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APOSTOLIC LETTER:
SPIRITUS ET SPONSA
John Paul II

MIXED AND DISPARITY OF
CULT MARRIAGES
Javier Gonzalez, O.P.

THE FIFTH GROUP OF FILIPINO
PRIESTS (1726-1736):
THE EMERGENCE OF THE
FIRST PLEBEIAN PRIESTS
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A PILGRIMAGE TO
OUR LADY OF FATIMA,
PORTUGAL
Ruperto Santos

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The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

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Table of Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE	152	HOW TO CHEAT? EXPOSING THE EVILS DURING ELECTION
DOCUMENTATION		
<i>John Paul II</i>	156	POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION <i>PASTORES GREGIS</i> II
	226	MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE
	239	APOSTOLIC LETTER <i>SPIRITUS ET SPONSA</i>
PASTORAL WORDS		
<i>Luciano P.R. Santiago, MD</i>	252	THE FIFTH GROUP OF FILIPINO PRIESTS (1726-1736): THE EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST PLEBEIAN PREIST
<i>Ruperto Santos</i>	283	A PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY OF FATIMA, PORTUGAL
CONSULTATIVE WORDS		
<i>Javier Gonzalez, OP</i>	298	MIXED AND DISPARITY OF CULT MARRIAGES
GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW		
<i>Efren Rivera, OP</i>	304	HOMILETIC & BIBLIARASAL POINTERS FOR MAY-JUNE 2004
FABC CORNER		
<i>FABC-OSC</i>	330	BISHOPS' MEET 2003: FINAL STATEMENT

EDITOR'S NOTE

How to Cheat? Exposing the Evils During Election

VICENTE CAJILIG, OP

The Center for Contextualized Theology and Ethics, in collaboration with the Episcopal Commission on Inter-religious Dialogue, Episcopal Commission on Ecumenical Affairs, Philippines Islamic Council, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Urban Poor Organizations of Metro Manila, the Social Research Center, and student leaders of the University of Santo Tomas h^old a dialogue of deeds with the theme "How to Cheat? Exposing the Evils During Election" on January 16, 2004 at the seminar-workshop rooms 1-3, Thomas Aquinas Research Complex, University of Santo Tomas, Manila.

As the National Election is coming in May, academicians, researchers, heads of organizations, students and every Filipino is called upon to actively participate in ensuring its integrity. Inter-religious efforts by Christians and Muslims and other faith persuasions are undertaken to advocate a clean and honest election.

The occasion was graced by his Excellency, Bishop Deogracias Iniguez,, Jr., DD, Bishop of Kalookan and Vice-Chairman of the Episcopal Commission of Ecumenical Affairs, who provided the pastoral and ecclesiological background of the conference.

The first resource speaker, Prof. E. Daniel De Leon, the National President and Board Chairman of the Kolping Society Philippines, Inc., presented the different ways of cheating, happening, before, during and after election. The second resource speaker, Prof. Taha Basman, the Commissioner of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), and the President of the Philippine Islamic Council, discussed the issues on "Religion and Politics: Mindanao Concern During Election."

This dialogue of deeds was undertaken as a response to the challenge made by Archbishop Michael Louis Fitzgerald, DD, the President of the Pontifical Commission on Inter-religious Dialogue and Member of the Pontifical Commission on Christian Unity, during the symposium on the "Ecumenical Implications of Inter-religious Relations" on August 23, 2003 at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. In that meeting, His Excellency clearly elaborated the different dynamics of DIALOGUE, namely: dialogue of life, dialogue of deeds, dialogue of discourse, and dialogue of religious experience.

Dialogue of deeds produced results which was forwarded to the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the Philippines (CBCP). Responding to the results is the release of a Pastoral Statement on the coming 2004 Elections:

To the People of God in the Philippines,

Another crossroads in our nation's history is confronting us. Even before the campaign season begins, the elections of

2004 have already been poisoned by a climate of confusion, cynicism, and loss of credibility. More than ever, political patronage, pay-offs and personalities dominate our electoral process, not principles, party platforms and genuine people's participation.

In this critical moment, we hear Jesus' assuring words, "Be not afraid" (Mk 6:50). We therefore confidently face up to the following challenges:

- (1) We have to uphold the constitutional process and the rule of law. Clean, honest, and orderly elections are the hallmarks of a working democracy. There are indeed shortcomings and threats to our democratic way of life. But the freedoms we cherish are best safeguarded by a vigilant and informed citizenry during times of election. The opposite scenario would be recourse to violence, attempted coups, and anarchy.*
- (2) We have to work together. In various parts of the country, citizens' movements for clean elections and good governance have sprung up. These are often multi-sectoral, interfaith groupings of concerned citizens involved in political education, scrutiny of candidates' qualifications, and poll watching. With the advances in communications technology, these citizens' groups have the potential to reach out to all sectors of society. We commend their efforts.*

We support the formation and networking of these groups throughout the country. In our own dioceses, we shall encourage local groups and communities to participate critically in these discussions. In particular, we reiterate the call to the Catholic laity to exercise their Christian responsibility and noble

calling to be involved in politics through education in social responsibility, non-partisan poll watching, in the conscientious choices of candidates, etc,

- (3) *We have to believe in our own power to transform society. Clean and meaningful elections and transformed politics depend on ordinary people and on each one of us. We start with our own values and attitudes (e.g. walang hihingi sa panahon ng eleksyon). Let us encourage the teachers, the youth, the police force, military people, and others directly involved in the elections to exercise their roles uprightly. In a Church of the Poor, it is the poor who must take the lead in transforming our society. All of us, especially the poor, must realize that this transformed society requires leaders to be public servants, not providers of favors.*

Finally, we invite all of you to join us in prayer during this election period - that God's grace may enlighten us at this difficult crossroads in our nation's journey. May the First Friday devotion to the Sacred Heart focused on Conversion, Offering and Renewal, as well as the entire Lenten season, provide us moments of prayer - to take courage, and be guided by the Gospel as we hope for a brighter dawn for our nation. As Jesus sent his disciples, Jesus sends us now, with the same promise, "I am with you always." (Mt 28:20).

