to teach, sanctify and guide all men to the Father. Fervent Christians also need loving and continuous encouragement in their quest for personal holiness, to which they are called by God and by the Church. This is the true impetus of new evangelization.

All the Christian faithful, children of the Church, should be impelled by this common and pressing responsibility. In a particular way, priests have this duty since they have been specially chosen, consecrated and sent to make evident the presence of Christ whose authentic representatives and messengers they become.³ It is, therefore, necessary to assist both secular and religious priests in assuming the "important pastoral responsibility of new evangeli-

³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and life of Priests*, n. 7: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1994, p. 11.

zation"⁴ and, in the light of this commitment, to rediscover the divine call to serve that portion of God's people entrusted to them as teachers of the Word, ministers of the Sacraments and pastors of the flock.

⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 25 March 1992, n. 18: AAS 84 (1992), p. 685.

I

IN THE SERVICE OF NEW EVANGELIZATION

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain"
(John 15:16)

1. New Evangelization, responsibility of the entire Church

Being called and sent by the Lord have always been relevant but in contemporary historical circumstances they acquire a particular importance. The end of the twentieth century, from a religious perspective, is marked by contrasting phenomena. On the one hand, intense secularization in society results in rejection of God and all reference to the transcendent, while the other is marked by the emergence of a greater religious sensitivity which seeks to satisfy the innate aspiration for God which is present in the hearts of all mankind but which sometimes fails to find satisfactory expression.

"The mission of Christ the Redeemer which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service."⁵ Today, this missionary task is carried out largely in the context of the new evangelization of many countries which have had long Christian traditions but in which the Christian understanding of life appears to be in decline. It is also carried out in the general context of mankind, in which not everyone has yet heard and understood the proclamation of the salvation brought by Christ.

⁵ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 1: *I.e.*, p. 249.

It is a sad but evident reality that many have heard of Christ but seem to know and accept his teaching merely as a set of general ethical norms rather than as concrete life commitments. Large numbers of the baptized have abandoned following Christ and live by the tenets of relativism. In many instances, the role of the Christian faith is reduced to that of a purely cultural factor often limited to a merely private sphere and without any social relevance in individual or national life.⁶

After twenty centuries of Christianity there is still no shortage of wide missionary fields. All Christians should be aware that, in virtue of their baptismal priesthood (cf. *1 Pt* 2, 4-5.9; *Ap* 1, 5-6. 9-10; 20, 6), they are called to collaborate, in so far as their personal circumstances permit, in the new evangelizing mission which is a common ecclesial undertaking.⁷ Responsibility for missionary activity "is incumbent primarily on the College of Bishops presided over by its head, the Successor of Peter".⁸ "Priests, who are collaborators with the bishop in virtue of the Sacrament of Orders, are called to share responsibility for the

⁶ The Christian religion is often regarded as just one religion among many or reduced to nothing more than a social ethic at the service of man. As a result its amazing novelty in human history is quite often not apparent. It is a 'mystery', the event of the coming of the Son of God who becomes man and gives to those who welcome him the 'power to become children of God' (*John* 1, 12)" (JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 46: *I.e.*, pp. 738-739).

⁷ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 2; JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 13: *I.e.*, 677-678; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, nn. 1, 3, 6: *I.e.*, pp. 7, 9, 1011; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY, CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Instruction *Ecclesiae de Mystero* (15 August 1997) on some aspects of the collaboration of the lay faithful with the ministry of priests, Forward: AAS 89 (1997), p. 852.

⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 63: *I.e.*, p. 311-

mission".⁹ Thus it can be said that, in a certain sense, they bear primary responsibility for this new evangelization of the third Millennium".¹⁰

Encouraged by scientific and technical advances, contemporary society has developed a profound sense of critical independence from secular and religious authority and doctrine. This situation requires thorough explanation and presentation of the Christian message of salvation which always remains a mystery. Such must be done with respect, and with the power and capacity of the first evangelization, while making prudent use of all suitable methods afforded by modern technology. However, it should never be forgotten that technology is no substitute for the witness of holiness of life. The Church needs true witnesses to communicate the Gospel in every sector of society. From this derives the need for all Christians in general, and for priests in particular, to acquire a profound and proper training in philosophy and theology" which enables them to render account for their faith and hope. Such also alerts them to the importance of presenting the faith constructively by means of personal dialogue and understanding. Proclamation of the Gospel, however, cannot be reduced to dialogue alone. The courage of the truth is, in fact, an ineluctable challenge when confronted with temptation to conform, or to seek facile popularity or personal convenience.

When evangelizing, it must be remembered that some of the traditional ideas and vocabulary of evangelization have become unintelligible to the greater part of contemporary culture. Certain

⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 67: *I.e.*, p. 315.

¹⁰ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, Introduction: *I.e.*, p. 4. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nn. 2 and 14: *I.e.*, pp. 659-660; 678-679.

¹¹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, 14 September 1998, n. 62.

contexts are impervious to the positive Christian sense of terms such as original sin and its consequences, redemption, the cross, the need for prayer, voluntary sacrifice, chastity, sobriety, obedience, humility, penance, poverty, etc. New evangelization, in fidelity to the doctrine of the faith constantly taught by the Church and with a strong sense of responsibility with regard to the vocabulary of Christian doctrine, must discover means of expressing itself to the contemporary world so as to help it rediscover the profound meaning of these Christian and human terms. In this effort, new evangelization cannot discard the established formulations of faith which have already been arrived at and which are summarized in the Creed.¹²

2. The necessary and indispensable role of priests

While the Pastors of the Church "know that they themselves were not established by Christ to undertake alone the whole salvific mission of the Church to the world,"¹³ they do exercise and absolutely indispensable evangelizing role. New evangelization needs urgently to find a form for the exercise of the priestly ministry really consonant with contemporary conditions so as to render it effective and capable of adequately responding to the circumstances in which it is exercised. This, however, can only be done by constant reference to Christ, our only model, who enables us to move in contemporary conditions without losing sight of our final goal. Genuine pastoral renewal is not motivated solely by socio-cultural considerations but, more importantly, by a burning love for Christ and his Church. The end of all our efforts is the definitive Kingdom of Christ, recapitulation of all created things in Him. This will only be fully achieved at the end of time but already it is present through the power of the life-giving Spirit through whom

¹² Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 171.

¹³ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 30.

Jesus Christ constituted his body, the Church, as universal sacrament of salvation.¹⁴

Christ, head of the Church and Lord of all creation, continues his salvific work among men. The ministerial priesthood is properly located within this operative framework. In drawing all things to Himself (cf. *John* 12, 32), Christ desires to involve his priests in a special way. This is the divine plan (God wills that the Church and her ministers should be involved in the work of redemption) which, although evident from a doctrinal and theological perspective, can be particularly difficult for modern man to accept. Sacramental mediation and the hierarchical structure of the Church, are often questioned today. The need for sacramental mediation or for the hierarchical structure of the Church as well as the reasons for them are also called into question.

As the life of Christ was consecrated to the authentic proclamation of the loving will of the Father (cf. *John* 17, 4; *Heb* 10, 7-10) so, too, the life of priests should be consecrated, in his name, to the same proclamation. "In word and deed" (cf. *Acts* 1, 1) the Messiah devoted his public life to preaching with authority (cf. *Mt* 7, 29). Such authority derived, in the first place, from his divine condition but also, in the eyes of the people, from his sincere, holy and perfect example. Likewise, the priest is obliged to complement the objective spiritual authority which is his in virtue of sacred ordination¹⁵ with a subjective authority deriving from sincerity and holiness of life¹⁶, and that pastoral charity which

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 48.

¹⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 21: *l.c.*, pp. 688-690.

¹⁶ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 12; JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 25: *l.e.*, pp. 695-697.

manifests the love of Christ.¹⁷ Gregory the Great's exhortation to his priests is still relevant: "The Pastor must be pure in thought, exemplary in his actions, discreet in his silence and useful in his words. He should be close to all in his compassion and, above all, dedicated to contemplation. He should be the humble ally of all who do good. In justice, he should be inflexibly opposed to the vice of sinners. He should neither neglect the interior life through exterior preoccupations nor omit provision of exterior needs through solicitude for interior good."¹⁸

In our times, as always in the Church, "heralds of the Gospel are needed who are expert in humanity, profoundly knowing the heart of contemporary man, who share his joys and hopes, his fears and sorrows, and, at the same time, who are contemplatives in love with God." The Holy Father, specifically referring to the re-christianization of Europe but in terms valid everywhere, affirms that "the saints were the great evangelizers of Europe. We must pray the Lord to increase the spirit of holiness in the Church and to send saints to evangelize the contemporary world."¹⁹ Many of our contemporaries, it must not be forgotten, arrive at ideas of Christ and the Church above all through their contact with her sacred ministers. Hence the need for their authentic witness to the Gospel becomes all the more pressing since it is "a living and transparent image of Christ the priest."²⁰

In the context of Christ's saving action, two inseparable objectives can be highlighted: an intellectual objective, on the one hand, which seeks to teach, instruct the crowds without shepherds

¹⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 43: *I.e.*, p. 42.

¹⁸ St. GREGORY THE GREAT, *Regula pastoralis*, II, 1.

¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Allocution to the VI Symposium of European Bishops, 11 November 1985, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VIII, 2 (1985), pp. 918-949.

²⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 12: *I.c.*, pp. 675-677.

(cf. *Mt* 9, 36) and move the intelligence towards conversion (cf. *Mt* 4, 17), and, on the other, the desire to move the hearts of those who listened to him to sorrow and penance for their sins thereby opening the way to divine forgiveness. This continues to be true today: "the call to new evangelization is primarily a call to conversion"²¹ and when the Word of God has taught the intellect of man and moved his will to reject sin, evangelizing activity attains its goal in fruitful participation in the sacraments, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. Paul VI taught that "the role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments of faith — and not to receive them passively or reluctantly."²²

Evangelization consists of proclamation, witness, dialogue and service. It is based on three inseparable elements: preaching the Word, sacramental ministry and leading the faithful.²³ Preaching would be senseless unless it include continuous formation of the faithful and participation in the sacraments. Likewise, participation in the sacraments without sincere conversion of heart, full acceptance of the faith and of the principles of Christian morality is also meaningless. From a pastoral perspective, the primary action of evangelization is, logically, considered to be preaching.²⁴ From the perspective of intentionality, however, the primary element of evangelization must be celebration of the sacraments, especially of

²¹ JOHN PAUL II, Inaugural Allocution to the IV General Conference of CELAM, Santo Domingo, 12 October 1992, n. 1: AAS 85 (1993), p. 808; cf. Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 2 December 1984, n. 13, AAS 77 (1985), pp. 208-211.

²² Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), n. 47: AAS 68 (1976), p. 37.

²³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 28.

²⁴ Second Vatican Council, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn. 5, 13, 14; JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 26: *I.e.*, pp. 697-700.

Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.²⁵ The integrity of the pastoral ministry of priests in the service of new evangelization is to be found, however, in a harmonious fusion of both of these functions.

Ecumenical formation of the faithful is another aspect of new evangelization of growing importance. The Second Vatican Council encouraged all the faithful "to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism" and "to esteem the truly Christian endowments of our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brethren."²⁶ At the same time, however, it must be noted that "nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenecism which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its genuine and certain meaning."²⁷ Priests should ensure that ecumenism is always conducted in fidelity to the principles established by the Magisterium of the Church, avoid divisions and promote harmonious continuity.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHAPTER ONE

1. Is the need for and urgency of new evangelization really felt in our ecclesial communities and especially among our priests?
2. Is it frequently preached? Does new evangelization feature at clergy meetings, in pastoral programmes and in continuing formation?

²⁵ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn. 5, 13, 14; JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nn. 23, 26, 48: *I.e.*, 691-694; 694-700; 742-745; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 48: *I.e.*, pp. 48ff.

²⁶ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 11.

3. Are priests especially involved in promoting a new evangelizing mission — new in its "ardour, methods and expression"²⁸ — both *ad intra* and *ad extra* in the Church?
4. Do the faithful regard the priesthood as a divine gift both for those who receive it and for their communities, or do they regard the priesthood merely as an administrative function? Are prayers for vocations to the priesthood sufficiently encouraged as well as prayers for that generosity which responds affirmatively to a vocation?
5. In preaching the Word of God and in catechesis is the necessary proportion between instruction in the faith and sacramental practice maintained? Is the evangelizing activity of priests characterized by a complementarity between preaching and sacraments, the *munus docendi* and the *munus sanctificandi*?
6. What can be done to help priests become ministers who harmoniously build the prophetic, liturgical and charitable community which is the Church?
7. From the preparations for the Great Jubilee of 2000 do priests derive opportunities and ideas for a realistic programme of new evangelization?

²⁸ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Allocation to the Bishops of CELAM, 9 March 1983: *Insegnamenti*, VI, 1 (1983), p. 698; Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 18: *I.e.*, pp. 684-686.

II

TEACHERS OF THE WORD

"Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16, 15)

1. Priests, ministers of the Word

nomine Christi et nomine Ecclesiae

A correct understanding of the pastoral ministry of the Word begins with a consideration of God's divine Revelation in itself. "By this revelation, the invisible God (cf. *Col* 1, 15; / *Tim* 1, 17), from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends (cf. *Es* 33, 11; *John* 15, 14-15) and moves among them in order to invite and receive them into his company."²⁹ The proclamation of the Kingdom in Scripture not only speaks of the glory of God but also spreads that same glory by its very proclamation. The Gospel preached by the Church is not just a message but a divine and life-giving experience for those who believe, hear, receive and obey the message.

Revelation, therefore, is not limited to instruction about God who lives in inaccessible light since it also recounts the marvelous things that God does for us with his grace. The revealed Word, made present and actualized "in" and "through" the Church, is an instrument through which Christ acts in us with his Spirit. It is both judgment and grace. In hearing the Word, the actual encounter with God himself calls to the heart of man and demands a decision which is not arrived at solely through intellectual knowledge but which requires conversion of heart.

"It is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all men...(so as to)... set up and

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, n. 2.

increase the People of God."³⁰ Precisely because preaching the Gospel is not merely an intellectual transmission of a message but "the power of God for the salvation of all who believe" (*Rm* 1, 16), accomplished for all time in Christ, its proclamation in the Church requires from its heralds a supernatural basis which guarantees its authenticity and its effectiveness. The proclamation of the Gospel by the sacred ministers of the Church is, in a certain sense, a participation in the salvific character of the Word itself, not only because they speak of Christ, but because they proclaim the Gospel to their hearers with that power to call which comes from their participation in the consecration and mission of the incarnate Word of God. The words of the Lord still resound in the ears of his ministers: "Whosoever listens to you listens to me; whosoever despises you despises me" (*Lk* 10, 16). Together with St Paul they can testify: "The Spirit we have received is not the world's spirit but God's Spirit, helping us to recognize the gifts he has given us: We speak of these not in words of human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, thus interpreting spiritual things in spiritual terms" (*1 Cor* 2, 12-13).

Proclaiming the Gospel is a ministry deriving from the Sacrament of Orders and is exercised by the authority of Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all the acts of sacred ministers in the same way. In the administration of the sacraments this guarantee is assured to the extent that not even the sinful condition of a minister can impede the fruit of grace. There are many other acts in which the human qualities of the minister acquire notable importance. Those qualities can serve to promote or impede the apostolic effectiveness of Church.³¹ While the entire *munus pastorale* must be characterized by service, it is especially necessary that service characterize the minister of

³⁰ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 4.

³¹ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1550.

preaching since the salvific effectiveness of the Word becomes more operative when its minister, who is never master of the Word, increasingly becomes its servant.

Service demands a personal dedication on the part of the minister to the preached Word. Such dedication ultimately is made to God "to whom I render worship in my heart by preaching the Gospel of his Son" (*Rm* 1, 9). The minister may not place obstacles in its path by pursuing objectives extraneous to its mission, or relying on human wisdom, or by promoting subjective experiences that can obscure the Gospel. The Word of God can never be manipulated. Rather, preachers "should firstly become personally familiar with the Word of God...and be the first "believers" in the Word, fully conscious that the words of their preaching are not their own, but those of the one who sent them."³²

There is an *essential relationship between personal prayer and preaching*. From meditating on the Word of God in personal prayer, comes that spontaneous "primacy of witness of life which discovers the power of the love of God and makes his word convincing."³³ Effective preaching is another fruit of personal prayer. Such preaching is effective not only because of its speculative coherence but because it comes from a prayerful, sincere heart which is aware that sacred ministers are bound not to impart their own wisdom but the Word of God and ceaselessly to invite all to conversion and holiness."³⁴ The preaching of Christ's sacred ministers, to be effective, requires that it be based on their spirit of filial prayer: *sit orator antequam dieter?*³⁵

³² JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 26: *I.e.*, p. 698.

³³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 45: *I.e.*, p. 44.

³⁴ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 4.

³⁵ ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4, 15, 32: *PL* 34, 100.

Personal prayer provides priests with support and encouragement for their sense of the ministry, their vocation in life, and for their living and apostolic faith. In personal prayer they draw daily zeal for evangelization. Once personally convinced of this, it is translated into persuasive, coherent and convincing preaching. Praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*, thus, is not simply a matter of personal piety nor is it the totality of the Church's public prayer. It is of great pastoral use³⁶ since it is a special opportunity to interiorize and become familiar with biblical, patristic, theological and magisterial teaching which can subsequently be returned to the People of God through preaching.