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.



†**FERNANDO** ***T** **CAPALLA**, D.D.
Archbishop of Davao
President, CBCP
26 January 2004

The Fifth Group of Filipino Priests (1729-1736): The Emergence of the First Plebeian Priests

LUCIANO P.R. SANTIAGO, MD

As the title indicates, this article is the fifth in a series by the author on the early Filipino clergy since its launching by Manila Archbishop Diego Camacho y Avila (1697-1706) on December 20, 1698. The special significance of the fifth group is that, for the first time, Filipino aspirants from the lesser social classes ascended the altar of God with the priestly dignity. This, in fact, is more reflective of the contemporary situation in the Philippine church.

The earlier articles in the series have been published in the Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas (BEF) in the following issues:

"The First Two Groups of Filipino Priests (1698-1723)."
BEF Vol. 66 (Sept.-Oct. 1988): pp. 636-645.

"The Third Group of Filipino Priests (1723-28)."
BEF. Vol. 66 (Nov.-Dec. 1988): pp. 757-770.

"The Fourth Group of Filipino Priests (1728-29)."
BEF. Vol. 67 (Jan.-Feb. 1989): 1-6.

No other group of Filipino priests since the first two stirs more interest than the fifth group for it embraced the first native priests to be drawn from the masses. Notwithstanding Sidoti's assertion in the constitution of the Seminary of San Clemente that "a plebian of noble character, ability and promise should be preferred to a nobleman with lesser attributes,"¹ it took more than three decades for this principle to be applied to priestly ordination since the launching of the Filipino clergy in 1698. Thus, if the church authorities had dragged their feet in ordaining the first native priests who all belonged to the nobility, they put off even longer the promotion of the first Filipino plebian priests.

The fifth group refers to those ordained during the *sede vacante* in Manila (1729-36) by the suffragan bishops who included Dr. Phelipe de Molina of Nueva Caceres (1726-38). Dr. Geronimo de Herrera y Lopes of Nueva Segovia (1727-1742) and Dr. Manuel Antonio de Ocio y Ocampo of Cebu (1735-37).²

The First Filipino Plebeian Priests

Bishop Foronda of Cebu was the first Philippine prelate to ordain Filipino clerics regardless of social class. In 1724, he raised a poor Pampango, Bachiller Balthazar Banta to the minor orders.³ Five years later, Archbishop Bermudes of Manila followed his example by also ordaining a poor Tagalog, Bachiller Anttonio de

¹ Luciano P.R. Santiago. *The Hidden Light: The First Filipino Priests*. (QC: New Day, 1987). An earlier version appeared at *Philippine Studies (PS)* 31 (1983): 160.

² Luciano P.R. Santiago. "A Chronological Grouping of the Eighteenth Century Filipino Clergy." *Diwa* 12 (October 1987): 93-101.

³ Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila (AAM). *Libro de Gobierno Ecclesiastico (LGE)* (1723-24) doc. 56.

la Assumpcion, to the minor orders. However, these two humble seminarians were not elevated to the sacerdotal dignity until they obtained a *capellania* (pious trust fund) as a means of support. Providentially, since Filipino capellanias were carefully created with provisions for the less fortunate, these funds now became available as the latter needed them. Thus, it was these indigenous foundations which opened the door of the priesthood of the Universal Church to the common man.

In fact, it is interesting to note that the very first capellania to be founded by Indios for an Indio cleric devolved upon the first Filipino plebeian priest. It had been formed by the Cutngan sisters of Apalit, Pampanga on 4 November 1721 in favor of Don Francisco Valerio. The latter, however, left the seminary eventually but not before he recommended Br. Balthazar Banta on 23 July 1721 to replace him as the beneficiary of the chaplaincy - to which the foundresses readily agreed. Banta's poverty was emphasized in the subsequent documents of the foundation. He had been in the minor orders for the past three years and would remain in the same level for another three years until his chaplaincy was finally approved by the cathedral chapter on 15 February 1730. He must have been ordained soon afterwards.⁴

Dr. Antonino de la Assumpcion, on the other hand, was more fortunate in that a year after he was ordained to the minor orders, a native capellania fell vacant with the unexpected death of the young Pampango priest B.D. Joseph de Mercado. This trust fund

⁴ AAM. "Aiiio de 1727. Recaudos de una Capellania de Missas fundada a favor de Licenciado Don Balthazar Vanta, clérigo de menores ordenes" and "Aiiio de 1730. Testimonio juridico de los Autos y demas diligencias que procedieron sobre la erección de una Capellania de Missas fundada a favor del B.D. Balthazar Vanta, clérigo de menores ordenes." *Capellania de Misas (CM)* (1700-1913) B.

had been set up by the Mallaris of Pampanga in 1722. Since Mercado and the founders had no eligible relatives to succeed him and since the founders had expressed preference for the "poorest" applicants, Assumpcion was chosen by the cathedral chapter as its next chaplain and he was installed to it by Bishop Herrera of Nueva Segovia in Vigan on 31 January 1731.⁵ By the following year, he was apparently ordained to the priesthood by the same prelate.

It is interesting to note that these first two poor Filipino priests ended up working together in the same area of the Lord's vineyard for the rest of their lives - in the parish of San Roque, Cavite where Banta was the coadjutor and Assumpcion, the priest-sacristan. It is recorded that the hardy Padre Banta lived a saintly life which lasted up to his mid-eighties - one of the longest lifespans among the eighteenth century Filipino clergy.⁶

Another poor and obscure priest of the fifth group was Miguel Banta who was most probably a brother or cousin or cousin of Padre Balthazar. Miguel graduated from the University of Santo Tom s with a BA degree in 1727 and was evidently ordained sometime within the next decade.⁷

In fact, the pioneer plebeian priests (except Br. Miguel Banta about whom we have very meager data) were recorded

⁵ AAM. "Capellanfa de Missas fundada por Don Melchor Mallari." *CM* (1722-1893) B.

⁶ AAM. *Catdlogos d,el Clero Secular (CCS)* (1762); Archivo General de Indias (AGI). "Clerecia del Abpdo. de Manila" (1760) *Filipinas* leg. 304; Salvador Escoto and John Schumacher "Filipino Priests of the Archdiocese of Manila, 1782" *PS* 24 (1976); 330-43.

⁷ AAM. *LGE* (1737-42) doc. 484; UST Alumni Association (USTAA) *Graduate Listing (1611-1971)* (Manila: UST, 1972) p. 2b.

to have distinguished themselves as illustrious clergymen of their time.⁸

The Elite Priests: Herrera's Ordinees

The ordination of native priests from the *principalia* of course continued unabated. We can identify at least twelve of them in the fifth group. We will start with those apparently ordained by Bishop Herrera of Nueva Segovia either in Vigan or in Manila. Vigan was then relatively the most accessible episcopal city from Manila. Due to old age and illness, Herrera retired to the vacant see of Manila in 1731 with royal license and survived eleven more years during which period he apparently continued to ordain priests.

Two co-ordinees of Br. Attonio de la Assumpcion in the minor orders were most probably also raised to the priesthood with him by Bishop Herrera by 1732 although their ordination records are missing. They were Bachilleres Don (B.D.) Nicolas Malonia and Don Joseph de Sta. Cruz y Saguinsin, both Indios as indicated by their surnames.⁹

Br. Miguel Banta, on the other hand, had two native co-graduates at the University of Santo Tomas in 1727 who likewise took the Holy Orders during the same period. They were: B.D. Juan Manuel Anzures, a Spanish mestizo, who eventually became the pastor of the prestigious parish of San Pedro de Tunazan in Laguna and B.D. Joseph Ureta, a Chinese mestizo who transferred to Cebu and succeeded to the capellanfa of his first cousin Mro.

⁸ Ibid; AAM. *LGE* (1751-52) doc. 159; Escoto and Schumacher. "Filipino Priests."

⁹ AAM. *Exdmenes para Provision de Curatos (EPC)* (1729-34).

Don Joseph de Ocampo, the first Chinese mestizo priest, when the latter's nephew B.D. Juan de Ocampo died in 1753.¹⁰

Bishop Herrera further ordained B.D. Joseph de Reyna for his diocese. Reyna was appointed coadjutor of Vigan in 1737 and then priest-sacristan of its cathedral from 1749-1753.¹¹

Molina's Ordinees

The late historian of Bikol, Dr. Domingo Abella affirms that Bishop Molina of Nueva Caceres ordained eight secular priests during his entire term. We can infer that at least half of them were native priests whom he raised in the later part of his episcopate based on surviving documents at the Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila coupled with those of the University of Santo Tomas.¹²

One of them was a BA graduate of the University of Santo Tomas in 1729, B.D. Augustin Reyero de Mercado. Most probably a Pampango, he died in 1751 as the pastor of Lagonoy and vicar forane of Caramoan. Mercado's contemporary, B.D. Anttonio Pascual de la Trinidad is another possibility. Either an Indio or Chinese mestizo, judging from his "religious" name, he too died in 1751 as the parish priest of Dongsol.¹³

Two more native graduates of the Dominican University in 1731 were evidently-raised to the priesthood by Molina for his

¹⁰ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 2b; AAM. CCS (1762); LGE {*Cartas*} (1747-56) doc. 92.

¹¹ Frederick Scherpf, SVD. "Notes from the parish books of Vigan (18th century)" MS.

¹² Domingo Abella. *Bikol Annals* (Manila: 1954) p. 97; USTAA. *Graduate Listing*, pp. 2b-3b.

¹³ Ibid; AAM. LGE {*Cartas*} (1747-56) docs. 85 & 88.

diocese. The first, B.D., Christoval Quinones, a Spanish mestizo, led a colorful career in the church. After serving three times as the vicar general of Nueva Caceres in *sede vacante*, he transferred to the archdiocese in 1778 to assume the pastorship of Sta. Cruz, Manila where he died in 1791 at the age of 79. His co-graduate, on the other hand, B.D. Bernardino de Mesa succeeded to the curacy of Capalonga in 1753.¹⁴

Ocio's Ordinees

Bishop Ocio of Cebu likewise celebrated native ordinations during his brief reign. Licenciado Don Miguel Pimentel, a Chinese mestizo who was one of his definitely known ordinees, became an exemplary clergyman of the diocese.