2. Towards an effective proclamation of the Word

New evangelization has to underline the importance of bringing to maturity the meaning of the baptismal vocation of the faithful thereby bringing the faithful to an awareness that they have been called by God closely to follow Christ and to personally collaborate in the Church's mission. "Transmitting the faith means awakening, proclaiming and deepening the Christian vocation, that is, God's call to all men as He makes known to them the mystery of salvation..."³⁷ The task of preaching, therefore, is to present Christ to all men because He alone, "the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling."³⁸

New evangelization together with a vocational sense of existence go hand in hand for the Christian. This is the "good news" which must be preached to the faithful without any reductionism in what concerns its goodness and the demands which are made

³⁶ Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Constitution *Laudis Canticum*, 1 November 1970, n. 8: AAS 63 (1971), pp. 533-534.

³⁷ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 45: I.e., p. 43.

³⁸ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

in accomplishing it. It must always be remembered that "the Christian is certainly bound by need and by duty to struggle with evil through many afflictions and to suffer death; but as one who has been made a partner in the paschal mystery and configured to the death of Christ, he will go forward, strengthened by hope, to the resurrection."³⁹

New evangelization demands a zealous ministry of the Word which is complete and well-founded. It should have a clear theological, spiritual, liturgical and moral content, while bearing in mind the needs of those men and women whom it must reach. This is not to succumb to any temptation to intellectualism which could obscure rather than enlighten the intelligence of Christians, rather it requires a genuine intellectual charity through continuous patient catechesis on the fundamentals of Catholic faith and morals and on their influence on the spiritual life. Christian instruction is foremost among the spiritual works of mercy: salvation comes by knowing Christ since "there is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved" (*Acts* 4, 12).

Catechetical proclamation cannot be achieved without use of a solid theology since it requires not only presentation of revealed doctrine but also formation of the intelligence and conscience of the faithful by means of revealed doctrine so that they can authentically live the demands of their baptismal calling. New evangelization will be achieved not only in the measure that the Church as a whole and its institutions but each and every Christian live the faith authentically, thereby giving credible witness to that same faith.

Evangelizing means announcing and spreading the contents of revealed truth by every available good and congruent means (Christological and Trinitarian faith, the meaning of the dogma of

³⁹ *Ibidem.*

creation, the eschatological truths, the doctrine concerning the Church, man, the sacraments and other means of salvation). It is also important to teach people how concretely to translate these truths into life by means of spiritual and moral formation so that they become a witness to life and missionary commitment.

The task of spiritual and theological formation (and that of permanent formation of priests, deacons and the lay faithful) is both inescapable and enormous. Hence, the ministry of the Word and its ministers must be able to respond to current circumstances. While its effectiveness is essentially dependent on the help of God, it also requires the highest possible degree of human perfection. A renewed doctrinal, theological and spiritual proclamation of the Christian message, aimed primarily to enthuse and purify the conscience of the baptized, cannot be achieved through irresponsible or indolent improvisation. Less still can it be brought about if there is an unwillingness on the part of priests to assume directly their responsibilities for the proclamation of the Gospel — especially those relating to the homiletic ministry which cannot be delegated to the non-ordained⁴⁰ nor easily entrusted to those ill prepared for its exercise.

Preaching, as always has been insisted, requires the priest to give particular attention to the importance of *remote preparation*. This can be concretized by such things as study and the pursuit of those things which can help the sacred ministers in their preparation. Pastoral sensitivity on the part of preachers must

⁴⁰ Cf. THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY, CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Interdicasterial Instruction, *Ecclesiae de Mystero* on some questions concerning the collaboration of the lay faithful with the ministry of priests, 15 August 1997, article 3: AAS 89 (1997), p. 852 ff.

always be aware of the problems preoccupying the contemporary world and be able to identify possible solution for them. "Moreover, if priests are to give adequate answers to the problems discussed by people at the present time, they should be well versed in the statements of the Church's magisterium and especially those of the Councils and the Popes. They should also consult the best approved writers in theology"⁴¹ as well as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Insistence must also be placed on the importance of the permanent formation of the clergy and especially on its content which should be in accord with the *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*.⁴² Efforts in this regard will always reap a rich harvest. In addition to the foregoing, attention must be given to the *proximate preparation* needed to preach the Word of God. Apart from exceptional circumstances where nothing else is possible, humility and industry require, at the very least, a careful plan of what the priest intends to preach.

The principle source for preaching is naturally Sacred Scripture, deeply meditated in personal prayer and assimilated through study and adequate contact with suitable books.⁴³ Pastoral experience well demonstrates the capacity of the power and eloquence of the Sacred text to stir the hearts of those who hear it. The Fathers of the Church and the other great writers of the Catholic tradition teach us how to penetrate the meaning of the revealed Word and communicate it to others.⁴⁴ This is far removed from any form of

⁴¹ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 19.

⁴² Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nn. 70ff: *I.e.*, pp. 778ff; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, nn. 69ff: *I.e.*, pp. 72ff.

⁴³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nn. 26 and 47: *I.e.*, pp. 697-700, 740-742; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 46: *I.e.*, p. 46.

⁴⁴ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Instruction on the Study of the Church Fathers in the Formation of Priests* (10 November 1989), nn. 26-27: AAS 82 (1990), pp. 618-619.

"biblical fundamentalism" or mutilation of the divine message. The pedagogy with which the Church reads, interprets and applies the Word of God throughout the liturgical seasons should also be a point of reference for preaching. The lives of the saints, their struggles and heroism, have always produced positive effects in the hearts of the Christian faithful who, today, have special need of the heroic example of the saints in their self-dedication to the love of God and, through God, to others. Reference to the lives of the saints has renewed significance in contemporary circumstances where the faithful are often assailed by equivocal values and doctrines. All of these are helpful for evangelization as indeed is the promotion of a sense of the love of God among the faithful, a solidarity with everyone and spirit of service and generous self-giving for others. Christian conscience comes to maturity through constant reference to charity.

The priest should also cultivate the formal aspects of preaching. We live in an information era characterized by rapid communication. We frequently hear experts and specialists on the television and radio. In a certain sense the priest (who is also a social communicator) has to compete with these when he preaches to the faithful. Hence his message must be presented in an attractive manner. His apostolic spirit should move him to acquire competence in the use of the "new pulpits" provided by modern communications and ensure that his preaching is always of a standard congruent with the preached Word. Universities today have witnessed a resurgence of interest in rhetoric. A similar interest should be aroused among priests as well as a desire to acquire a noble and dignified self presentation and poise.

Like that of Christ, priestly preaching should be positive, stimulating and draw men and women to the goodness, beauty and truth of God. Christians are bound to make known "the divine glory which shines on the face of Christ" (2 *Cor* 4, 6) and present revealed truth in a captivating way. Is it not impossible to deny

the strong attractive, though serene, nature of Christian existence? There is nothing to fear in this. "From the moment when, in the Paschal Mystery, she received the gift of the ultimate truth about man's life, the Church has made her way along the path of the world proclaiming that Jesus Christ is 'the way, the truth and the life' (*John* 14, 6). It is her duty to serve humanity in different ways, but one way in particular imposes a responsibility of a quite special kind: *the diaconia of service to the truth.*"*⁵

Elegant accurate language, comprehensible to contemporary men and women of all social backgrounds, is always useful for preaching. Banal commonplace language should be eschewed.⁴⁶ While preachers must speak from an authentic vision of faith, a vocabulary must be employed which is comprehensible in all quarters and must avoid specialized jargon or concessions to the spirit of materialism. The human "key" to effective preaching of the Word is to be found in the professionalism of the preacher who knows what he wants to say and who is always backed up by serious remote and proximate preparation. This is far removed from the improvisation of the dilettante. Attempts to obscure the entire force of truth are insidious forms of irenecism. Care should therefore be taken with the meaning of words, style and diction. Important themes should be highlighted, without ostentation, after careful reflection. A pleasant speaking voice should be cultivated. Preachers should know their objectives and have a good understanding of the existential and cultural reality of their congregations. Theories and abstract generalizations must always be avoided. Hence every preacher should know his own flock well and use an attractive style which, rather than wounding people, strikes the conscience and is not afraid to call things for what they really are.

⁴⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, 14 September 1998, n. 2.

⁴⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 46: *I.e.*, p. 46.

Priests engaged in different pastoral tasks should help each other with fraternal advice on these and other matters such as the content of preaching and its theological and linguistic quality, style, the duration of homilies — which should always be reasonable, the proper use of the ambo, the development of an unaffected normal tone of voice and its inflection while preaching. Humility is necessary if the priest is to be helped by his brother priests and, indirectly, by the faithful who cooperate in his pastoral activities.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHAPTER TWO

1. Do we really appreciate the real effect of the ministry of the Word on the life of our communities? Are we anxious to use this essential instrument of evangelization with the best possible professionalism?
2. Is sufficient attention given to perfecting the diverse forms of proclamation of the Word in permanent formation courses?
3. Are priests encouraged to study sound theology and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Doctors of the Church and of the Saints? Are positive efforts made to know and make known the great masters of Christian spirituality?
4. Is the formation of good libraries for priests encouraged which reflect a solid doctrinal outlook?
5. Is it possible locally to access libraries available on the internet? Are priests aware of the electronic library which has been set up by the Congregation for the Clergy (www.clerus.org)?
6. Do priests use the catechesis and teaching of the Holy Father and the various documents published by the Holy See?
7. Is there an awareness of the necessity to train people (priests, permanent deacons, religious and laity) capable of using well

the means of communication which are key aspects of the evangelization of contemporary culture?

III

MINISTERS OF THE SACRAMENTS

*"Christ's servants, stewards of the entrusted
with the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4, 1)*

1. *In persona Christi Capitis*

"The Church's mission is not an addition to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but is its sacrament: in her whole being and in all her members, the Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present, and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity."⁴⁷ This sacramental dimension of the whole mission of the Church springs from her very nature as a reality which is "both human and divine, visible yet endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation, present in the world but as a pilgrim."⁴⁸ In the context of the Church as "universal sacrament of salvation,"⁴⁹ in which Christ "manifests and actualizes the mystery of God's love for men,"⁵⁰ the sacraments, privileged moments in communicating the divine life to man, are at the very core of priestly ministry. Priests are especially conscious of being living instruments of Christ, the Priest. Their function, in virtue of sacramental character, is that of men complying with the action of God through shared instrumental effectiveness.

Configuration to Christ in sacramental ordination places the priest at the heart of God's people. It allows him to participate in a way proper to him, and in conformity with the whole structure of the ecclesial community, in the triple *munus Christi*. The priest, acting *in persona Christi Capitis*, feeds the flock, the people of

⁴⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 738.

⁴⁸ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 2.

⁴⁹ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 48.

⁵⁰ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 45.

God, and leads them to sanctity.⁵¹ Hence the need for credible witness to the faith in all aspects of priestly life and in his respect for and celebration of the sacraments.⁵² The classic doctrine, repeated by the Second Vatican Council, must always be borne in mind: "While it is true that God can accomplish the work of salvation through unworthy ministers, God nevertheless, ordinarily prefers to manifest his greatness through those who are more docile to the promptings and direction of the Holy Spirit, so much so that they can say of the apostolate, thanks to their own intimate union with Christ and holiness of life: 'It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me'" (*Gal* 2, 20).⁵³

Priests, in celebrating the sacraments, act as ministers of Christ and, through the Holy Spirit, participate in His priesthood in a special way.⁵⁴ Hence the sacraments are moments of worship of singular importance for new evangelization. It must be recalled that they have become the only effective moments for transmitting the contents of the faith. While this is true for all the faithful, it is even more true for those who, having lost the practice of the faith, occasionally participate in the liturgy for family or social reasons (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, ordinations, funerals etc.). A credible life-style on the part of priests should be complemented "with a high standard of ceremony and liturgical celebration:⁵⁵ it should not seek spectacle but truly ensure that "the human is directed toward and subordinate to the divine, the visible to the

⁵¹ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of priests, Tota Ecclesia*, 7b-c: *I.e.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵² Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 5 May 1993, *Insegnamenti* XVI, 1 (1993), p. 1061.

⁵³ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 12.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 5.

⁵⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience 12 May 1993, *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 1 (1993), p. 1197.

invisible, action to contemplation, this present world to the city yet to come."⁵⁶

2. Ministers of the Eucharist: core of priestly ministry

"Jesus called his Apostles 'friends'. He also calls us friends since we share in his Priesthood by virtue of the Sacrament of Orders (...) Could Jesus have expressed his friendship for us in a more eloquent way than by allowing us, priests of the New Covenant, to act in his name, to act in *persona Christi Capitis*? This is what happens in all our priestly service, when we administer the sacraments and especially when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. We repeat the words spoken by Him over the bread and wine, and, through our ministry we effect the same consecration as effected by Christ. Can there be a more complete expression of friendship than this? This is what is at the very core of our priestly ministry."⁵⁷

New evangelization must also signal a new clarity about the centrality of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the entire Christian life, to the faithful.⁵⁸ "No Christian community can be built up unless it grows from and hinges on to the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist"⁵⁹ because "the other sacraments and indeed all ecclesial ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. For in the most Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 2.

⁵⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Priests on Holy Thursday 1997* (16 March 1997), n. 5: *MS* 89 (1997), p. 662.

⁵⁸ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 2; 10.

⁵⁹ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 6.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 5.

The Eucharist is also the object of the pastoral ministry. The faithful must participate in it if they are to draw fruit from it. While it is necessary to inculcate a "worthy, careful and fruitful" preparation for the liturgy among the laity, it is also necessary to bring them to an awareness that they are "invited and led to offer themselves, their works and all creation with Christ. For this reason the Eucharist appears as the source and summit of all preaching of the Gospel."⁶¹ From this truth many consequences follow for the pastoral ministry.

Formation of the faithful concerning the essence of the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar is vitally important as is the need to encourage them to participate fruitfully in the Eucharist.⁶² Insistence must be made on the observance of the Sunday obligation⁶³ and on frequent, if not daily, participation in the celebration of the Mass and holy communion. Emphasis must be placed on the grave obligation to fulfill the spiritual and corporeal conditions governing reception of the Body of Christ — especially individual sacramental confession for those conscious that they are not in a state of grace. The strength of Christian life in every particular Church and parish community depends, in large measure, on rediscovery of the great gift of the Eucharist in faith and adoration. When the link between daily life and the Eucharist is not clearly manifested in the priest's doctrinal teaching, preaching and life, participation begins to fall into abeyance.

In this respect, the example of the priest-celebrant is fundamentally important: "Celebrating the Eucharist well is an important form of primary catechesis on the Holy Sacrifice."⁶⁴ While this is

⁶¹ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁶² Cf. John Paul II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 12 May 1993, *Insegnamenti* XVI, 1 (1993), pp. 1197-1198.

⁶³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, 31 May 1998, n. 46: AAS 90 (1998), p. 742.

⁶⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, 49.

not the immediate intention of the priest, it is important for the faithful to see him prepare well by recollecting himself before celebrating the Holy Sacrifice. They should be able to witness the love and devotion that he has for the Eucharist and, following his example, they should learn to remain, for a while, in thanksgiving after Holy Communion.

While an essential part of the Church's work of evangelization is to teach men and women to pray to the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit, new evangelization entails the recovery and consolidation of pastoral practices which manifest belief in the real presence of Our Lord under the eucharistic species. "The priest has a mission to promote the cult of the eucharistic presence, also outside of the celebration of the Mass, thereby making of his own church a Christian "house of prayer."⁶⁵ The faithful should be well instructed with regard to the indispensable conditions for the reception of Holy Communion. It is important to encourage their devotion to Christ who awaits them in the tabernacle. A simple but effective form of eucharistic catechesis is the material care of everything concerned with the church and especially the altar and tabernacle: cleanliness and decor, worthy vestments and vessels, care in celebrating the liturgical ceremonies,⁶⁶ genuflection etc. An atmosphere of recollection should pervade the Blessed Sacrament chapel. This is a centuries old tradition guaranteeing that silence which facilitates dialogue with the Lord. The heart of our churches is the Blessed Sacrament chapel or the area in which the Eucharistic Christ is reserved and adored. Access to it should be evident and easily facilitated. It should be open for as much of the day as possible and it should be well decorated.

⁶⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 12 May 1993, *Insegnamenti* XVI, 1 (1993), p. 1198.

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibidem*; SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 112, 114, 116, 120, 122-124, 128.

All these are signs deriving not from some form of "spiritualism" but from a well tested theological tradition of devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. They are possible only if the priest is a man of prayer and genuinely devoted to the Holy Eucharist. Only the pastor who prays will know how to teach others to pray and bring God's grace on those in his pastoral charge, thereby evincing conversions, more fervent resolution for life, priestly vocations and special consecration. Only the priest who has daily experience of the *conversatio in coelis* and whose life is motivated by friendship with Christ can make genuine advances towards authentic and renewed evangelization.

3. Ministers of Reconciliation with God and the Church

In a world in which the sense of sin has declined⁶⁷ it is most necessary to insist that lack of love for God obscures our perception of the reality of sin and evil. The initiation of conversion, not just as a momentary interior act but as a stable disposition, begins with authentic knowledge of God's merciful love. "Those who come to know and see God in this way cannot live other than in continual conversion toward Him. Thus they live in a state of conversion."⁶⁸ Penance is an essential constituent of the patrimony in the ecclesial life of the baptized. It is, however, marked by the hope of pardon: "you who were once excluded from mercy have now received mercy" (/ *Pt* 2, 10).

New evangelization calls for renewed efforts to bring the faithful to the Sacrament of Penance.⁶⁹ This pastoral task is

⁶⁷ Cf. Pius XII, Radio message to the National Catechetical Congress of the United States, 26 October 1946: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, VIII (1946), p. 288; JOHN PAUL II Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n. 18: AAS 77 (1985), pp. 224-228.

⁶⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia*, n. 13: AAS 72 (1980), pp. 1220-1221.

⁶⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience 22 September 1993: *Insegnamenti* XVI, 2 (1993), p. 826.

absolutely indispensable. The Sacrament of Penance "opens the way for everyone, especially those borne down by grave sin, individually to experience mercy, that love which is stronger than sin."⁷⁰ We should never fail to encourage and promote the sacrament while striving intelligently to renew and revitalize age old beneficial Christian traditions. As a first step, with the help of the Holy Spirit, this should bring the faithful to that conversion which leads to sincere and contrite recognition of those moral flaws or deficiencies found in everyone's daily life. It is essential to insist upon the importance of frequent individual confession in arriving, where possible, at authentic personal spiritual direction.

Without confusing the sacramental moment with spiritual direction, priests should know how to identify opportunities to initiate spiritual dialogue outside of the celebration of the Sacrament. "Rediscovery and promotion of this practice, also during the various moments of the Sacrament of Penance, is a major benefit for the contemporary Church."⁷¹ Such leads to an awakening of the sense and effectiveness of the Sacrament and creates the conditions necessary to overcome the present crisis. Personal spiritual direction forms true apostles, capable of activating new evangelization in society. The success of the mission to re-evangelize so many of the faithful who are estranged from the Church requires a solid formation for those who have remained close to her.

New evangelization depends on an adequate number of priests; experience teaches that many respond positively to a vocation because of spiritual direction as well as the example given by priests who are interiorly and exteriorly faithful to their priestly identity.

⁷⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia*, n. 13: *I.e.*, p. 1219.

⁷¹ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 54, *I.e.*, p. 54; cf. John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n. 31: *I.e.*, pp. 257-266.

"In his pastoral work each priest will take particular care concerning vocations, encouraging prayer for vocations, doing his best in the work of catechetics and taking care of the formation of ministers. He will promote appropriate initiatives through a personal rapport with those in his care, allowing him to discover their talents and to single out the will of God for them, permitting a courageous choice in following Christ...It is desirable that every priest be concerned with inspiring at least one priestly vocation which could thus continue the ministry."⁷²

Giving the faithful a real possibility of coming to confession implies much dedication.⁷³ Fixed times during which the priest is available in the confessional are warmly to be encouraged. They should be well published and availability on the priest's part should not be just theoretical. Sometimes the mere fact of having to search for a confessor is sufficient to delay or postpone confession. The faithful, on the other hand, willingly approach the sacrament in places where they know confessors are available.⁷⁴ Parish churches and those open for public worship should have a good, well-lit confessional chapel, suitable for hearing confessions. A regular organized schedule of confessions should be provided and implemented by the priests. In order to facilitate the faithful in their desire to approach the Sacrament care should be taken to maintain the confessionals by frequent cleaning, ensuring that they are clearly

⁷² CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 32: *I.e.*, p. 31.

⁷³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 13; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 52: *I.e.*, pp. 52-53.

⁷⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 52: *I.e.*, p. 53; cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 13.

visible and by affording the possibility of using a grill to those who wish to remain anonymous.⁷⁵

It is not always easy to maintain these pastoral practices, but this is no excuse to overlook their pastoral effectiveness or not to reinstitute them where they have fallen into disuse. Cooperation between the diocesan clergy and religious should be encouraged so as to ensure this pastoral priority. In the same context, recognition must be given to the daily service provided in the confessional by many older priests who are true masters of the spiritual life in the various Christian communities.

This service to the Church would, of course, be more easily accomplished when priests themselves are the first to approach the Sacrament of Penance regularly.⁷⁶ Personal recourse to the Sacrament by the priest, as penitent, is an indispensable condition for a generous ministry of Reconciliation.

"All priestly existence undergoes an inexorable decline if the priest, through negligence or whatever other reason, neglects frequent recourse, inspired by genuine faith and devotion, to the Sacrament of Penance. If a priest no longer goes to confession or makes a bad confession, very quickly this will affect his priestly ministry and be noticed by the community of which he is Pastor."⁷⁷

"The ministry of priests is above all communion and a responsible and necessary cooperation with the Bishop's ministry,

⁷⁵ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL TEXTS, *Risposta circa il can.* 964 § 2 *CIC*, 7 July 1998, in AAS 90 (1998), p. 711.

⁷⁶ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 18; JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nn. 26, 28: *I.e.*, pp. 697-700, 742-45; Catechesis at the General Audience of 26 May 1993, *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 1 (1993), p. 1331; Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n. 31: *I.e.* pp. 257-266; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 53: *I.e.*, p. 54.

⁷⁷ JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n. 31, VI: *I.e.*, p. 266.

in concern for the universal Church and for the individual particular Churches, for whose service they form with the Bishop a single presbyterate."⁷⁸ The brethren in the presbyterate should always be the special object of the priest's pastoral charity, by helping them materially and spiritually, by affording the opportunity for confession and spiritual direction, by encouraging their service, by helping them in their necessities, by offering fraternal support in their difficulties, old-age or infirmity. This is truly an area for the exercise of priestly virtue.

Pastoral prudence is a fundamental virtue for fruitful exercise of the ministry of Reconciliation. Thus when the minister imparts absolution he participates as an effective instrument in the sacramental action. His task in the penitential rites is to place the penitent *before Christ*, thereby facilitating an encounter of mercy with the utmost discretion. Disagreements which do not take into account the reality of sin should be avoided. Hence the confessor should have opportune knowledge.⁷⁹ However, the penitential dialogue should always be imbued with that understanding which gradually leads to conversion. It should not, however, lapse into a so called "graduality of moral norms."

When the practice of confession diminishes, in some cases, to the detriment of the moral life and the conscience of the faithful, the danger sometimes arises of a decline in the theological and pastoral quality of the exercise of the ministry of confession. Confessors should always pray to the Paraclete for the ability to fill this salvific moment⁸⁰ with supernatural meaning and to

⁷⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 17: *I.e.*, p. 683.

⁷⁹ In this regard, a solid preparation on those matters which arise more frequently in confession is asked of priests. A useful aid in this respect is the *Vademecum per i confessori su alcuni temi morali attinenti alia vita coniugale* (PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, 12 February 1997, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1997).

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

transform it into an authentic encounter with the all merciful and forgiving Jesus for the penitent. He should also avail of confession to form the conscience of the faithful correctly — an extremely important task — by asking, where necessary, those questions which secure the integrity of confession and the validity of the sacrament. He should help the penitent to thank God for His mercy and assist him in making a firm purpose of amendment for his conduct of the moral life. He should never fail to encourage the penitent appropriately, offering him comfort and motivating him to do works of penance which are satisfaction for his sins and which help him to grow in virtue.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHAPTER THREE

1. The essence and saving meaning of the sacraments are invariable. Starting out from a firm conviction of this position, how can sacramental pastoral care be renewed and how can it be placed at the service of new evangelization?
2. Is our particular community a "Church of Eucharist and Penance"? Is eucharistic devotion in all its forms nourished and promoted? Is the practice of personal confession facilitated and encouraged?
3. Is habitual reference made to the real presence of Our Lord in the tabernacle and, for example, is the fruitful practice of visiting the Blessed Sacrament encouraged? Are there frequent acts of eucharistic worship? Do our Churches have an atmosphere which encourages prayer before the Blessed Sacrament?
4. In a true pastoral spirit is special care given to the proper maintenance of the Church? Do priests respect the canonical (cf. canons 284, 669; the *Directory for the Life and Ministry Priests*) and liturgical norms by vesting properly and rever-

ently for divine worship and by wearing all of the prescribed vestments (cf. canon 929)?

5. Do priests go to confession regularly and do they make themselves available for this important ministry?
6. In the exercise of their pastoral ministry what pastoral efforts are being made in the area of Reconciliation and Penance? Do churches and sanctuaries have an established time for hearing confessions? Is it respected and followed?
7. What initiatives are taken in permanent formation to perfect and assist priests in their ministry of confessors? Are they encouraged to update themselves properly for this indispensable ministry?
8. Are confessors reminded of the norms pertaining to prudence in the confessional regularly and the need for reserve when dealing with all penitents? Among other things, in this respect, is the traditional discipline of the confessional employed?
9. Given the importance for new evangelization of a renewal of individual confession, are the canonical norms concerning general absolution observed? Are penitential ceremonies in the various churches and chapels prepared with prudence and pastoral charity? Are opportunities made available for a number of examinations of conscience bearing in mind the diversity of age and states of life?
10. What concrete initiatives are being made to encourage the faithful to attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation?

IV

LOVING PASTORS OF THE FLOCK

"The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep"

(John 10, 11)

1. With Christ, incarnating and spreading the mercy of the Father

"The Church lives an authentic life when she *professes and proclaims mercy* — the most stupendous attribute of the creator and of the Redeemer — and when she brings people close to the sources of the Saviour's mercy, of which she is trustee and dispenser."⁸¹ This reality essentially distinguishes the Church from other human institutions dedicated to the promotion of solidarity and philanthropy. Even when imbued with a religious spirit, by themselves, such institutions cannot effectively dispense the mercy of God. The mercy of God as offered by the Church, in contrast with secularized concepts of mercy which fail to transform man interiorly, is primarily forgiveness and salvific healing. Its effectiveness on man requires his acceptance of the entire truth concerning his being, his action and his guilt. Hence derives the need for sorrow and encounter with the proclamation of mercy and the fullness of truth. Such affirmations are vitally important for priests who are called to a particular vocation, by the Church and in the Church, to reveal and effect the mystery of the Father's love in their ministry, lived in charity according to the truth (*EfA*, 15) and in docility to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The mercy of God, manifested by His paternal love, is encountered in Christ. He reveals his messianic role (cf. *Lk* 4, 18)

⁸¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dives in Misericordia*, 30 November 1980, n. 13c: *I.e.*, p. 1219.

as the Father's mercy for all who are in need, especially sinners who need forgiveness and interior peace. "It is especially for these last that the Messiah becomes a particularly clear sign of God who is love, a sign of the Father. In this visible sign the people of our time, just like people then, can see the Father."⁸² God "who is love" (1 John 4, 16) cannot but reveal Himself as mercy.⁸³ Through the sacrifice of His Son, God the Father, in His love, implicated Himself in the drama of man's salvation.

While in the preaching of Christ mercy acquires many striking characteristics which surpass human realization — as emerges in the parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. Lk 15, 11-32) — it is in his sacrifice on the cross that its meaning is most especially revealed. The crucified Christ is the radical manifestation of the Father's mercy, of that "love which goes against the very source of evil in human history: countering sin and death."⁸⁴ The Christian spiritual tradition regards the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which draws priestly hearts to itself, as a profound, mysterious synthesis of the Father's infinite mercy.

The soteriological dimension of the entire priestly *munus pastorale* is centered on the eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of Jesus' offering up of his life. "There exists, in fact, an intimate rapport between the centrality of the Eucharist, pastoral charity and the priest's unity of life. He finds in this rapport the decisive indications for the way to holiness to which he has been specifically called... If the priest lends to Christ, Most Eternal High Priest, his intelligence, will, voice and hands so as to offer through his own ministry the sacrifice of redemption to the Father, he should make his own the dispositions of the Master and, like him, live those *gifts* for his brothers in the faith. He must therefore learn to unite

⁸²*Ibid.*, n. 3: *I.e.*, p. 1183.

⁸³ Cf. n. 13: *I.c.*, pp. 1218-1221.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, n. 8: *I.e.*, p. 1204.

himself intimately to the offering, placing his entire life on the altar of sacrifice as a revealing sign of the gratuitous and anticipatory love of God."⁸⁵ In the permanent gift of the eucharistic Sacrifice, memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus, priests have sacramentally received the unique and singular ministerial capacity to bring the witness of God's infinite love to men, which will be confirmed as more powerful than sin in salvation history. The paschal Christ is the definitive incarnation of mercy and its living sign, both in salvation history and eschatologically.⁸⁶ According to the Cure d'Ars, the priesthood is "the love of the heart of Jesus."⁸⁷ In virtue of the consecration and their ministry, with Christ, priests are living and effective signs of this great love, described by St. Augustine as the *amoris officium*.¹⁹⁶

2. Sacerdos et Hostia

Essential to authentic mercy is its gratuitous nature. It is received as an unmerited gift which has been freely and gratuitously given and which is completely unmerited. Such liberality is part of the Father's saving plan. "This is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away" (7 *John* 4, 10). The ordained minister, in precisely this context, finds his *raison d'être*. No one can confer grace of himself; it is always given and received. This presupposes that there are ministers of grace, authorized and empowered by Christ. In the Church's tradition, the ordained ministry is referred to as "sacrament", since through the ministry

⁸⁵ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 48: *I.e.*, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 8: *I.e.*, pp. 668-669.

⁸⁷ Cf. Jean-Marie Vianney, *Cure d'Ars: sa pensée, son cœur*, présenté par Bernard Nodet, Le Puy 1960, p. 100.

⁸⁸ ST. AUGUSTINE, *In Johannis Evangelium Tractatus*, 123, 5: CCL 36, 678.

those sent by Christ, by God's gift, effect and offer that which they themselves can neither effect nor give.⁸⁹

Priests should therefore regard themselves as living signs and bearers of that mercy which they offer, not as though it were their own, but as a free gift from God. They are thus servants of God's mercy. The desire to serve is an essential element of priestly ministry and requires the respective moral disposition in the subject. The priest makes Jesus, the Pastor who came to serve and not be served (*Mt* 20, 28) present to men. The priest primarily serves Christ, but that service necessarily passes through the Church and her mission."

He loves us and sheds his blood to wash away our sins: *Pontifex qui dilexisti nos et lavasti a peccatis in sanguine tuo*. He gave himself for us: *tradidisti temetipsum Deo oblationem et hostiam*. Christ introduces the sacrifice of himself, ransom for our redemption, into the eternal sanctuary. The offering, the sacrificial victim, is inseparable from the priest."⁹⁰ While only Christ is simultaneously *Sacerdos et Hostia*, his minister who partakes in the dynamic of the Church's mission, is sacramentally priest and permanently called to become a *Hostia* and thereby assimilate "the same sentiments that Jesus had" (*Phil* 2, 5). The effectiveness of all evangelizing activity depends on this unbreakable unity of priest and sacrificial victim,⁹¹ or priesthood and Eucharist. Today, the work of divine mercy, contained in Word and Sacraments, depends on the unity, in the Holy Spirit, of Christ and his minister, who does not substitute for Him but relies on Him and allows Him to act in and through him. The significance of St. John's Gospel can be applied to this link between the ministry of the priest and Jesus:

⁸⁹ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 875.

⁹⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Letter to Priests on Holy Thursday 1997 (16 March 1997), n. 4: AAS 89 (1997), p. 661.

⁹¹ Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3.

"I am the vine...cut off from me you can do nothing" (*John* 15, 14).

The call to become, like Jesus, a *Hostia* underlies the compatibility of the commitment to celibacy with the priestly ministry in the Church. It implies the incorporation of the priest in the sacrifice with which "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her so as to make her holy" (*Eph* 5, 25-26). The priest is called to be "a living image of Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Church" and to make his entire life an offering for her."⁹² "Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest's service in and with the Lord."⁹³

3. The Pastoral Ministry of Priests: service of leading in love and strength

"Priests exercise the function of Christ as Pastor and Head in proportion to their share of authority. In the name of the bishop they gather the family of God as a brotherhood endowed with the spirit of unity and lead it through Christ in the Spirit to God the Father."⁹⁴ The indispensable exercise of the *munus regendi* by the priest, far from being a mere sociological concept or organizational capacity, derives also from the sacramental priesthood: "In virtue of the Sacrament of Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest (*Heb* 5, 1-10; 7, 24; 9, 11-28) they are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament."⁹⁵

Since priests participate in the authority of Christ they differ notably from the faithful. These realize, however, that "the presence

⁹² JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 22: *I.e.*, p. 691.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 29: *I.e.*, p. 704.

⁹⁴ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 6.

⁹⁵ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 28.

of Christ in their ministry is not to be understood as if... (they) were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error and even sin."⁹⁶ The word and guidance of ministers are subject to greater or lesser effectiveness depending on their natural or acquired qualities of intelligence, will, character and maturity. This awareness together with a realization of the sacramental origins of the pastoral ministry, inspires them to imitate Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and makes pastoral charity indispensable for a fruitful exercise of the ministry.