Another ordinee of Ocio was B.D. Joseph Tolentino of Cebu. He graduated as Bachelor of Arts from the Dominican University in 1731 and was probably ordained to the priesthood by Ocio before the prelate died in 1737. He was described as "*mozo de circunstancias*," referring to his affluent background, honorable and competent when in 1752, he succeeded B.D. Eugenio de Sta. Cruz, the first Indio vicar general, as acting pastor of Ahuy in Panay (Iloilo).¹⁵

A third probable but very obscure ordinee of the same prelate was B.D. Diego Tandoc de Sta. Maria who appears to have died in or before 1752.¹⁶

¹⁴ USTAA. *Graduate Listing*, p. 3b; Escoto & Schumacher. "Filipino Priests;" AAM. *LGE* (1753-55) f. 45v.

¹⁵ USTAA. *Graduate Listing*, p. 3b; AAM *LGE* {*Cartas*} (1747-56) doc. 92.

¹⁶ AAM. *LGE* (*Cartas*) (1747-56) doc. 92. *LGE*(*Cartas*) (1747-55) doc. 246.

Biographical Profiles

1. Licenciado Don Balthazar Banta

Banta or Vanta was born of a humble family of Pampanga most probably on the feast of the Three Kings, 6 January 1702.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that he was named after the dark-skinned King Balthazar with whom Indios probably tended to identify. His surname means, "threat" in the vernacular whereas in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia, it signifies "protest" or "dispute."¹⁸ If his forbears were threatening or disputatious as suggested by their patronymic, his long life, however, evinces the antithesis of these attributes.

It is not known where he earned his baccalaureate and licentiate degrees in arts but he evidently worked as a *capista* or domestic in exchange for his higher education. He was first granted the first tonsure and minor orders by Bishop Foronda of Cebu on 22 May 1724 in Manila which was then a vacant see.¹⁹ His elevation to the priesthood, however, was apparently delayed by the cathedral chapter until he could present a priestly means of income because of his poverty. On the other hand, he could have been ordained with the title of "worker" (*operario*) like the other native priests. Be that as it may, he had been in the minor orders for three years when by a providential turn of events a chaplaincy became available to him. It was interestingly enough, the very first *capellania de misas* to be founded by Indios for an Indio cleric.²⁰

¹⁷ AGI. "Clerecia (1760)"; AAM CCS (1762).

¹⁸ Paraluman S. Aspillera. *A Common Vocabulary for Malay-Pilipino-Bahasa Indonesia* (Quezon City:UP Institute of Asian Studies, 1964) p. 49.

¹⁹ AAM. LG£ doc. 56.

²⁰ AAM. CM (1700-1913) B.

On 4 November 1721, two days after All Soul's Day, the three Cutngan sisters (their surname means "to request") of Apalit, Pampanga had offered one hundred *cabalitas* of their hereditary lands, including fishponds, in the plains and hills of a site called *Pancayari* in orders to form a *capellania*. Dona Maria Cutngan and Dona Maria Guadalupe, both widows, and Doha Augustina, a spinter had chosen Don Francisco Valerio of Mexico, Pampanga as its chaplain-to-be, because of the "many good deeds" he had done for them. One of the witnesses of this foundation had been Don Bernardo Garzia Baluio who was probably a brother of B.D. Alfonzo Baluio y Garzia, the first Indio chaplain. A student seminarian of the University of Santo Tomas, Valerio had petitioned for the erection of the capellania on 19 April 1723 so that he could eventually be ordained with its title. The land claims of the foundation had been scrutinized for more than a year and a half up to December 1724. However, Valerio had apparently failed to follow up the process from this point on. As it turned out, he had been wavering in his vocation until finally on 23 July 1727, he gave up the *capellania* because "God Our Lord was pleased to call him in another way," that is, through the sacrament of matrimony. He eventually married a *prinzipala* of Bacolor. It is a tribute to Valerio's sense of justice, however, that he took care to recommend the needy but worthy Banta to replace him in this *capellania*. With unfailing generosity, Dona Maria Guadalupe and Dona Maria Cutngan (Dona Augustina had died in the meantime) assented to this new arrangement on 29 July together with their heirs: Don Juan Manutos, Dona Maria Guadalupe's bachelor son who left for New Spain; and Dona Cathalina Cutngan and Don Andres Marrano de los Santos, children of Dona Maria Cutngan.²¹

²¹ Ibid.