"The essential object of their action as pastors and of the authority conferred on them" is "to bring the communities entrusted to them to full spiritual and ecclesial development."⁹⁷ However, "the community dimension of pastoral care...the needs of each of the faithful...Jesus himself, the Good Shepherd, calls "his sheep one by one" with a voice well known to them (*John* 10, 3-4). By his example he has set the first canon of individual pastoral care: knowledge of the people and friendly relations with them."⁹⁸ In the Church, a community vision of the pastoral ministry must be in harmony with this personal pastoral care. Indeed, in building up the Church the pastor always moves from a personal to a community dimension. In relating to individuals and communities, the priest cares for all "*eximia humanitate*."⁹⁹ He can never be the servant of an ideology or of a faction.¹⁰⁰ He is obliged to treat men "not according to what may please men, but according to the demands of Christian doctrine and life."¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1550.

⁹⁷ JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 19 May 1993, *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 1 (1993), p. 1254.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 4., *I.e.*, pp. 1255-1256.

⁹⁹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 6a.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 6g.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 6a.

Today more than ever, the style of pastoral action needs to be such as can address the demands arising in traditionally Christian communities which have become largely secularized. In this context, consideration of the *munus regendi*, in its original missionary sense, acquires greater significance. The *munus regendi*, however, should never be confused with a merely bureaucratic or organizational task. It requires a loving exercise of strength on the part of priests — the model for which is the pastoral activity of Jesus Christ. He, as is clear from the Gospels, never refused to assume that responsibility deriving from his messianic authority and exercised it with charity and strength. This authority is not an oppressive domination but a spirit of and a willingness to serve. This dual aspect — authority and service — is the reference point for the *munus regendi* of the priest who must always commit himself to a coherent exercise of his participation in the condition of Christ, Head and Shepherd of the flock.¹⁰²

The priest, with and under the Bishop, is also a pastor of the community entrusted to him. Moved by pastoral charity he should not fear to exercise proper authority in those areas where he is obliged to exercise it for he has been constituted in authority for this very purpose. It must be recalled that when authority is duly exercised it is done *non tam praeesse quam prodesse* (not so much to command but to serve).¹⁰³ Those in authority must overcome the temptation to exempt themselves from this responsibility. If they do not exercise authority, they no longer serve. In close communion with his Bishop and with his faithful, the priest should avoid introducing into his pastoral ministry all forms of authoritarianism and forms of democratic administration which are alien to the profound reality of the ministry, for these lead to a secularization

¹⁰² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 17: I.e., pp. 18-20.

¹⁰³ ST. AUGUSTINE, *Ep. 134*, 1: CSEL 44, 85.

of the priest and a clericalization of the laity.¹⁰⁴ Behind such approaches to the ministry there is often a hidden fear of assuming responsibility or making mistakes, of not being liked or of being unpopular or indeed a reluctance to accept the cross. Ultimately these spring from an obscuring of the real source of priestly identity which is assimilation to Christ, the Shepherd and Head of the flock.

New evangelization requires that the priest make his authentic presence evident in the community. They should realize that the ministers of Jesus Christ are present and available to all men.¹⁰⁵ Thus their amicable insertion into the community is always important. In this context it is easy to understand the significance and pastoral role of the discipline concerning clerical garb, to which the priest should always conform since it is a public proclamation of his limitless dedication to the brethren and to the faithful in his service to Jesus Christ. The more society is marked by secularization, the greater the need for signs.

The priest should avoid falling into the contradictory position of abdicating exercise of his specific authority so as to involve

¹⁰⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 19; John Paul II Allocution at the Symposium "Collaboration of the Laity with the pastoral ministry of priests" (22 April 1994), n. 4; *Sacrum Ministerium* 1 (1995) 64; cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY, CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGAL TEXTS, Interdicasterial Instruction *Ecclesiae de Mysterio* on some questions concerning the collaboration of the lay faithful with the ministry of priests, 15 August 1997, Forward: AAS 89 (1997), p. 852.

¹⁰⁵ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 66: *I.e.*, pp. 67-68.

himself in temporal, social or even political matters,¹⁰⁶ which God has left to the free disposition of man.

The priest enjoys a certain prestige amongst the faithful and, in some places, with the civil authorities. He should, however, be aware that such prestige should be lived in humility and used correctly for the promotion of the *salus animarum* while remembering that Christ is the real head of the people of God. It is to Him that the faithful must be directed and not to any attachment to an individual priest. The faithful belong to Christ alone, for only He has redeemed them by His precious blood, to the glory of God the Father. He is thus Lord of all supernatural goods and Teacher who teaches with authority. In Christ and the Holy Spirit, the priest is but an administrator of the gifts entrusted to him by the Church. He has no right to omit or deviate them or remodel them to his own liking.¹⁰⁷ He has received, for example, no authority to teach the Christian faithful that only some of the truths of the Christian faith have been given to him so as to obscure or ignore others which he personally considers more difficult to accept or "less relevant".¹⁰⁸

Concerning new evangelization and the pastoral leadership given by priests, all need to undertake a sincere and careful discernment. The attitude of "not wishing to impose", etc., may well mask a misconception of the very theological substance of

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2442; *CIC*, canon 227; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 33: *I.e.*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22; *CIC*, canon 846; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, nn. 49 and 64: *I.e.*, pp. 49 and 66.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 26: *I.e.*, pp. 697-700; Catechesis at the General Audience 21 April 1993, *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 1 (1993), p. 938; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, Tota Ecclesia*, n. 45: *I.e.*, pp. 43-45.

the pastoral ministry or a lack of character which seeks to escape responsibility. Neither undue attachment to persons or particular ministerial positions nor misguided desires for popularity nor lack of proper intention can be underestimated when making this discernment. Pastoral charity, void of humility, is empty. Pride or need to crave attention can mask seemingly motivated rebellion, reticence in the face of pastoral changes desired by the Bishop, eccentric preaching and celebration of the liturgy, refusal to wear ecclesial garb or alteration of ecclesiastical garb for personal convenience.

New evangelization demands a renewal of commitment to the pastoral ministry, especially on the part of priests. "As the Council points out 'the spiritual gift which priests have received in ordination does not prepare them merely for a limited and circumscribed mission, but for the fullest, in fact the universal mission of salvation to the end of the earth. The reason is that every priestly ministry shares in the fullness of the mission entrusted by Christ to the Apostles.'"¹⁰⁹ Numerical shortages of clergy, experienced in some countries, coupled with the mobility of the contemporary world makes it particularly necessary to be able to call on priests who are willing to change not only pastoral assignments but also cities, regions, countries in response to various needs and to undertake whatever mission may be necessary while renouncing personal plans and desires for the sake of the love of God. "By the very nature of their ministry they should therefore be penetrated and animated by a profound missionary spirit and 'with that truly Catholic spirit which habitually looks beyond the boundaries of diocese, country or rite, to meet the needs of the whole Church, being prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel

¹⁰⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 18: *I.e.*, p. 684; cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 10.

everywhere.""¹⁰ A correct sense of the particular Church, especially in permanent formation, should never obscure a sense of the universal Church and should always be in harmony with it.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. How can the Mercy of God of those in need be made more clearly evident through our communities and especially through our priests? Is sufficient emphasis given to the practice of the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy as a means of attaining Christian maturity and of evangelizing?
2. Is pastoral charity in all its dimensions really "the soul and dynamism of the permanent formation" of our priests?
3. Are priests encouraged to care for their brother priests with a sincere fraternal spirit, especially the sick and the old or those who find themselves in difficulty? Are there forms of common life available?
4. Do our priests understand and exercise their proper and correct function as spiritual leaders of the communities entrusted to them? In what concrete form is this exercised?
5. Given the urgency of the apostolic mission on the threshold of the Third Millennium when all the faithful must be asked to have the courage to show that they are followers of Christ by manifesting themselves as believers, how can emphasis be given to the need for priests to make ever more evident, even externally, their specific presence among men?
6. Is sufficient emphasis given to the missionary dimension of the sacred ministry and to the Church's universal dimension in the spiritual formation of priests?

¹⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 18: *I.e.*, p. 684; cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree *Optatam Totius*, n. 20.

7. Do we factually omit preaching on certain truths of the faith or particular moral principles simply because they are regarded as difficult to accept?
8. Are all priests encouraged to teach Christian morality in its integrity?
9. One of the demands of the pastoral ministry is to unite initiatives in promoting the mission of evangelizing. Are all the vocations present in the Church encouraged and their specific charisms respected?

CONCLUSIONS

"New evangelization needs new evangelizers and these are the priests who are serious about living their priesthood as a specific path toward holiness."¹¹¹ To accomplish this it is fundamentally important that every priest rediscover the absolute need for personal sanctity. "Before purifying others, they must purify themselves; to instruct others they must be instructed; they have to become light in order to illuminate and become close to God in order to bring others closer to Him; they have to be sanctified in order to sanctify."¹¹² This commitment is made concrete in a profound *unity of life* which leads the priest to be and live as *another Christ* in all the circumstances of his life.

The faithful in the parish and those who collaborate in various pastoral activities see, observe, feel, and listen not only when the Word of God is preached but also when the liturgy is celebrated, especially the Mass, when they are received in the parochial office (which should be comfortable and welcoming);¹¹³ when the priest eats and when he rests and they are edified by his temperance and sobriety; when they visit his home and they rejoice in his simplicity and priestly poverty;¹¹⁴ when they talk with him and discuss common interests and are comforted by his spiritual outlook, his courtesy and his behaviour in treating humble people with priestly nobility. "The grace and charity of the Altar are diffused at the ambo, in the confessional, in the parish archive, in the schools and

¹¹¹ JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 82f, *I.e.*, p. 801.

¹¹² ST. GREGORY NAZIANZUS, *Orationes*, 2, 71: PG 35, 480B.

¹¹³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n. 43: *lc.* pp. 731-733.

¹¹⁴ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 17; CIC, canon 282; JOHN PAUL II Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 30: *I.e.*, pp. 705-707; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Tota Ecclesia*, n. 67: *I.e.*, pp. 68-70.

oratories, in the homes of the faithful, in the streets and at the hospitals, on public transport and in the media. The priest has an opportunity to fulfill his role as Pastor everywhere. In every instance it is his Mass which is diffused. His spiritual union with Christ, Priest and Host, causes him to be the grain of God that is to become the true bread of Christ — as St. Ignatius of Antioch says (*Epist. ad Romanos*, IV, 1) — for the good of the brethren."¹¹⁵

Thus the priest of the Third Millennium will be able to repeat again the reaction of the disciples at Emaus, who, having heard Jesus, the Divine Teacher, explain the Scriptures, could not but ask themselves "did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" (*Lk* 24, 32). We pastors should entrust ourselves to Mary, Queen and Mother of the Church, so that, united with the Vicar of Christ, we may discover new ways to evince a sincere desire for renewal among the Church's priests in their tasks as teachers of the Word, ministers of the Sacraments and leaders of the community. Let us ask the Queen of Evangelization for the Church to discover anew the path which the mercy of God, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, has prepared from all eternity to draw all men, including our own generation, into communion with Him.

Rome, at the Palace of the Congregations, 19 March 1999,
Solemnity of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church.

DARÍO CARD. CASTRILLÓN HOYOS

Prefect

and CSABA TERNYÁK

Titular Archbishop of Eminenziana

Secretary

¹¹⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 7 July 1993, n. 7: *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 2 (1993), p. 38.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

MARY,

Star of the New Evangelization,

who from the outset gladdened and renewed the hearts of the apostles and their helpers in their spreading the Gospel, at the dawn of the third millennium, cause to grow in priests an increasing realization that they are primarily responsible for new evangelization.

MARY,

First of the evangelized and first evangelizer,

who with incomparable faith, hope and charity responded to the Angel, intercede for those configured to your Son, Christ the Priest, so that they too may respond in the same spirit to the Holy Father's urgent call made to them in the Father's name on the occasion of the great Jubilee.

MARY,

Teacher of lived faith,

who accepted the divine Word in total availability, teach priests to know the Word in prayer and to devote themselves to his service in humility and love, so that the same Word may continue to exercise his all saving power in the third millennium.

MARY,

Full of grace and Mother of grace,

protect your priestly sons who, like you, are called to be collaborators of the Spirit who causes Jesus to be born in the hearts of the faithful. Teach them to be faithful dispensers of the mysteries of God during this anniversary of the birth of your Son, so that with your help they may open the way of reconciliation to sinners, make the Eucharist the summit of their lives and of the lives of those entrusted to them.

MARY,

Morning Star of the Third Millennium,

continue to guide the priests of Jesus Christ in following your example of love of God and love of neighbour. May they know how to be true pastors. May they guide the footsteps of all men to your Son, true light enlightening all men (*John* 1, 9). May priests and through them, all God's people, listen lovingly to his call on the eve of a new millennium in the history of salvation: "Do what he tells you" (*John* 2, 5). The Vicar of Christ tells us that "with renewed force, the year 2000 should echo the proclamation of the truth: *Ecce natus est nobis Salvator Mundi.*"

The Co-essentiality between the Institutional and Charismatic Dimension of the Church

EMMANUEL MIJARES

Introduction

On the vigil of Pentecost Sunday, of the Year of the Holy Spirit in the immediate preparation for the Great Jubilee Year, Lay movements were the protagonists of an extraordinary meeting with the Holy Father in St. Peter's Square. Exactly one year later, Pope John Paul II, recalling that moment, emphasized once again that the ecclesial movements and new communities "constitute a true gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church at the close of the millennium and one of the new signs which emerged from Vatican Council II." The Pope added: "The Pentecost '98 meeting has produced invaluable fruits. It has given rise to a great number of initiatives aimed at nurturing a sense of communion within the movements and ecclesial communities, and at increasing collaboration among them, with the local Church and with the parishes." The Holy Father invited everyone to thank the Lord "for this promising springtime in the Church, so rich in hope" and he said he was sure that the programmed meeting for June would contribute "towards its further development"¹

¹ *Regina Coeli*, 23 May 1999.

It was here that he also announced the Pontifical Council for the Laity's initiative to organize a Congress focusing on the topic, 'Ecclesial Movements and New Communities and the Bishops' Pastoral Care.' The Pope believed that it is precisely from this collaboration between the new entities and the Church's hierarchy that the Christians' "missionary impulse" in "a secularized world," largely depends; it is based on "a radical experience of faith in Christ, an experience which is expressed in prayer, unity and proclamation" of the Good News."²

This calls to mind Encyclical Letter by Pope John Paul II *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, wherein he already forwarded some ideas regarding what the Holy Spirit is working in this century: The Church cannot prepare for the new millennium "in any other way than in the Holy Spirit. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit 'in the fullness of time' can only through the spirit's power now emerge from the memory of the Church." (Encyclical Letter by Pope John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 51)³

The Spirit, in fact, makes present in the Church of every time and place the unique Revelation brought by Christ to humanity, making it alive and active in the soul of each individual: "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (Jn 14:26).

To primarily prepare therefore the Great Jubilee Year, he wrote in the same encyclical: "thus include[s] a renewed appreciation of the presence and activity of the Spirit, who acts within the Church both in the Sacrament . . . and in the variety of charism, roles and ministries which he inspires for the good of the Church."⁴

² *ibid.*

³ John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 44.

⁴ *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 45.

At the end of this millennium, we cannot deny the presence of the movement in the Church. It is said that the new ecclesial movements and communities, are not anymore a phenomenon but a reality. It is as if the Church discovers a new treasure and she is still in awe what would be the value of it.

It is also that the second of this century is not anymore the winter but the springtime of the Church. Thanks to these new manifestations of the Holy Spirit through the ecclesial movements and communities.

Co-essentiality of the Institutional and Charismatic Dimension

There is a need therefore for a theological locus to situate these movements. What theological schemes should we build for them? Pastorally parish priests could face problems and difficulties in as much as these movement have new features and sometimes do not fit to their pastoral programs.

One could think of the binomials and polarity between the institutional church and the charismatic church; between Christology and pneumatology; between hierarchy and charisms; between the particular and universal church; between the apostles in the church and the prophets in the church, etc. The formulation however purports a certain tension, even if it is healthy, between the two, which sometimes are considered polarizing dimensions in the church.

John Paul II, instead, on the occasion of Pentecost 98, underlined that the institutional and charismatic dimensions "are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they contribute together to rendering present the mystery of Christ and his salvific work in the world."⁵ They

⁵ John Paul II, Address to half a million members of ecclesial movements from around the world gathered in St. Peter's Square, May 30, 1999. *"L'Osservatore Romano"*, n. 22, 3 June 1998.

contribute, although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God's People.

Its significance and implications

The Pope refers, in address, to the ecclesiological vision outlined by the Second Vatican Council. He said: "Within the Second Vatican Council, the Comforter recently gave the Church, which according to the Fathers is the place "where the Spirit flourishes" (CCC n. 749), a renewed Pentecost, instilling a new and unforeseen dynamism."

"Whenever the spirit intervenes, he leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness; he radically changes persons and history. This was unforgettable experience of the Second Vatican Council during which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church rediscovered the charismatic dimension of one of her constitutive elements. In fact, the dogmatic constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, teaches in n. 4 that the Holy Spirit guides the Church . . . "and gives her a unity of fellowship and service. He furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic," and n. 12 further specifies: "it is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Allotting his gifts 'to everyone according as he will' (1 Cor 12:11). He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks or offices advantageous for the renewal and building up to the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit' (1 Cor 12:17)."

From its origins and then unceasingly throughout the centuries, the Church has always experienced that she is generated and built up, at the same time and providential synergy, by what the Council calls "hierarchical gifts", constituting the institutional dimension of

the church, and by what the Council defines as the "charismatic gifts", constituting dimension. Both dimensions are in answer to the promise that the risen Lord made to the apostle before ascending to heaven, as the guarantee of the effectiveness of their mission in the world: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28: 19-20).⁶

Therefore it is the same Holy Spirit which is the origin and dispenser of both hierarchical gifts and charismatic gifts. "There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries distributes his different gift for the welfare of the Church" (cf. 1 Cor 12:1- 11).

Among these gifts stands out the grace given to the Apostles. To their authority, the Spirit himself subjected even those who are were endowed with charisms (cf. 1 Cor 14). Giving the body unity through himself and through his power and through the internal cohesion of its members, this same Spirit produces and urges love among the believers." (LG, n. 7)

The institutional aspect of the church, which ultimately is concretized in and by Holy Orders, ultimately also come from the Holy Spirit. In fact, those who are normally ordained to the sacred orders, first of all experienced a call from the Holy Spirit and the church founded through the Pentecost, only affirms and confirms it. Now, if Sacred orders, the hierarchical gifts, come from the Holy spirit, the same source of charismatic gifts and expresses itself in history through ecclesial movements, pastorally, the ordained minister would immediately find a unifying instinct if not a nostalgia

⁶ Piero Coda, *The Charism and Co-Essentiality*. Talk given to the participants of "Speyer 1999 Meeting: Towards Communion among Lay Movements and new Ecclesial Realities", June 7-8 1999, Speyer, Germany.

towards them, finding in them the imprint of the same Holy Spirit that he received sacramentally in ordination. In the same way, members of new ecclesial movements and communities have to be instinctively one with their pastors because the hierarchy is also coming from the Holy Spirit.⁷

Both, the hierarchy and the movements are the tangible expression of the gift, *par excellence*, which the risen Jesus pours over the Church so that she may continue his same mission: the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hierarchical and charismatic gifts are gifts of the Holy Spirit-Gift.

Through the first, the Holy Spirit objectively guarantees the presence of Jesus who gives himself to the Church, through the Word and Sacraments, generating and nourishing her as his spouse, other himself (cf. Eph 5:25). We can cite the Eucharist as only one example of Jesus' self-giving to the Church in all its objectives reality, which is also its culminating point.⁸

Through the charismatic gifts, on the other hand, the same Spirit opens the subjectivity of believers — that is, their minds and hearts, their existence — so that they become capable of receiving, of penetrating and of bringing to full effectiveness of life and holiness the objective gift of Christ which they receive from the Word of God and the Sacraments, announced and celebrated by the ordained ministers. They are normally given to a single person, but in such a way that they can "be shared by others in such ways as to continue in time a precious and effective heritage serving as a source of a particular spiritual affinity among persons," to the advantage of the entire Church.⁹

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ cfr. Pierro Coda, *he. cit.*

⁹ *Christifideles Laid*, 24.

The objective charism and the subjective charism are therefore co-essential in identity and in the mission of the Church. They express and realize the spousal rapport that subsists between Christ and the Church. Christ continues to give himself in the Spirit to the Church his Bride through the Word and the Sacraments. And the Church, Bride of Christ, formed by the charismatic gifts she receives from the same Holy Spirit, gathers, generates and increases within herself the Christ given to her through the Word and Sacraments, by living the new commandment of mutual love and by loving all brothers and sisters.¹⁰

If there is a difference in the way in which the objective charism and the subjective charism are given by the same Holy Spirit to the Church, it consists in the fact that, in the first case, this gift is objectively guaranteed by Christ's faithfulness to the Church (for example, Jesus in the Eucharist becomes present independently of the subjective holiness of the minister). Whereas in the second case, the Holy Spirit is received and accepted only when whoever is called to receive the subjective charism and to live it, conforms his or her life to Jesus the one mediator for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church. The objective and subjective charisms, therefore, are essentially in relationship with one another.¹¹ One cannot be without the other.

Authenticity of Ecclesial Movements

Another question hangs over us. How would we determine the authenticity of these movements, especially those are yet on the process of being approved by the church?

First, let us recall the Document *Christifideles Laid*, 30 which says: "it is always from the perspective of the Church's communion and mission, and not in opposition to the freedom to associate,

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

that one understands the necessity of having clear and definite criteria for discerning and recognizing such lay groups, also called "Criteria of Ecclesiality".

The following basic criteria might be helpful in evaluating an association of the lay faithful in the Church:

—The primary given to the call of every Christian to holiness, as it manifested "in the fruits of grace which the spirit produces in the faithful" and in a growth towards the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity.

—The responsibility of professing the Catholic faith, embracing and proclaiming the truth about Christ, the Church and humanity, in obedience to the Church's Magisterium, as the Church interprets it. For this reason every association of the lay faithful must be a forum where the faith is proclaimed as well as taught in its total content.

—The witness to a strong and authentic communion in filial relationship to the Pope, in total adherence to the belief that he is the perpetual and visual center of unity of the universal Church, and with the local bishop "the visible principle and foundation of unity" in the particular church, and in "mutual esteem for all forms of the church apostolate".

The communion with Pope and bishop must be expressed in loyal readiness to embrace the doctrinal teachings and pastoral initiatives of both Pope and Bishop. Moreover, church communion demands both an acknowledgement of a legitimate plurality of forms in the associations of the lay faithful in the Church and at the same time, willingness to cooperate in working together.

— Conformity to and participation in the Church's apostolic goals, i.e., "evangelization and sanctification of humanity and the Christian formation of the people's conscience, so as to enable them to infuse the spirit of the Gospel into the various communities and spheres of life."

— A commitment to a presence in human society, which in light of the Church's social doctrine, place it at the service of the total dignity of the person.¹²

Perhaps the basic criteria of the authenticity of any movement is from the definition of the same by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: "Movements are born from a charismatic leader or personality or personality; they form concrete communities which by force of their origin, re-live the Gospel in its entirety, and without hesitation they recognize the church their reason of life without which they could not continue to exist. The essential criterion then is the rooting itself in the faith of the church. Whoever does not share the apostolic faith cannot lay claim apostolic activity."¹³

The grace of discernment

The members of the hierarchy, sacramentally configured to Christ, are called to be signs and instruments of him — they act, in fact, *in persona Christi Capitis Ecclesiae* (Cf. PO 2; LG 10) — so that he may give himself to the Church his Bride. As pastor of the Church, they also have the grace and duty to receive with gratitude, to discern the authenticity of the charismatic gifts and to regulate their orderly use in accordance with their specific sphere

¹² "The fundamental criteria mentioned at this time find their verification in the actual fruits that various group forms show in their organizational life and the works they perform, such as the renewed appreciation for prayer, contemplation, liturgical and sacramental life, the reawakening of vocations to Christian marriage, the ministerial priesthood and the consecrated life; a readiness to participate in programs and Church activities at the local, national and international levels; a commitment to catechesis and a capacity for teaching and forming Christians; a desire to be present as Christians in various settings of social life and the creation and awakening of charitable, cultural and spiritual works the spirit of detachment and evangelical poverty leading to a greater generosity in charity towards all; conversion to the Christian life or the return to the Church communion of those baptized members who have fallen away from the faith." *Christifideles Laid*, 30.

¹³ cfr. Talk of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger given during the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, *Domus Pads*, Rome, May 27, 1998 (unofficial translation).

of competence: that of the universal Church for the Pope, and that of the particular Church for the Bishops united in collegial communion with him (cf. LG 12).

Furthermore, inasmuch as they themselves are members of the Church, Bride of Christ, the ordained ministers are called to be open and to welcome the gift of Christ. Consequently, the charismatic gifts can help them to live their lives as Christians and also to exercise their ministry more fully in conformity to the heart and mind of Christ.

In their turn, "true charisms — these are the words of the Pope — cannot but aim at the encounter with Christ in the sacraments" and to live a "trusting obedience to the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles, in communion with the Successor of Peter," according to the words of Jesus: "Who hears you hears me" (Lk 10:16).

In the homily of the Holy Father, n. 8 The Council wrote in clear words: "Those who have charge over the church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts, through their office not indeed to extinguish, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (LG n. 12).

In his message to the participants of the said recent Seminar for Bishops on the ecclesial movements and new communities, last June 16-19 1999, John Paul II stressed the need for lay people in the missionary role of the Church.

The essential point for the Bishops, according to the Pope, is "to know how elicit a lively missionary impulse from the laity is indispensable for the Church as she prepares to cross the threshold of the third millennium."

In reference to the pastors, John Paul II wrote, "Dear brothers in the Episcopal! From you, whose task is to discern the authenticity of the charisms, and to decide on their just exercise in the context

of the Church, I ask for paternal magnanimity and charity and a broad vision as regards these realities, because every work of man requires time and patience for its adequate and indispensable purification."

"I am convinced, venerable brothers," continued the Holy Father, "that your careful and cordial disposition, making possible opportune meetings for prayer, reflection and friendship, will in turn make your authority not only more pleasing but more exacting, your pointers more efficacious and incisive, and ministry conferred on you to evaluate the charism in order of 'common usefulness' more fruitful. Your first task, is to open the eyes of your heart and mind to recognize the multiple ways the Spirit is present in the Church, to reflect on these and to lead them to unity in truth and charity."

Pastorally, this also re-echoes what the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines decreed: "priests should welcome, encourage, and support these renewed communities, whenever they could be led into the mainstream of parish and diocesan pastoral priorities and programs. When properly guided they draw attention to the continuing presence, power, and activity of the Spirit in the Church and in the world."¹⁴

Conclusion

I will conclude with the words of appeal of the Pope to the Cardinals and Bishops present in the seminar in Rome last June 16-19, 1999, which could also be applied to our priest in the parishes: "In the course of my meetings with the ecclesial movements and new communities, I have repeatedly stressed the intimate connection between their experience and the reality of the local Churches and the universal Church, of which they are a fruit and, at the same time, a missionary expression. Last year, at the

¹⁴ PCP II, 612.

world congress of ecclesial movements, I publicly stated 'their disposition to put their energies at the service of the See of Peter and of the local Churches.' In fact, one of the most important fruits generated by the movements is, precisely, knowing how to free a lively missionary impulse in so many lay faithful, men and women, adults and children, something indispensable for the Church as she prepares to cross the threshold of the third millennium."

"However, this objectives is reached only when 'they integrate themselves with humility in the life of the local Churches and are cordially welcomed by the bishops and priests in the existing diocesan and parish structures,'" he continued. "What does this means in concrete terms for the apostolate and pastoral action? How do we receive this special gift which the Spirit is offering to the Church at this moment in time? How do we receive it in its full extension, in its fullness, in all its dynamism?"

John Paul II encouraged the Bishops in their mission as pastors of the Church. "To respond adequately to these questions is part of your responsibility as pastors. Your great responsibility is to not allow the gift of the Spirit to be in vain but, on the contrary, to make it even more fruitful in the service of the entire Christian people."¹⁵

¹⁵ John Paul II, Message to Bishops and Ecclesial Movement, Seminar on "Ecclesial Movements and the New Communities in the Pastoral Care of Bishops" Rome, June 16-19, 1999.

NDEA Schools and the Third Millennium*

ORLANDO QUEVEDO, OMI

Introduction

May I express my thanks to our able NDEA Executive Secretary, Mr. Nestor Lemana, for having invited me to speak at your general assembly. The last NDEA general assembly that I attended must have been in 1974-75, some 23 or 24 years ago, when I was still president of both NDU and NDEA.

The world has changed dramatically since then. A new environment for education has developed considerably. In the 1970's the novelty of exploring outer space had not yet worn off and the threat of nuclear warfare and total destruction was still hanging over the world. Today with disarmament that threat has substantially waned. The developed world is now preoccupied with exploring inner space, the mysteries of the biosphere, of human life itself. Genetics and bioethics have become burning issues. Changes in the world have also brought in its wake comprehensive changes in the educational environment. The revolution and expansion of knowledge is symbolized by the creation of cyberspace

* Talk delivered at the Archdiocesan Schools Teachers' Assembly, Cotabato, November 1999.

and the information highway. New words are being coined almost daily. Internet, infotech, infotainment, telecommute, and a host of other jargon are becoming common language to high school students in the developed world.

It we count this day, it is now only 22 days before we are in the Jubilee Year 2000. It is not yet too late to reflect together on what the third millennium has in store for us, as educators.

Surely there are many challenges to us and to our schools. But may I choose five major challenges that our schools have to face. I shall only describe the challenges and leave to your own collective wisdom the more detailed responses, based on your own perspectives and professional background.

A. The Challenge of an Emerging World Culture

The first challenge to our schools is posed by an emerging world culture. What is this world culture? It is secular and materialistic. It brings values that are contrary to the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. These values are propagated far and wide by the tools of social communication or mass media such as radio, television, cinema, newspapers, etc.

The values constitute a new kind of morality, a morality that is not based on faith in the Sacred Scriptures and on the teachings of the Church. It is a morality with no religious roots.

Let me cite some examples of these secular or materialistic values. You may have seen a television advertisement for the soft drink, Sprite. In the advertisement a famous American professional basketball player shows off his playing skills to the great admiration of viewers. He then takes a can or bottle of Sprite and the advertisement urges viewers, "Obey your thirst!" The message seems to be simply for us to patronize Sprite. But there is something subtle in the suggestion to obey one's thirst. If you are thirsty, drink Sprite. If you need to assuage your senses, satisfy them. Obey your

feelings and your senses. It is not good to deny or control or discipline your feelings and your senses. That, really, comes out as the message.

Such an advertisement goes along well with another value that is being taught to the young by mass media. This value states, "If it feels good, it is good." The goodness of an act is determined by your feeling of pleasure and happiness. The act may be against the commandment of God, but if it gives you pleasure or happiness then this secular value says, "It is good, because it feels good." Feelings and the desires of the senses become the powerful norm or standards of a new kind of morality.

This new type of morality is being presented powerfully by mass media. Movie after movie portrays yet another materialistic or secular value. Movies show the happiness of people who fall in love and abandon their marriage partners. The child that is born is called a "love-child." The term may be, in the short term, good for the child, for he would not be burdened with the stigma of being "illegitimate." But the term ignores the seriously immoral relationship whose fruit the child is. And the "love-child" may even grow up thinking that as long as there is love, sex between consenting adults is morally right.

Today as more and more such cases involving famous people take place and are publicized, the public gradually becomes more "liberal," "progressive," or "modern" with regard to love, marriage, and fidelity. The traditional teachings of the Church and of the sacred Scriptures are gradually seen as old-fashioned, not in keeping with the times. Divorces become a part of the social landscape. Where divorce is allowed, children have their "biological parents" as well as their "legal parents." As one wit has commented, "In the past, parents had many children. Today, children have many parents."

Or take another example again in the field of marriage and the family. In the past, contraception and abortion were totally wrong. Then the practice began in the developed countries of the West for parents to choose how many children they should have. In other words, it became the trait of being a "modern" parent to "plan" the family. For some, the sexual act for consenting adults should not result in any children, unless they both want the child. Their love for each other would only be hindered if they have to take care of a child. Thus we have the phenomenon of the "unwanted child" even when no rape is involved. Contraception, then, has become the approved practice in "modern" "civilized" society. It expresses the right to choose one's own child. The right to choose, which is a quality of human freedom, has become a human right with no moral restraints.

In fact today, the "right to choose" is being given a more "liberal" interpretation, in the guise of "the right to reproductive health." In the past abortion was totally condemned as an act of murder. Today in many so-called "modern" and "civilized" societies, abortion is becoming more and more permitted when the life of the mother is at stake. Thus the child in the womb is killed in order to save the mother, for the "reproductive health of the mother."

With their values now less influenced by religion, the developed countries have managed to influence the United Nations to use the term, "the right to reproductive health." By so doing they have taken the issues of contraception and abortion from the realm of morality and religion and made them into "medical" issues, with the intention of promoting contraception to control the population of the poor and permitting abortion in certain cases. Secular values now very much prevail with regard to love and life, marriage and the family in the developed West. Such values are now gradually and irresistibly penetrating the developing countries through the tools of social communication.

Some other values are with regard to "needs" and "wants." Here, the power of advertising is evident. A constant barrage of attractive and powerful advertisements regarding a certain product, for example, a computer, creates in the viewer a certain desire to own the computer. With more advertising, the desire develops into something more powerful. The viewer realizes that he also wants the computer. He might not really need it. After all there is already an available and also reliable computer. But he wants the additional features of the computer being advertised. The "want" becomes a "need." The viewer is now convinced that the computer is absolutely needed. Advertising has successfully changed or created a need from a simple desire and "want." Through the power of mass media, people buy many things that are really superfluous. Moreover, another value becomes more important, the value of "having" rather than of "being." An individual is valued more today by what he or she has, rather than by what he/she is as a person.

Such are some examples of secular and materialistic values brought in by an emerging world culture that had originated from the West and is now being spread to other countries by mass media. We all have to be alert to the process and be concerned about it.