Banta, who was now a licentiate, asked the governor-general as vice royal patron to approve the above transfer on 20 September 1727 so that he could be ordained to the priesthood with the title of capellan. The chief executive gave his approval on 15 November and the following day in Manila, the Cutngan sisters founded their *capellania* anew in favor of Banta. One of their witnesses this time was B.D. Matheo Gana, a Pampango sub-deacon. The foundresses named the cathedral chapter also called ecclesiastical cabildo, as the *capellania's* patron in perpetuum and charged Banta with the obligation to offer twelve masses annually for the blessed souls in Purgatory. They further stipulated that after Banta's death, first preference for succession should be given to their nearest male relative who would be interested in the Holy Orders. But if no relative were available, the foundation should pass to the closest eligible relative of Banta himself and if still none of the latter were interested, it should be granted to any Pampango seminarian, who would be the closest to ordination to the priesthood. But whether relatives or not of the foundresses or of Banta, the future chaplains should preferably be the poor, virtuous and competent aspirants - apparently referring to the qualities of the first chaplain himself.²²

Banta submitted the foregoing documents to the cathedral chapter for approval on 22 November 1727 expressing the hope that he would be granted the title as well as the canonical collation to it. Noting Banta's poverty, the ecclesiastical fiscal B.D. Antonio Gil Adriano recommended a careful assessment of the total value of its lands to make sure that it could adequately support the applicant. However, a year passed without the

²² Ibid.

chapter acting on this recommendation and in the meantime, the new Archbishop Bermudes had arrived in July 1728 and scheduled ordinations for the December Ember Days. So on 5 November 1728, Banta repeated his previous request. He was then serving at the Manila Cathedral, the better for the chapter to observe and evaluate his worthiness and competence. A re-examination of the dimensions of the state in question was now ordered. Within the same month, a handsome map was drawn of it and it was found to be even bigger than the stated area in the documents. Nevertheless, the chaplaincy was not yet approved and Banta missed the ordinations of the following month.

Were the officials dragging their feet because this was the first time a brown man from the masses was determined to pursue his vocation to the Holy Orders? Alas! More than a year Banta's second request, the process had not been concluded. After the mourning period over the archbishop's death, the patient applicant firmly reiterated his petition to the chapter for the third time on 15 February 1730 to become a chaplain so that he could be promoted to the priesthood. He had languished in the minor orders for almost six years! At last, the chapter, through its Dean Doctor Don Manuel Antonio de Ocio y Ocampo (who was soon to be nominated bishop of Cebu) formally erected his capellania and granted him its title on 19 April 1730. He was notified of this long overdue decision the following day and he received collation as chaplain from Dr. Don Juan de la Fuente Yepes, Chantre of the cathedral.²³ Most probably, he was ordained by Bishop Herrera of Nueva Segovia in Vigan later in the same year. It appears that his first and last assignment was the coadjutorship of San Roque, Cavite. For more than fifty years, it was his humble place in the

²³ Ibid.

sun for the rest of his long life. In 1738, he was joined there by the second Indio plebeian priest B.D. Anttonio de la Assumpcion as the priest sacristan. They served under their Spanish contemporary Dr. Don Vizente Mauleon y Peralta (1705-1782) who became the proprietary parish priest of San Roque in 1753.²⁴

On 22 January 1740, Archbishop Rodrigues renewed Banta's license to celebrate masses for a year. Eleven years later, however, there was no longer any doubt about the worthiness and competence of the first Filipino plebeian priest. On 16 November 1751, Archbishop Marlines granted him the privileges to hear confessions and say masses in the parishes of Cavite for the duration of his coadjutorship in San Roque. He maintained these privileges for the rest of his priestly life. These were successively reaffirmed by Archbishop Sancho on 1 October 1772 who further extended his privileges to anywhere he might be in the whole archdiocese "for a period of time at the will of His Grace." In the clergy lists of 1760 and 1762, he was properly classified as an *Indio Pampango legitimo* - not *aprinzipal* like most of the others - and he was, of course, noted to be fluent in both Tagalog and Pampango. In the more detailed list of 1776, he was described in awe as "of venerable age, of virtous life and conduct and of well-known competence" (*de edad madura, de aprobada vida y costumbres y de conocida suficiencia*).²⁵

He celebrated his golden jubilee as a priest quietly in 1780. By this time, he had witnessed the various civil and eccle-

²⁴ AAM. *LGE* (1737-42) docs. 6 to 12; (1753-55) f. 93v.

²⁵ Ibid. (1732-42) doc. 349; (1751-52) doc. 159; (1759-64) f. 98; (1772-83) f. 41; CCS (1762); AGI "Clerecia (1760)" of "Catalogo del Clero Manilano" (1776) "*Filipinas* leg. 1027 in Angel Martinez Cuesta. "El Clero Filipino" *Missionalia Hispdnica*, 40 (1983): 331-62.

siastical crises in the colony including the British Occupation (1762-64) and the secularization of the parishes by Archbishop Sancho starting in 1768. He appears as the most venerable member of the Manila clergy in its extant roster of 1782, his age then being approximated as 82. In this document, the previous description of his long life was glowingly repeated as "virtuous and of well-known competence" (*probada vida y conocida suficiencia*).²⁶ What a moving epitaph for the first Filipino priest from the masses! He was called to his eternal rest and reward between 1784-1787 for which the official book of Archbishop Sancho is missing.

He was probably the godfather or uncle of the second B.D. Balthazar Banta (born in 1757) a long-time coadjutor of Sta. Cruz, Manila who founded a valuable capellanfa in the early nineteenth century.²⁷

2. *Bachiller Don Antonio de la Assumption*

As cited earlier, he was the second Filipino proletarian priest next to Banta. Like the latter, he was consistently classified simply as an *Indio legitimo* in surviving catalogues of the archdiocesan clergy for 1760 and 1762, indicating that he was a Tagalog but not of the principal or upper class like most native priests of his time. He was born around 1705 according to the same catalogues but his place of birth is unknown. A humble student of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, he must have graduated at its parent institution the University of Santo

²⁵ Escoto & Schumacher. "Fit. Priests."