B. The Challenge of a New "Faith"

In the world today, there is an emerging faith that is taking the place of "religious faith." It is a faith in science and technology. As science and technology unravels some of the mysteries of the universe and of life, they seem to explain even more the beginning of everything. People begin to claim that there is less and less need of God as the explanation of life and the universe. Now science can "clone" a sheep or a cow. It might be able to clone the human being. Science is now able to "create" life outside the womb, in test tubes, and can even freeze the elements of life with the hope of "resurrecting" life in the future. Again, more and more, science claims to substitute for God himself. This new secular faith goes

hand in hand with the emerging secular culture. It does not have any religious and moral roots.

With the loss of traditional faith and traditional morality by the world, a new morality has to be invented in order to judge whether the acts of science are moral or not. Poor world, poor civilized nations! What a great pity, indeed. They have thrown out religious faith and morality, now they are throwing out a sense of the sacred, and a sense of God. They must now invent a substitute for faith and morality to put controls on the action of science and technology!

Are these developments foreign to the Philippines? Yes, but they are slowly creeping into our culture. Take note of the example of an actress, who went to an award ceremony dressed in a very scandalous outfit. She claimed that there was nothing malicious about it. She said that it was a "fashion statement." Her motivation may not have been malicious, but the dress itself as a fashion statement is provocative of malicious desires even among adults. Bad enough are static pictures of women and men in very skimpy outfits. The problem is when pornography is passed off as "art" or a maliciously provocative dress as a "fashion statement."

Or take note of the idolatry of money and power that has long been part of our history as a people. Money and power have become idols to be worshipped. They have taken the place of God. For the sake of money and power, people are ready to sacrifice their principles, their honesty, and their friends. That is why there is a widening gap between rich and poor. That is why there is so much graft and corruption, so many frauds during elections, so many political turncoatism (or changing from one party to another). The same people would go to Church and be seen as praying in the Church, while in fact they worship other idols. A "new faith" has taken the place of our own religious faith.

Such development has again to be of grave concern to us as educators of the young.

C. The Challenge of a new Explosion of Knowledge

Today, likewise, we cannot keep abreast of the advance of scientific knowledge and technology. There are now many young Americans who cannot write well nor add. They cannot write well because they have been using computers in order to write. They cannot add because they have been using calculators. But ignorant in these basic things, they are incredibly advanced in scientific and technological information. They speak "computerese," the jargon of computers. They know how to operate sophisticated electronic gadgets, used in modern homes. They have access to information worldwide at the touch of a computer key.

We cannot compete in such a world of "infotechnology." Knowledge is advancing by leaps and bounds. Ours is basically a rural culture. Television and cellular phones are still beyond the reach of rural villages. Many towns in the Archdiocese of Cotabato do not even have a public telephone station. One could radio a message from the local government unit, but not a telephone message.

We need not even think of coping with such a revolution in scientific and technological knowledge. For many of us in the Philippines, we do not even have the basic textbooks for the three R's! Our struggle is to cope with basic rudimentary knowledge and not so much with advanced science and technology. Still we need to prepare our own students for the future. We need to provide sonic answers for the future could quickly come upon us.

D. The Challenge of Dialogue and Peace

In our Mindanao, particularly Cotabato, situation the need is for dialogue among peoples of different faiths to dialogue toward justice, peace and development. Our culture in Mindanao has

become a culture of distrust and violence. There does not seem to be mutual respect or mutual understanding. There is no "give and take," no sacrificing of one's own interest for the good of all. Distrust between Christians and Muslims has intensified since in the past twenty years, since the 1970's. And violence has become a way of expressing distrust and a way of trying to solve problems.

Politics has not solved the situation of antagonism but in a real sense politics has even aggravated the problem. Muslims feel neglected by our political leaders. Christians feel that any attempt to provide some form of autonomy to Muslims is against their own interests.

And even if from the present peace process, some political agreement could somehow be signed, there is no doubt that peace would be far from being secure and stable. Based on a peace agreement, a peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians could be secured. But peaceful co-existence is not the same as real peace. Two neighbors may not be fighting with each other but they could still be enemies and antagonism could still rule their hearts.

Real peace comes from respect and understanding, trust, and being just. Real peace is an attitude of the heart. This comes from dialogue between Muslims and Christians, a dialogue of life, of living together in mutual respect and understanding, in trust and justice. It would mean listening with the ears as well as with the heart, sharing and serving. At the basis of all this is what we call charity or love. From all this a truly "human" community emerges that is made up of different peoples, cultures, and faiths.

Hence, our schools must somehow meet the challenge of dialogue and peace in order to provide the kind of "human ecology" and human values that are necessary for such a "human" community. Again, the question is how?

E. The Challenge of Survival in a World of Increasing Costs

But the most immediate challenge that probably raises our concern to the utmost is the crisis of survival. Our schools are rural. Many of our students come from middle class and low middle class families. In fact most would be from poor families that depend mostly on farming for their livelihood.

But we also know that the cost of education rises every year as prices of goods and commodities are raised. We have no control over increasing costs. Just recently, the price of oil was raised. As so often the case, the rise in oil price creates a domino effect and the cost of other commodities also rise.

As costs rise, so must wages rise. It is fine with government employees for they are paid through taxes paid to the government. This is not so with private enterprise. To pay for wages, they have to raise the cost of their products.

And this is so even for non-profit private religious institutions, like Catholic schools. To cope with rising wages, they also have to raise the cost of education, specifically, tuition and other fees. There is just no other way to survive otherwise.

But there could come a time in the coming millennium that our rural Catholic schools will not be able to raise school fees and risk the prospect of losing so many students that failure to survive becomes itself a probability.

How shall we confront this prospect? What measures can be put in place so that our poor rural Catholic schools can survive?

I know that I have only described some of the challenges that our Catholic schools will have to confront in the third millennium. I myself would not be prepared to provide responses to them. Certainly, most of the challenges could be met with what we usually call "value education." Unfortunately, value education does not seem to have succeeded since the days when it became a feature

of the curriculum. Why? And what could we do to improve and make it effective?

Conclusion

The Jubilee Year, 2000, affords us with the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for renewal. If we follow the themes of the Jubilee Year as laid down in the Old Testament (Leviticus 15), we have enough to occupy our time. The Old Testament calls for a renewal of the land and of the earth, a restoration of rights, a redemption of debts, a return to the sovereignty of God. In that panoramic view, we can surely find a host of educational objectives.

The Jubilee Year calls for Education toward a culture of human rights, a culture of peace, justice and development, a culture of life. How is this to be realized in the context of social conflict that the NDEA schools find themselves in? I do not know the answer. With your own professional expertise you might, together, come up with solutions.

As you meet in this important assembly may I express my profound admiration and thanks for the dedicated and loyal service that you are extending to Notre Dame and its students. The times are very difficult, the challenges are great and perhaps very daunting. But reflecting, sharing, and praying together you will surely be guided by the Holy Spirit and come up with certain measures to respond to the challenges.

Be assured of my prayers to the Lord for your assembly, for your families and other loved ones.

Beatification of 44 Servants of God*

JOHN PAUL II

1. "I will praise you, O God my Saviour; I will give thanks to your name, for you have been ... my helper and have delivered my body" (Sir 51: 1-2).

You, Lord, have been my helper! I hear these words from the Book of Sirach echoing in my heart as I contemplate the wonders God has wrought in the lives of these brothers and sisters in the faith who have won the palm of martyrdom. Today I have the joy of raising them to the glory of the altars, presenting them to the Church and to the world as a shining witness to God's power in the frailty of the human person.

You, Lord, have delivered me! This is the cry of Andre de Soveral, Ambrosio Francisco Ferro and 28 Companions, diocesan priests, lay men and women; Nicolas Bunkerd Kitbamrung, diocesan priest; Maria Stella Adela Mardosewicz and 10 professed sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Nazareth; Pedro Calungsod and Andrew of Phu Yen, lay catechists.

* Homily of the Holy Father, Sunday, 5 March 2000.

Yes, the Almighty was their powerful help in their time of trial and now they are experiencing the joy of eternal reward. Although these humble servants of the Gospel, whose names are for ever written in heaven, lived in different historical periods and in very diverse cultural contexts, they are linked by an identical experience of fidelity to Christ and to the Church. They are united by the same unconditional trust in the Lord and the same deep passion for the Gospel.

I will praise you, O God my Saviour! With their lives offered for the cause of Christ, these new blessed, the first of the Jubilee Year, proclaim that God is "Father" (cf. *ibid.*, v. 10), God is "protector" and "helper" (cf. y. 2); he is our Saviour who listens to the appeals of those who trust in him with all their heart (cf. v. 11).

2. These are the sentiments that fill our hearts as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the evangelization of Brazil, which occurs this year. In this immense country, the implanting of the Gospel encountered many difficulties. The Church's presence was gradually strengthened through the missionary activity of various orders and religious congregations and by priests of the diocesan clergy. The martyrs beatified today came, at the end of the 17th century, from the communities of Cunhau and Uruacu in Rio Grande de Norte. Fr Andre de Soveral, Fr Ambrósio Francisco Ferro and 28 lay companions belong to this generation of martyrs who watered their homeland, making it fertile for a generation of new Christians. They are the first fruits of the missionary work, the protomartyrs of Brazil. One of these, Mateus Moreira, had his heart ripped out through his back while he was still alive, and yet he had the strength to proclaim his faith in the Eucharist, saying: "Praised be the Blessed Sacrament".

Today, the words of Christ recalled in the Gospel ring out again: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the

soul" (Mr 10: 28). The blood of defenceless Catholics, many of whose names are unknown — children, the elderly, whole families — will be an incentive for strengthening the faith of new generations of Brazilians, reminding them especially of the value of the family as an authentic and irreplaceable teacher of faith and moral values.

3. "I shall praise your name unceasingly and gratefully sing its praises" (*Sir* 51: 10). Fr Nicolas Bunkerd Kitbamrung's priestly life was an authentic hymn of praise to the Lord. A man of prayer, Fr Nicolas was outstanding in teaching the faith, in seeking out the lapsed, and in his charity towards the poor. Constantly seeking to make Christ known to those who had never heard his name, Fr Nicolas undertook the difficulties of a mission through the mountains and into Burma. The strength of his faith was made clear to all when he forgave those who falsely accused him, deprived him of his freedom and made him suffer much. In prison, Fr Nicolas encouraged his fellow prisoners, taught the catechism and administered the sacraments. His witness to Christ exemplified the words of St Paul: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 *Cor* 4: 8-10). Through the intercession of Bl. Nicolas, may the Church in Thailand be blessed and strengthened in the work of evangelization and service.

4. God was also a true "protector and helper" for the martyrs of Nowogróddek — for Bl. Maria Stella Mardosewicz and her 10 sisters, professed religious of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Nazareth. For them he was a helper throughout their lives and at the moment of their terrible test, when for an entire night they awaited death; he was a helper especially on the way to the place of execution, and finally at the moment they were shot.

Where did these women find the strength to give themselves in exchange for the lives of imprisoned residents of Nowogrodek? From where did they draw the courage to accept calmly the death sentence that was so cruel and unjust? God had slowly prepared them for this moment of greater trial. He sowed the seed of his grace in their hearts at the time of holy Baptism and then, tended with great care and responsibility, it developed firm roots and bore the most beautiful fruit, which is the gift of life. Christ says: "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (*Jn* 15: 13). Yes, there is no greater love than this: to be ready to lay down one's life for one's brothers and sisters.

We thank you, O blessed martyrs of Nowogrodek, for your witness of love, for your example of Christian heroism and for your trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Christ chose and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit in your lives and that your fruit should abide" (cf. *Jn* 15: 16). You are the greatest inheritance of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Nazareth. You are the inheritance of the whole Church of Christ for ever!

5. "If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven" (*Mt* 10: 32). From his childhood, Pedro Calungsod declared himself unwaveringly for Christ and responded generously to his call. Young people today can draw encouragement and strength from the example of Pedro, whose love of Jesus inspired him to devote his teenage years to teaching the faith as a lay catechist. Leaving family and friends behind, Pedro willingly accepted the challenge put to him by Fr Diego de San Vitores to join him on the Mission to the Chamorros. In a spirit of faith, marked by strong Eucharistic and Marian devotion, Pedro undertook the demanding work asked of him and bravely faced the many obstacles and difficulties he met. In the face of imminent danger, Pedro would not forsake Fr Diego, but as a "good soldier of Christ" preferred to die at the missionary's side. Today Bl. Pedro Calungsod

intercedes for the young, in particular those of his native Philippines, and he challenges them. Young friends, do not hesitate to follow the example of Pedro, who "pleased God and was loved by him" (*Wis* 4: 10) and who, having come to perfection in so short a time, lived a full life (cf. *ibid.*, v. 13).

6. "If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven" (*Mt* 10: 32). Andrew of Phu Yen in Viêt Nam made these words of the Lord his own with heroic intensity. From the day he received Baptism at the age of 16, he strove to develop a deep spiritual life. Amid the difficulties to which all who adhered to the Christian faith were subjected, he lived as a faithful witness to the risen Christ and tirelessly proclaimed the Gospel in the "Maison Dieu" association of catechists. For love of the Lord he spent all his energy in serving the Church and assisting priests in their mission. He persevered to the point of bloodshed in order to remain faithful to the love of the One to whom he had totally given himself.

The words he repeated as he resolutely advanced on the path of martyrdom are the expression of what motivated his whole life: "Let us return love for love to our God, let us return life for life." Today Bl. Andrew, protomartyr of Viet Nam, is given as a model to the Church of his country. May all Christ's disciples find in him strength and support in trial, and be concerned to strengthen their intimacy with the Lord, their knowledge of the Christian mystery, their fidelity to the Church and their sense of mission!

7. "Fear not, therefore" (*Mt* 10: 31). This is Christ's invitation. It is also the exhortation of the new blessed, who remained steadfast in their love of God and of their brothers and sisters, even in the midst of trial. This invitation comes to us as an encouragement in the Jubilee Year, a time for conversion and profound spiritual renewal. Let us not be afraid of trials and difficulties; may

we not be hindered by obstacles from making courageous decisions consistent with the Gospel! What do we have to fear, if Christ is with us? Why doubt, if we remain on Christ's side and accept the commitment and responsibility of being his disciples? May the celebration of the Jubilee strengthen our determination to follow the Gospel. The new blessed are an example to us and they offer us their help.

May Mary, Queen of Martyrs, who at the foot of the Cross shared fully in her Son's sacrifice, sustain us in courageously bearing witness to our faith!

Circular: Blessed Pedro Calungsod, Catechist and Martyr

JAIME CARD. SIN, DD

Circular 2000-09

Pedro Calungsod was a teen-aged native of the Visayas region of the Philippines. He was one of the boy catechists who went with some Spanish Jesuit missionaries from the Philippines to the Ladrone Islands-later renamed "Marianas" — in the western Pacific in 1668 to evangelize the Chamorros. On 2 April 1672, while helping Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores, the rector of the Mission, to recover a runaway servant and to do some baptism at the village of Tomhom on the Island of Guam, he was killed by two natives for his being a Christian, for catechizing the Chamorros and for helping in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. His body was thrown into deep ocean together with that of the rector who was also killed after him.

Introduction to the Mass

The beatification of Pedro Calungsod, catechist and Martyr, is another special gift and sign of divine providence to the Philippine church in this Jubilee Year 2000. It is with thanksgiving and gladness that we celebrate today our Sunday liturgy. Today, the church praises God for the gift of the life a Filipino,

a visayano, Pedro Calungsod who like us, an ordinary young fellow, witnessed to the power of God's infinite love for man, of every age and nation.

Pedro Calungsod who in his youthfulness and because of his faith shines today as the earthen vessel which holds the greatness treasure, Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:6-11)

Pedro Calungsod who in his great love of Christ became a martyr who even unto death manifested the life of Jesus in his mortal flesh (2 Cor 4:6-11).

Let us praise God for his fidelity to us manifested in Jesus' dying and rising to new life witnessed to by Pedro Calungsod.

Let us pray to God that the prayers and example Pedro Calungsod may keep us live our Christian life with greater faith, hope and love.

Prayers of the Faithful

These can be inserted:

That the witnessing in love and faith of Pedro Calungsod, which led to his martyrdom, inspire us to live our faith with greater love for Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

That our young people may find in Pedro Calungsod a light to grow in the path of life through Jesus to the Father, let us pray to the Lord.

Prayer

This prayer can be said by the presider together with the congregation before the final blessing:

Latin:

Omnipotens Deus,
qui beato Petro, martyri
Evangelium usque ad sanguinis effusionem
testificari donasti:
concede, ejus exemplo et intercessione,
ut fortes in tui nominis confessione
iugiter vivere valeamus.
Per Dominum.

English:

Almighty God,
by whose gift Blessed Pedro, martyr,
witnessed to the Gospel even to the shedding of his blood:
grant, by his example and intercession,
that we too may live for you, boldly and steadfastly
confessing your name.
We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son
who live and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Tagalog:

Ama naming makapangyarihan,
ipinagkaloob mo sa martir na si Pedro
Ang biyayang maging saksi sa Mabuting Balita
kahit na ito'y mangahulugan ng
pagbubuhos ng kanyang dugo.
Sa pamamagitan ng kanyang halimbawa
at panalangin,
makapabuhay nawa kaming

puno ng lakas at katatagan
sa pagpapahayag ng iyong Banal na Ngalan.
Hinihiling namin ito
sa pamamagitan ni Hesukristo,
nabubuhay at naghaharing kasama
mo at ng Espiritu Santo magpasawalang hanggan.

Homily on the Ecumenical Service for the Jubilee of Ecumenism*

JAIME CARD. SIN, DD

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to all of you! As we gather in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, I offer to each of you the embrace of peace, and I cordially thank you for your presence, which I deeply appreciate.

When the Holy Father held an ecumenical service on the occasion of the opening of the holy door at St. Paul's Basilica in Rome he recalled the moving cry of Catholics Orthodox and Protestants in Bucharest who attended his mass: "*Unitate! Unitate!*"

Unity! Unity! We all desire and pray for unity. Unity is our common dream and vision. Jesus himself asked for the grace of unity on his last night on earth: "As you, Father, are in me and I in you may they be one in us" (*Jn 17: 21*). This unity is a sharing in the unity he has with the Father and which the Father has with Him. This unity is a reflection of that perfect unity, the resplendent Trinitarian mystery.

* Homily delivered by His Eminence, Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, D.D., Archbishop of Manila on the Ecumenical Service for the Jubilee of Ecumenism at Villa San Miguel on February 23, 2000 at 4:00 pm.

We are still on that road to unity. I believe that there is still a long way to go. Nonetheless, I believe it is still possible in God's time and in a manner and fashion Christ himself will show forth to us. What we are doing today is a vital step in that journey.

And the most important step to unity is conversion. The desire for unity is born and grows from the renewal of mind, the love of truth, self-denial and the free outpouring of love. Thus, conversion of heart and holiness of life, with personal and community prayer for unity, are the nucleus from which the ecumenical movement draws its strength and substance.

Moreover, the longing for unity goes hand in hand with a profound ability to receive. Walking towards the path of unity means changing our viewpoint, broadening our horizons, recognizing the action of the holy spirit in all of us, discovering new dimensions of holiness and opening ourselves to fresh aspects of Christian commitment.

And if sustained by prayer, we can renew our minds and hearts, the dialogue we are pursuing will eventually go beyond the limits of an exchange of ideas and become an exchange of gifts. Our interaction will become a dialogue of love and truth which challenges and urges us to move ahead in order to offer God "the greatest offering", which is our peace and fraternal harmony.

It is not enough that we call ourselves Christians. What we need is to show forth the presence of Christ in our lives. In this way, we can truly become brothers and sisters of Christ for we try our best to open our ears to listen to his word and we open our hearts to follow his will just as Christ himself reminds us in the gospel. Though we diverse in some aspects, we become children of God who may all cry out "Abba!, Father!"

During this Great Jubilee Year, when we celebrate the 2000th Year of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, let us fervently pray that the graces of God may pour upon us. May our gathering bring

forth a new Pentecost, where we will have the courage to break down barriers, promote harmony and proclaim the love of God. I share the Holy Father's dream: "That, in the not too distant future, Christians will at last be reconciled and be able to walk together again as one people obedient to the Father's plan, a people who can repeat with one voice and in the joy of renewed brotherhood: "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with all the spiritual blessings in the heavens" (*Eph* 1:3).

As I end, I recall and make my own the prayer of Nathan Soderblom, a Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, a pioneer of unity at the start of the ecumenical movement:

"Lord,
Be Before Us To Lead Us,
Be Behind Us To Encourage Us,
Be Beneath Us To Carry Us,
Be Above Us To Bless Us,
Be Around Us To Protect Us,
Be Within Us So That In Body And
Soul We May Serve You
For The Glory Of Your Name". Amen.

CONSULTATIVE WORDS

Cases & Inquiries

JAVIER GONZALEZ, OP

PRESUMED DEATH OF SPOUSE

The marriage of Merell to Philip was arranged by her parents. It was said, in those days, girls had to marry whomever their parents chose for them. Merell and Philip had three children: Martin, Philip II, and Margaret. Some years later Philip left for Davao to look for a job to support his family. After ten years of waiting for her husband not knowing his whereabouts, Merell's patience ceased. So she decided to live with Thomas to help her take care of her children until she begot four children with her second man.

My question is: Can Merell seek an annulment of her first marriage due to the absence of her husband for almost eleven years? Is there any provision in canon law regarding this case? Please explain further.

A Parochial Vicar

There are several elements in the formulation of this case that should be distinguished in order to give to your questions an appropriate answer:

1. In the first two lines you seem to imply that the marriage of Merell to Philip was invalid because of lack of the necessary freedom on Merell's side (she "had to" marry Philip, her parents' choice). Well, even if such was the case, we should remember that "Marriage enjoys the favor of the law." Consequently, in doubt, the validity of a marriage must be upheld until the contrary is proven. (Can. 1061). Thus the marriage of Merell to Philip was in principle valid, since the opposite would have to be proven before a competent ecclesiastical tribunal. So if Merell thinks that her first marriage was null and void she may seek for an annulment (declaration of nullity) of her marriage before an ecclesiastical tribunal. For such procedure, the absence of her husband would not be an insurmountable obstacle, for such cases can be pursued even in the absence of the other spouse.

2. "Can Merell seek an annulment of her first marriage due to the absence of her husband for almost eleven years?" Of course, but only if she thinks that their first marriage was invalid from the very beginning.. The mere absence, no matter how long, of Philip does not render invalid by itself the presumably valid marriage, neither entitles Merell to consider herself free to contract a new marriage. However, it may happen that, after studying the case, experts and ecclesiastical judges might find in such "abandonment" a sufficient psychological ground indicating that some necessary element for the validity of the marriage was not present in Philip's mind at the time of contracting marriage, thus opening the way for a possible declaration of nullity.

3. Still another possibility that may have been in your mind when you formulated the two questions: Merell's husband "is nowhere to be found"; his whereabouts after eleven years are

unknown. What about if he were dead and nobody knew it? Could then Merell regard herself free from the bond of her first marriage? Hence, this case could also be considered and for all effects applied to it the procedure of presumed death of one of the spouses. Canon 1707 states that "whenever the death of a spouse cannot be proven by an authentic ecclesiastical or civil document, the other spouse is not regarded as free from the bond of marriage until the diocesan Bishop has issued a declaration that death is presumed." Hence Merell cannot consider herself free to marry anew by the mere fact that Philip's whereabouts are unknown or simply because he has been absent for eleven years. Only the diocesan Bishop can declare — obviously after a diligent investigation — when the absent spouse should be considered dead. Again, the fact of the absence of the spouse, no matter how long, does not entitle the present spouse to enter a subsequent marriage. This canonical norm is in clear contrast with the provisions of the Philippine Family Code, which on this regard sets a period of four consecutive years (and in some special circumstances two years) of absence of a spouse for the validity of a subsequent marriage (cf. Art. 41). This civil norm is not valid in the Church. Thus Merell, under this ground, would have to follow the procedure indicated by the Church in canon 1707, as explained before.

Homiletic and Bibliarasal **September - October 2000**

EFREN RIVERA, OP

<Q JUBILEE YEAR §> 37) SEPTEMBER 3, 2000

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Unified Theme: God's Authentic Commandments

(Dt 4:1-2; Jm 1:1-18. 21b-22. 27; Mk 7:1-8. 14-15. 21-23)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 528, p. 492-493, slightly edited.

The most important offshoot of God's Covenant with the chosen people was his Commandments. When the Covenant was established the people had solemnly vowed to do all that Yahweh commanded (Ex 24:3) These commandments are so sacred that no one has any authority to change them, add or subtract anything from them. The fulfillment of these commandments is the guarantee that the Covenant would endure. The commandments are like the fence around the Covenant. In the course of time the

Jewish people led by the Scribes erected another fence around the Commandments. They multiplied legal prescriptions reaching even the most insignificant minutiae of life, giving them the full force of moral law. According to the Rabbis there are about 613 of these prescriptions. They were the "traditions of the Fathers," codified by Rabbi Judah han-Nasi at the beginning of the 3rd century of our era, now known as the *Mishna*. Actually the *Mishna* is divided into six parts of *sederim* (orders) with 63 tractates containing 524 chapters and 4187 paragraphs.

These prescriptions sometimes became unbearable for an ordinary Jew (cfr. Acts 15:10). Our Lord called them "traditions of men." The situation during the time of Our Lord must have been worse and so our Lord rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for putting aside the commandment of God to cling to human traditions (Mk 7:8). The fence became more important than the garden to be protected. Human traditions were more scrupulously guarded than the commandments of God.

The teaching of the Letter of James which is the topic of the second reading stresses very well the interiority of God's commandments. He calls them the "word which has been planted in us which can save our souls."

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing on the Unified Theme. Filipinos live in Asia, the continent where, more than anywhere else, traditions are respected. Commonly, however, people do not make distinctions behind "very important traditions" and "less important traditions." Don't you think it is time for us to be more discerning and make distinctions in our traditions? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. Here in Asia there are many religious traditions that are good but they are often mixed up with others that are not so good. We must learn to make distinctions. The Holy Spirit will help us do this, with the spiritual gift called "discernment."

2. Many good traditions in our country like veneration for ancestors and hospitality for strangers were already strong among our people even before the coming of Christian missionaries. Many more examples are listed in *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 6 (BEF no. 816 p. 13-14). They come from what *Ecclesia in Asia* calls "an innate spiritual insight and moral wisdom in the Asian soul." (see n. 6; BEF no. 816, p. 14). They are the core around which a growing sense of "being Asian" is built. We must point out that: "This 'being Asian' is best discovered and affirmed not in confrontation and apposition, but in the spirit of complementarity and harmony. In this framework of complementarity and harmony, the Church can communicate the Gospel in a way which is faithful both to her own Tradition and to the Asian soul." (*Ibid.*)

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 38) SEPTEMBER 10, 2000

JUBILEE OF SCHOOLS. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: THE MESSIANIC AGE (Is 35:4-7a; Mk 7:31-37)

**Theme 2: NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN RICH
AND POOR IN THE CHURCH (Jm 2:1-5)**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BD3LIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 528, p. 493-494, slightly edited.

The Messianic Age

One of the signs of the messianic times according to the prophet Isaiah will be the healing of corporal evils: blindness, deafness, lameness, dumbness — "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy" (Is 35:5-6). This text was fulfilled by Christ as proclaimed in the Gospel reading of today's Mass. See also Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22). The healing of the deaf-mute (lit. one who has speech impediment — *mogilalos*) can only be found in Mark.

In Mark's presentation, Christ avoided any ostentatious gesture that would benefit the onlookers only, and would have preferred to perform the miracle as secretly as possible. He took the deaf man aside, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he exclaimed, "Ephphatha," a Greek transcription of the Aramaic word '*etpetah*' meaning "be thou opened."

Recall that in Mt 8:5-13 and Jn 4:46-53 Jesus is presented as curing by mere words and "at a distance," In Mark's presentation the words of Christ are accompanied with external signs. This indicates that Mark wanted the early Christian community to whom he addressed his book to see in this episode a foreshadowing of the Christian sacraments.

No Distinction Between Rich and Poor

In the old churches of Europe, it was common to see places with ornate furniture reserved for the rich and the powerful. It was indeed a big point scored by the liturgical renewal after the Vatican II Council to have done away with such places of distinction inside our churches which are not according to distinction of ministry (it is all right for altar ministers like the Bishop, priests and deacons to have special seats). Discrimination on the basis

of power and wealth seems to have encroached into the. Christian community as early as the time of James (the letter writer) impelling him to make the following admonition: "My brothers and sisters, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people."

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. Ordinary Christians may not be able to cure the lame and the blind, but they can help sick people find meaning in their sickness. This, too, is an important aspect of living in the Messianic age ushered in by Jesus Christ. Have you been able to help the sick in a Christian way? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILISTS

1. Our schools, colleges and universities should make no distinction based on being wealthy or powerful. They should carry on the wonderful achievements accomplished over four hundred years of Christian educational efforts in Asia. See *Ecclesia in Asia*, no. 37.

2. The First Reading for this Sunday comes from the prophet Isaiah, who was a learned and culturally accomplished man. He is an example of what the product of Catholic schools should be.

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 39) SEPTEMBER 17, 2000

SEPT. 17-23 IS NATIONAL CATECHETICAL WEEK

24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

**Theme 1: PASSION PROPHECY: THE SUFFERING
MESSIAH (Is 50:5-9a; Mk 8:27-35)**

Theme 2: FAITH AND GOOD WORKS (Jm 2:14-18)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 528, p.494-495, slightly edited.

The Suffering Messiah

The prophecy of the Passion is narrated in all three Synoptic Gospels right after the profession of faith of St. Peter. This happened in Caesarea Philippi, at the northernmost part of Galilee, the region at the foot of the picturesque mount Hermon, a place accessible to pilgrims and tourists today.

Christ, the best of teachers, taught the apostles gradually. Hence, after receiving a profession of faith from his apostles, he proceeded to reveal to them the real nature of the Messiah, correcting their false idea, common among the Jews of that time, that the Messiah would come to lead them as a victorious conqueror against their oppressors. The apostles were shocked when he told them that he is going to suffer and die in Jerusalem, but would rise again on the third day. Peter remonstrated but was quickly cut down to size by Christ. Peter was called a "satan," an adversary, because he wanted a course of action different from God's plan. At that time he was not aware of the prophecy of Isaiah (first reading of the Mass) that the Messiah would suffer but in that suffering true victory would come forth.

If the Messiah should suffer in order to conquer suffering and death, and fulfill God's plan, so also his true disciples must undergo suffering and even death in order to cooperate in ushering in God's Reign among all people.

Faith And Good Works

This passage in James has been a thorn for a long time in some of our separated brethren's doctrine that faith alone would

be necessary for salvation. Indeed, Luther and some others went to the point of rejecting the letter of James to be a part of the Bible.

In our ecumenical times, there has been a rapprochement. It has become clearer to both sides that Paul and James were dealing about two different stages of being saved. To get justified, one need not do good works. But what does one do after justification? One has to cooperate with God's Holy Spirit or grace to do good works so as to attain to the perfection of faith, which in the more complete sense, we call eternal salvation.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. In Asia, if not in the Philippines, there is a rich tradition of suffering for Christ, see *Ecclesia in Asia*, 49. Pope John Paul II, in concluding his exhortation, said: "Deep in my heart there is a special place for those in Asia who are persecuted for their faith in Christ. They are the hidden pillars of the Church..." (n. 50). From your own experience, do you see any connection between suffering and the strengthening of one's faith in Jesus Christ? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. In the Philippines today we are very much like the apostles who want to join Jesus Christ in his kingdom but are so shocked about the need to join him in his suffering first. Just the same, we continue to walk with him.

2. The need for good works is most evident when Christians evangelize people of other faiths. As *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 32 says: "The Church in Asia, with its multitude of poor and oppressed people, is called to live a communion of life which shows itself

particularly in loving service to the poor and defenseless." The papal exhortation goes on to point out in what areas the service has to be given: health care (n. 36), education (n. 37), peacemaking (n. 38), minimizing the bad effects of globalization (n. 39), solving the problem of foreign debt (n. 40), caring for the environment (n. 41).

<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> 40) SEPTEMBER 24, 2000

JUBILEE OF MARIAN MOVEMENTS

SEPT. 24-30 IS NATIONAL LAITY WEEK

(Feast of St. Lorenzo Ruiz: Sept. 28)

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: PERSECUTION OF THE VIRTUOUS
(Wis 2:12. 17-20; Mk 9:29-36)

Theme 2: REAL AND FALSE WISDOM (Jm 3:16 - 4:3)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 528, p. 496-497, edited and abbreviated.

The persecution of the virtuous

In the arrangement of Christ's life made by the Synoptics, the events narrated in today's Gospel Reading happened when Christ was about to leave Galilee with his Apostles to go to Jerusalem where he was to be captured by his enemies and put to death. The episode in Mk 9:30-33 is presented as the second time Jesus prophesied his passion, a prediction so fearsome that the disciples were even afraid to ask for an explanation. Giving emphasis to this, the liturgy ties it up with the reading from Wisdom 2:17-20 that speaks about the persecution of the virtuous. Compare the passage of Wisdom with Mt 27:42-44.

(The second part of the Gospel Reading, Mk 9:33-37, is the famous passage about the question of who is to occupy the first place in the kingdom to come and how Jesus clarifies it by pointing to his love for little children.)

Real and False Wisdom

The fruits of true wisdom according to this epistle of James are purity, peace, kindness, solicitude for others, compassion, sincerity doing away with partiality or hypocrisy. Absence of true wisdom leads to strifes originating within oneself because of selfish desires. It is indeed true that external wars between persons, between groups, between nations are only the result of that inner war waged within oneself. There would be no peace of society unless there is no peace of self, and there would be no peace of self unless there is no peace of soul.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing: In the Bible, to be virtuous and to be wise are interchangeable. Reflection on this should give you some insights. Share them with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILISTS

1. The Jubilee of Marian Movements is celebrated today. It is most appropriate to preach a sermon based on the Prayer to the Mother of Christ which is the concluding segment (n. 51) of *Ecclesia in Asia*.

2. Mary has been acclaimed, from time immemorial, as the Seat of Wisdom. It is most appropriate to preach a sermon on this topic on this Sunday.

3. Starting this Sunday and for the whole week, in the Philippines, we also celebrate the role of the Laity in the church. St. Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino martyr, a married man with three children, should be presented as an appropriate model.