²⁷ Ibid.; AAM. "Capellanfa fundada por el Presbftero Don Balthazar Banta." CM (1853-54) A.

Tomas with a Bachelor's degree. However, he is not included in the extant but incomplete roll of graduates of this university.²⁸

He was apparently ordained to the minor orders by Archbishop Bermudes before the latter died in November 1729. As a cleric in the minor orders, he took the synodal examinations for the curacy of Natives and Morenos and the sacristy of Quiapo on 18 August 1730. The first was vacated by the death of the Tagalog B.D. Sebastian Fabian de Moxica whereas the second group of Filipino presbyters. Assumpcion, however, failed in the examinations by one score (*un grado*) in Latin and theology.²⁹

On the other hand, the death of Mercado also left open his capellania founded by the Mallari family of Macabebe, Pampanga in 1722. The Mercados and the Mallaris having no heirs with vocation, the foundation had to devolve upon any deserving applicant outside these families, preferably the "poorest" as specified by the founders. Answering to this description, the poor Letranite Assumpcion applied for this chaplaincy without any difficulty because it had been erected and functioning for the past seven years unlike that of Banta. However, Banta's own precedence in the same year, as the first Filipino plebeian priest must have helped Assumpcion's case considerably. The cathedral chapter in *sede vacante* approved Assumpcion as the second chaplain of the capellania of the Mallaris on 18 November 1730. After the Christmas holidays, Assumpcion traveled to Vigan in order to receive its title and collation from Bishop Herrera of Nueva Segovia on

²⁸ AGI. "Clerecfa (1760)"; CCS (1762); USTAA. *Graduate Listing*.

²⁹ AAM.EPCi 1729-34).

31 January 1781. He was also raised to the subdiaconate in the same year probably by the same prelate.³⁰

On 19 November 1731, as a student subdeacon of Letran, Assumpcion competed for the vacant curacy of Hermita but failed again by one score in Latin and moral theology.³¹ His promotion to the diaconate and the priesthood probably did not occur until the next year at the earliest. Thus, he was ordained at least two years after Banta.

One of his first assignments was as coadjutor of Bifian, Laguna on 28 February 1737 as a replacement of B.D. Juan de Ocampo who had to rush to Manila probably due to an illness. Later in the same year, the sacristy of San Roque, Cavite was vacated by the death of B.D. Phelipe Hernandes. For the third time, he participated in competitive examinations on 16 September 1737 with five other young clerics. This time, however, he topped the *terna*; the second place went to the Chinese mestizo Mro. Don Francisco Nayto and the third to the Spanish *Licenciado* Don Gregorio Olaes. The two other examinees were B.D. Salvador Polintan and *Licenciado* Don Juan Joseph de Vera. On 20 September 1737, Assumpcion petitioned for his formal appointment as the new priest-sacristan of San Roque. As vice royal patron, Governor Valdes Tamon presented him for this office three days later and the new Archbishop Rodrigues granted him the title to it on 27 September. He was canonically installed as the proprietary priest-sacristan of San Roque on 2 October at the Manila Cathedral.³² Thus did Assumpcion and Banta, the first

³⁰ AAM. CM (1722-1893) B;£PC (1729-34).

³¹ Ibid.

³² AAM.LG£ (1737-42) docs. 6 to 12 & 18.

two poor Filipino priests begin to work together in the same parish until Assumption's demise twenty-seven years later.

On 28 October 1738, Assumpcion was bestowed the title of preacher and general confessor in the whole archdiocese for three years. Further, on 31 October 1739, he was appointed as the acting chaplain of the capellania of Dona Juana Hernandes due to the death of B.D. Nicolas Melo, a Spanish priest. His income was therefore, temporarily augmented by revenues of the foundress' estate called *Estansuelas* (now Caridad) in the town of Cavite.³³

His licenses to celebrate masses and hear confessions of both men and women were extended only for a year on 4 May 1742. However, the same privileges were renewed indefinitely together with those of Banta by Archbishop Martines on 16 November 1751. More than nine years later, Archbishop Rojo fixed his above licenses to two years on 25 February 1761.³⁴ In the meantime, the British occupied the Philippines from 1762 to 1764. Assumpcion died in early 1765 at the age of 60 in about the thirty-third year of his priesthood. He was succeeded on 17 May 1765 in the capellania of the Mallaris by B.D. Vizente Xavier De Villegas Flores, a Spanish mestizo from Pampanga.³⁵

3. *Bachiller Don Miguel Banta*

On the basis of his surname, it can be inferred that he was a brother or cousin of Licenciado Don Balthazar Banta and that the latter, he sprang from the masses.

³³ Ibid. docs. 17 & 328.

³⁴ Ibid. doc. 499; (1751-52) doc. 159; (1759-64) f. 97v.

³⁵ AAM. CM (1722-1893) B.

As a capista, he graduated with a BA degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1727 together with Bres. Don Juan Anzures and Don Joseph Ureta who likewise belonged to the fifth group of Filipino Priests.³⁶

That he was ordained a presbyter of the archdiocese of Manila is definitely known. On 15 December 1742, he was granted the license to offer masses in the archdiocese for one year.³⁷ However, this is the only data we have at present about this obscure priest.

4. *Bachiller Don Joseph Tolentino*

He graduated from the University of Santo Tomas as a Bachelor of Arts in 1731 together with Bres. Don Christoval Quinones and Don Bernardino de Mesa who were also ordained in the same period.³⁸ He was probably raised to the priesthood by Bishop Manuel Antonio de Ocio of Cebu (1735-37).

In late 1752, he temporarily succeeded the late B.D. Eugenio de Sta. Cruz, the first Indio vicar general, as pastor of Ahuy. He was, therefore, cited as such in the descriptive catalogue of clergy of Cebu in *sede vacante* prepared by Provisor Dr. Don Alexandra Domingues on 8 June 1753 for Archbishop Martines of Manila. Domingues praised Tolentino thus: "He is a young man of means but quite honorable, efficient and competent. He does not give in to petty clerics whom they tend to assign to Him."³⁹

³⁶ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 2b.

³⁷ AAM. *LGE* (1737-42) doc. 484.

³⁸ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 3b.

³⁹ AAM. *LGE (Cartas)* (1747-56) doc. 92.

The following year, on 14 July 1754, as a result of a series of ruinous Muslim raids, Tolentino led his parishioners to take refuge in the mountains of Ahuy.⁴⁰

5. *Bachiller Don Nicolas Maloma*

His surname is the hispanized form of *maluma* which in both Tagalog and Pampango means "to get old or worn-out." He appears to have been ordained to the minor orders in 1729 by Archbishop Bermudes together with Bres. Anttonio de la Assumpcion and Joseph de Sta. Cruz y Saguinsin. Together with the latter two, he also vied for the curacy of Natives and Morenos and the sacristy of Quiapo on 18 August 1730 but like them, he obtained one score short in Latin and Theology.⁴¹ Although we do not have any other data on this Indio cleric, we are assuming that he was eventually ordained in the same period as Assumpcion and Sta. Cruz y Saguinsin.

6. *Bachiller Don Joseph de Sta. Cruz y Saguinsin*

This cleric carries the surnames of two of the most eminent Indio priests of his time: Bres. Don Eugenio de Sta. Cruz and Don Bartholome Saguinsin. He was probably related to either one or both of them either as a nephew or as a godson.

As mentioned above, he appeared to have been ordained to the minor orders in 1729 by Archbishop Bermudes together with Bachilleres Assumpcion and Maloma. The three of them competed for the curacy of Natives and Morenos and the

⁴⁰ Ibid. doc. 120.

⁴¹ AAM. EPC (1729-34).

sacristy of Quiapo on 18 August 1730 but failed by one score in Latin and Theology.⁴² Three years later, as a Theology student in the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, he participated again in the synodal examinations for the curacies of Tabuco (now Cabuyao, Laguna) and the Estancias of San Francisco de Malabon (now General Trias, Cavite) on 23 September 1733. This time he passed with one score in Latin and Theology and three in Tagalog, his native tongue. Nevertheless, he did not make the *terna* for either one.⁴³

We are also assuming that he was eventually ordained a priest as in the case of Maloma, although we do not have his ordination records.

7. *Bachiller Don Juan Manuel Anzures*

A Tagalog-Spanish mestizo, he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1727 together with Bres. Miguel Banta, an Indio and Joseph Ureta, a Chinese mestizo. He was most probably ordained during the subsequent *sede vacante* in the archdiocese of Manila which lasted up to 1736. On 22 January 1740, his license to celebrate masses was renewed for one year.⁴⁴

He eventually became the proprietary parish priest of San Pedro Tunazan in Laguna which was then one of the prominent parishes in the archdiocese. This was the position he occupied in 1760 when the catalogue of the Manila clergy was issued for the first time by Archbishop Rojo (1759-64). He was also

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 2b.; A AM. LGE (1737-42) doc. 349.

then recorded as 52 years old, an *operario*, preacher and confessor and fluent in Tagalog. The same details about him were included in the catalogue of 1762 except, of course, for his age which was given as 53.⁴⁵

He fell critically ill on 25 February 1768 and was replaced by a Spanish priest B.D. Juan de la Quadra who was appointed coadjutor of Tunazan. He died four months later when his curacy was declared vacant. He was then about 60 years old. B.D. Miguel Silverio, a Chinese mestizo, succeeded him as the proprietary pastor of Tunazan on 3 September 1768.⁴⁶

8. *Bachiller Don Joseph Ureta*

He was the first cousin of Mro. Don Joseph de Ocampo, the first Chinese mestizo priest and capellan who, however, was much older than he. His younger brother, Vizente also became a priest of the diocese of Cebu.⁴⁷

As noted earlier, he graduated from the Dominican University in 1727 as a Bachelor of Arts together with Bres. Miguel Banta and Juan Anzures.⁴⁸ He was also apparently ordained during the *sede vacante* in Manila (1729-36) at which time he transferred to Cebu.

After his nephew and contemporary, B.D. Juan de Ocampo died on 17 April 1753, Archbishop Martines declared the latter's chaplaincy vacant on 4 May. This was the chaplaincy founded by

⁴⁵ AGI. "Clerecia (1760)"; AAM. CCS (1762).

⁴⁶ AAM. LG£ (1767-71) docs. 134 & 279.

⁴⁷ Ibid. (1735-55) f. 55; (1747-56) {*Cartas*} doc. 92.

⁴⁸ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 2b.