<{ **JUBILEE YEAR** }> 41) OCTOBER 1, 2000

In mission territories: Feast of St. There of the Child Jesus, Patroness of all Missions. <> Mission Day for Religious Sisters.

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: PROPHESYING IN GOD'S NAME

(Nb 11:25-29; Mk 9:38-43. 45. 47-48)

Theme 2: DANGER FOR THE RICH (Jm 5:1-6)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 529, p. 497, slightly edited.

Prophesying in God's Name

"The Spirit of God breathes where He wills." The episode in Numbers ch. 11:25-29 clearly indicates that the spirit of prophecy is God's gratuitous endowment. It was not the monopoly of Moses who himself received the spirit of prophecy due to God's free determination and not through any merit of his own. Moses' humility with regard to his gift is emphasized in the story. He wishes that all the people would be given the Spirit of Yahweh. There was no trace of jealousy nor enviousness on his part.

A parallel story is narrated in the first part of today's Gospel Reading, Mk 9:38-40, a man not of the apostles' group is observed by them as having received the power to cast out devils in the

name of Christ. The apostles were tempted to inhibit him, but Christ is more generous, acting like a Second Moses.

(V. 41 is a positive observation regarding the reward of those who will help evangelization in any little way. However, what follows in verses 42-47 fall under the heading of "dire predictions.")

Danger for the Rich

While Jesus Christ did not condemn riches as such and he had rich friends, the love of riches in itself could lead to many evils. James, therefore, warned the rich of the dangers of their state in a way reminiscent of Christ's own teaching that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 19:24). Riches have their allure and rich people — and all those who have the "get rich" mentality — easily lose sight of the kingdom of heaven, falling prey to worldly evils.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. Even people who do not belong to the Apostles' group — like lay people and those of other faiths — have a role to play in evangelization. The papal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, is emphatic on this, see particularly n. 45 (The Laity), n. 46 (The Family), n. 47 (Young People), and n. 48 (Social Communication). Isn't it about time that everyone should implement this teaching? Reflect on the matter and share your insights with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. This Sunday gives an excellent opportunity to follow up on the role of the Laity in evangelization. For ideas, see *Ecclesia in Asia*, numbers 45 to 49. < > Special attention should be given to the role of *Spirit-filled lay people* to highlight the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, see *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 9 & 18. In Asia there is an "increasing number of better trained, enthusiastic and Spirit-filled lay people, who are more and more aware of their specific vocation within the ecclesial community. Among them the lay catechists deserve special recognition and praise. The apostolic and charismatic movements too are a gift of the Spirit, bringing new life and vigour to the formation of lay men and women, families and the young" (n. 9). "The Spirit... moves now among Asian Christians, strengthening the witness of their faith among the peoples, cultures and religions of the continent..." (n. 18).

2. The teaching of the Bible about the danger of riches should be applied today to the economic, social and cultural ramifications of globalization, see *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 39.

<0 JUBILEE YEAR {}> 42) OCTOBER 8, 2000

JUBILEE OF BISHOPS

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S SUNDAY

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE
(Gen 2:18-24; Mk 10:2-16)

Theme 2: APPROPRIATENESS OF CHRIST'S
PASSION (Heb 2:9-11)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 529, p. 567-68, abbreviated.

Indissolubility of marriage

According to Mark there is no doubt whatsoever as to the mind of Christ concerning divorce: "what God has united, man must not divide."

Moses allowed divorce on a particular case, when a man finds in his wife "something indecent," in Hebrew, *erwat dabar*, which literally means "a shame of something." This tolerant commandment is found in Dt 24:1-4, accepted by the Jews as a legislation coming from Moses. But if the text is read carefully in its context, it is not a "commandment" but a TOLERATION of a custom already existing, and it is not said that Moses approved of it. Later Judaism was divided as to the interpretation of "something indecent" as constituting grounds for divorce. The school of Rabbi Shammai held that only adultery may be grounds for divorce. Rabbi Hillel and his followers, on the other hand, made a broad interpretation of this clause and included even minor infractions of a wife as sufficient reason for divorce. Christ's position harked back to Genesis (see the Second Reading for today) and favored neither of these two schools. It asserts emphatically that "the man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too."

Mark was written for a Christian community that did not have a Jewish background and that is the reason why it avoids any discussion of exceptional cases when divorce — or at least the separation of husband and wife — could be permitted. This, however, was a concern of Matthew, who wrote for Christians

coming from a Jewish background, see Mt 5:31-32; 19:1-9. Going beyond Matthew, see Lk 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10 - 11:39.

The Appropriateness of Christ's Passion

This passage in the letter to the Hebrews gives us the key to the aptness of Christ's suffering in conformity with the infinite wisdom of God who is the final cause ("for whom everything exists") and the efficient cause ("through whom everything exists") of all things. From the perspective of Hebrews looking at Christ in his humanness, Christ is lower than the angels and therefore subject to suffering and death. By his suffering and death humankind is redeemed and reconciled with God. It receives all the blessings of salvation. In the suffering and death of Christ, God's designs and decrees for the salvation of human beings were fulfilled; "his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into "glory" was realized.

The idea of "consummation," or being "made perfect" is one of the principal ideas in the letter to the Hebrews (see 5:9; 7:19-28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23). Christ the author of our salvation was made-perfect through suffering. Anyone who wants solidarity with him in his humanness must also accept suffering. It is the key to participation in his resurrection.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. Societies that passed laws allowing divorce thought that consequently people would be happier. So, can we really say that people in those societies are happier now than before? On the contrary, happiness has become more elusive, and people turn to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, unbridled sex and so many other vices because they realize they are so

unhappy, and they grab at any fleeting illusion of happiness as a drowning person would grab at straws. Reflect on this and share your insights with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. God's law disallowing divorce, reinstated by Christ, is for the good of the family. Hence a sermon on the family based on *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 46, is most appropriate for this Sunday.

2. A good sermon on the appropriateness of Christ's passion could be based on *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 11 to 13. In particular, the following points could be developed.

"On the Cross, he took upon himself the sins of the world — past, present and future. Saint Paul reminds us that we were dead as a result of our sins and Christ's death has brought us to life again: 'God made us alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross' (Col 2:13-14). In this way, salvation was sealed once and for all."

"On the Cross, when 'he stretched out his arms between heaven and earth in the everlasting sign of the Father's covenant', Jesus uttered his final appeal to the Father to forgive the sins of humanity: 'Father, forgive them; for they now not what they do' (Lk 23:34). Jesus destroyed sin by the power of his love for his Father and for all mankind. He took upon himself the wounds inflicted on humanity by sin, and he offered release through conversion.

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 43) OCTOBER 15, 2000

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: RICHES ARE NOTHING COMPARED TO WISDOM (Wis 7:7-11; Mk 10:17-30)

Theme 2: DYNAMISM OF THE WORD OF GOD (Heb 4:12-13)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, OP. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 529, p. 569-70, modified.

Riches Are Nothing Compared to Wisdom

The story of the rich young man in the Gospel Reading for this Sunday gave occasion to our Lord for extolling the value of poverty for those who want to follow him and be perfect. The young man averred that he had kept all the commandments even from his Earliest days. Still he lacked something. He lacked an appreciation of the PURPOSE of the commandments, which was to give GOD'S WISDOM to the human race. The right attitude towards riches is the fruit of wisdom as exemplified in the individual who, in the First Reading for this Sunday, earnestly prays for it, Wis 7:7-11.

In contrast to the rich young man who could not leave his riches, the Apostles had in fact left everything to follow Christ. However, they probably envied the rich young man at the start of his conversation with Christ. At the end of that conversation, they must have asked themselves: are we indeed happier than him? It did not seem that way, and Christ had to explain. Basically, Christ's answer is that happiness is achieved only through perse-

verance in his way. A twofold reward is promised to his followers: firstly, they will be repaid a hundred times over in the "present age" for whatever they turned their back to, as long as they also accept the persecutions that will come their way; and secondly, they will have eternal life "in the age to come."

The Dynamism of the Word of God

The qualities of the word of God are depicted in the Second Reading for this Sunday with such vividness that some commentators have even identified it with the Johannine *Logos*, the Words who is the Second Person of the Trinity. But the context does not seem to warrant this. The word of God here means all the realities or things that God revealed through the prophets and through his Son Jesus Christ.

The first attribute given to God's prophetic word-events is that they are ALIVE. It is powerful enough to act like a living force (like the roots of a tree that lifts boulders). It is also fruitful, like the seed in the parable of the sower, that goes and produces fruit. Secondly, it is ACTIVE like the seed in the parable of the sower (see Mt 13:18): it grows and produces other seeds. Finally, it cuts like a two-edged sword. The sword envisaged here is the double-edged *machaera*, which is not used for stabbing but for cutting like a physician's scalpel: it can penetrate to the marrow of bones.

The personification of God's word-events in Heb 4:12 is so forceful that it presents them as identifiable with God himself who judges secret emotions and inner thoughts. Since the Bible is the collection of God's revelatory word-events, it should go without saying that this text is a very emphatic affirmation of the dynamism of the Bible's message.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. People like the Apostles who decide to follow Christ may not immediately realize what they are getting into and what they can hope for in their new situation. It is altogether possible that somewhere along the road, they will have misgivings or second thoughts or adjustments in expectations. This happens to individuals and groups. And it happens specially regarding the matter of wealth, honor or rewards for one's labors. Christ's teaching, or "word" has to purify wayward aspirations. Do you have experiences in this subject matter that you would like to share with others?

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. "In Asia there are millions of oppressed people who for centuries have been kept economically, culturally and politically on the margins of society," says *Ecclesia in Asia* (n. 7). Nevertheless, they take pride in their spiritual wealth: "The people of Asia take pride in their religious and cultural values, such as love of silence and contemplation, simplicity, harmony, detachment, non-violence, the spirit of hard work, discipline, frugal living, the thirst for learning and philosophical enquiry" (n. 6). This spiritual wealth has in fact helped Asians of today catch up (or almost) with wealthier countries. One has to give recognition "to the extensive economic growth of many Asian societies in recent decades: a new generation of skilled workers, scientists and technicians is growing daily and their great number augurs well for Asia's development" (n. 7). We have to take care so that, as Asia makes economic progress, its spiritual wealth will not diminish but rather increase through the peoples' acceptance of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

2. While it is true that one can and should evangelize by means of life witness and dialogue, "There can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord," says *Ecclesia in Asia* (n. 19). One must "preach the word." However, we have to do this with much tact and prudence and following a well planned pedagogy: see *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 20. \diamond See also what *Ecclesia in Asia* has to say about the use of the Bible in n. 22.

<{} JUBILEE YEAR {}> 44) OCTOBER 22, 2000

22nd anniversary of the inauguration of Pope Paul II into the papal office. Invite the faithful to celebrate with him and pray for him.

JUBILEE OF MISSIONARIES

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

Theme 1: SERVICE BY THOSE IN AUTHORITY

(Is 53:10-11; Mk 10:35-45)

Theme 2: CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST (Heb 4:14-16)

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 529, p. 572-73, slightly edited.

Service By Those In Authority

In spite of three prophecies about Christ's coming passion, his disciples could not get his message. James and John approached him to ask for places of honor in his kingdom. Jesus responded to their request by asking them whether they could drink the cup

that he must drink, and be baptised with his special baptism — images which were ways of referring to his passion. The two young men responded that they could, although they still had no insight to what Jesus had been prophesying. Their answer, though, was prophetic, since James died a martyr beheaded by Herod Agrippa I ca. AD 44, and John had to undergo exile to Patmos and other persecutions.

Christ's teaching in the subsequent verses (40-45) emphasizes that what will be of value in his kingdom is not honor but SERVICE (or love that is expressed in actions). His kingdom will be a new life where worldly values will be reversed: the great will be the smallest, the master will be the slave, the first will be last.

Christ. Our High Priest

Since Jesus Christ lived as one of us although he was the Son of God, he acquired the prerogative of being our supreme Mediator before the throne of God. He is given here a title that makes him both "supreme or great" and "high" — a double grandeur borrowed from 1 Mac 13:42 (where Simon Machabeus is both high priest and military general or leader of the Jews).

Heb 4:16 gives us another key thought in the letter to the Hebrews, namely, trustful access to God through worship. We find this thought elsewhere in the letter, for example in 7:25; 10:1. 22; 11:6; 12:22. We should feel confident in approaching God since we are sure through Christ our Mediator and High Priest that we will receive God's unfailing mercy and bountiful grace when we badly need it.

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

Pointers for sharing. Jesus taught his disciples for about three years day in, day out. Yet they failed to understand many of his basic teachings. Fortunately, their minds and hearts were finally opened by the word-events on Calvary and Christ's empty tomb, and especially by the coming of the Holy Spirit sent by Christ. Have we ourselves grasped the basics of Christian discipleship? Share your answer with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. Sermons for this Sunday should touch on the Jubilee of Missionaries and on World Mission Sunday. Much can be picked up from *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 44 to 45.

2. Liturgy should follow the path already taken by Jesus Christ in his Incarnation. Liturgy has to be inculturated, see *Ecclesia in Asia* n. 22.

<{} **JUBILEE YEAR** {}> **45) OCTOBER 29, 2000**

JUBILEE OF SPORTS PEOPLE

JUBILEE OF PRISONERS — PRISON AWARENESS SUNDAY

30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

**Theme 1: BLIND PEOPLE ARE CURED (Jer 31:7-9;
Mk 10:46-52)**

**Theme 2: BIBLICAL PRIESTHOOD IS BASED
ON GOD'S CHOICE (Heb 5:1-6)**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXTS / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

This portion (A) is a reprint of the Biblical Notes for Homilies written by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P. in BEF vol. XLVII, no. 529, p. 572-73, modified.

Blind People Are Cured

Mark gives the name Bartimaeus ("son of Timaeus") to the blind man (only one, but Mt 20: 30 mentions two) cured by Jesus when leaving Jericho (Lk 18:35 says Jesus was approaching Jericho).

The significance of this story is brought out in the liturgy by connecting it with Jer 31:7-9, a passage that speaks of God saving the "remnant of Israel," in particular the weak and humanly useless: the blind, the lame, women and children. Their "salvation" means their return to Mt. Zion where they shall shout for joy (Jer 31:12; see Mk 11:9-10) for they will enjoy bountiful food supplies "and their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again" (Jer 31:12). In Mark, Jesus leaves Jericho to go up to Jerusalem to gain salvation for the whole world.

Biblical Priesthood Is Based on God's Choice

Although the description given in the first verse of this Sunday's Second Reading applies to the high priest it could be easily applied to priests in general: "someone who has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."

A priest must be a person who knows human limitations, one who has himself experienced human weakness so that he can show COMPASSION to those who are ignorant or err. The Greek verb used in this text — translated here as "showing compassion" and by the New American Bible as "able to deal patiently" — is *metriopathein*. Used only here in the entire Bible, it means "to be

measured or moderate in passion." It is the showing of feeling in a way that is gentle.

The gratuity of being chosen to the priestly office is given prominence in this text: "each one is called by God, as Aaraon was." Even Christ received this dignity of priesthood from his Father according to the two oracles cited by the Letter, one taken from Ps 2:7 and the other from Ps 110:4, both considered as messianic psalms. Priests of the New Testament receive their dignity and function as a participation in the priesthood of Christ who is the one and only Eternal High Priest.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

Pointers for sharing. Jesus showed special favor to Bartimaeus, who can be taken as symbolizing the Jewish people who responded to his preaching and benefited from his ministry. But his mission is to save the whole human race, and for this he has to go on to Jerusalem to suffer and die. People who accepted the Good News and specially those like Bartimaeus who concretely and specifically were beneficiaries of the Good News, "follow him on the way" (Mk 10:52). Are you like Bartimaeus? After receiving benefits from Christ's ministry, do you follow him on the road to Jerusalem where he will suffer and die? Share your answers with your small group.

POINTERS FOR HOMILIES

1. Preachers who can address sports people should preach on the relevance of Christ and Christian life to the sports world. Sometimes, there is a "competition" between religion and sports, as when people go to see a basketball or football game instead

of going to Mass on Sunday. But this should not be. Sports — like any activity that is good for the human body — can also be good for human salvation. St. Paul compared Christian life to sports (1 Cor 9:24-27; see also Heb 12:1), and his own apostolic ministry to a fight (2 Tim 4:7; for Christians see 1 Tim 6:12 and Heb 11:24). Strictly speaking, Christ was not a sportsman. But he did a lot of walking. In today's Gospel Reading he is going to walk all the way up to Jerusalem. That should qualify him for a modern walkathon.

2. Preachers who can address prison people should preach about the care for prisoners that is part of the ministry of the Church. This has special significance because the "year of grace" proclaimed and fulfilled by Jesus Christ specifically mentions the release of prisoners, see Lk 4:16-21. Such a sermon, can emphasize releasing prisoners unjustly imprisoned. Newsweek Magazine May 29, 2000 carries an article (p. 32-37) that demonstrates how DNA testing has proved time and time again that even in America, a good percentage of people serving sentence for crime, including those subject to death penalty, are in fact innocent: "HARD SCIENCE;" though only a handful of cases are involved so far, DNA testing is shaking the criminal-justice system by showing that police and prosecutors can go wrong. Since 1973, 87 death-row inmates have been freed, eight by DNA evidence. DNA testing has cleared 64 non-death-row inmates as well."