Mro. Don Joseph de Ocampo in 1699 primarily for members of their clan in the Holy Orders. This type of religious trust fund was called *capellania de sangre* ("chaplaincy by blood"). Being the next of kin of the Ocampos, Ureta who was then the acting pastor of Aclan, applied for it through his attorney-in-fact in Manila, the Reverend Father Prior of the San Juan de Dios convent. This was, of course, approved by the Archbishop and he was given the title and collation to it on 2 June 1753.⁴⁹

However, the following day, when Dr. Don Alexandro Domingues, Provisor of Cebii, prepared his dossier on the diocesan clergy dated 3 June 1753, he virtually denounced Ureta to the archbishop as one of the "bad priests" of Cebu in direct contrast with his brother, Vizente who was described as a model priest. In his inimitable style, Domingues painted this sad picture of B.D. Joseph Ureta: "Although he was known in Manila as a talented person and good things were expected of him, he turned out to be a disappointment. Besides his careless and neglectful conduct in the ministry, according to information I received from reliable persons, he lacks reverence, decorum and the proper character in performing the rites instituted by the Mother Church. According to the vicar forane of the province of Panay, he conducted a burial ceremony in the company of the *alcalde* of the said province, Don Nicolas Baraona, talking in such ridiculous nonsense and in a diabolical manner that mocks, scorns, depreciates and derides the sacred rites to the scandal of all those who assist in them. For his suitable punishment, I have come up with effective measures considering the shortage of priests here and for now, I have to give assistance to other priests who are more rational than he."⁵⁰

AAM. LGE (1753-55) ff. 41b, 55 & 92v.

Ibid. (1747-56) (*Cartas*) doc. 92.

9. *Bachiller Don Joseph de Reyna*

Although he was a *mestizo de sangley* from the diocese of Cebu, Reyna was apparently ordained by Bishop Herrera of Nueva Segovia during his retirement period in the vacant see of Manila between 1731 and 1736. The next year, Reyna first appears in the canonical books of Vigan as its assistant parish priest. In 1740, he became its chief notary. From 1741 to 1746, however, his name disappears from the same sources which probably means he was assigned elsewhere in the diocese. He came back to Vigan as the coadjutor in 1747.⁵¹

On 25 February 1749, he ascended to the position of priest-sacristan of the cathedral in Vigan. However, after working in this capacity for more than four and a half years, he resigned on 5 October 1753. It was only on 22 December 1753, that he applied for his long overdue stipends from 1747 to date through his attorney-in-fact General Don Sebastian de Aramburu, regidor of Nueva Caceres. Happily, it was approved on New Year's Day of 1754. He then returned to his native diocese of Cebu but it is not known where he was assigned there. In his old age, he lived as an invalid in the San Carlos Seminary as noted in a list of the Manila clergy in 1778.⁵²

10. *Bachiller Don Augustin Reyero de Mercado*

His name appeared in most documents simply as Augustin de Mercado. His surname suggests that he was most probably

⁵¹ Scharpf. "Notes". AAM. "Clerecia del Abpdo. de Manila. Aflo de 1778." *Cedulario* no. 8 (1744-72) n.p.

⁵² Ibid; AAM. *Estipendios Ecclesiasticos (EE)* (1747-55).

an Indio because almost all the priests with this patronymic in extant eighteenth century catalogues were Indios.⁵³

He graduated from the University of Santo Tomas with a B A degree in 1729 and therefore, he must have been ordained to the priesthood sometime during the *sede vacante* in Manila (1720-36) probably by Bishop Molina of Nueva Caceres to which diocese he transferred. Here he rose to the position of proprietary parish priest of Lagonoy and Simandig and vicar forane of Caramoan in Camarines. He died in 1752 and was succeeded in both positions by B.D. Joseph Roberto Manicdao, another native priest.⁵⁴

11. *Bachiller Don Anttonio Pasqual de la Trinidad*

He mostly used his first two names which together with his third name indicate that he was a native priest, either Indio or Chinese mestizo. He was also probably related to Bres. Pedro, Andres and Manuel Pasqual who belonged, respectively, to the first, second and third groups of Filipino priests. For lack of definitive records, we are assuming that he was ordained during the same period as B.D. Augustin de Mercado who was his contemporary. However, it is also probable that he was ordained even earlier. Like Mercado, he also transferred to the diocese of Nueva Caceres where he eventually became the proprietary parish priest of Donsol. He died interstate in 1751 and Bishop Arevalo sent the elderly B.D. Juan Guinto (who belonged to the second group of Filipino priests) as vicar forane of Paracale to take care of the late

⁵³ A AM. CCS. (1-762 & 1776); AGI "Clerecfa (1760)," Escoto & Schumacher. "Filipino Priests."

⁵⁴ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 2b; AAM. *LGE {Cartas}* (1747-56) loc. 85; (1735-55) f. 44.

priest's estate. The bishop, however, also died in November 1751 and as a consequence Guinto apparently temporized with his foregoing assignment thus incurring the resentment of Pasqual's parishioners who sued him in a poignant case in the diocese.⁵⁵

Pasqual was succeeded in his curacy by another native priest B.D. Leon Borja in September 1752.⁵⁶

12. *Bachiller Don Bernardino de Messa*

He graduated from the University of Santo Tomas as a Bachelor of Arts in 1731 together with B.D. Christoval Qui-fiones.⁵⁷ They were both apparently ordained by Bishop Molina of Nueva Caceres well before this prelate died in 1738. In contrast to Quinones, de Messa's priestly career moved very slowly which probably means he was a native cleric, either Indio or mestizo.

On 18 September 1752, however, the archbishop of Manila issued an edict announcing the synodal examinations for the three curacies of Simandig, Donsol and Capalonga in the vacant see of Nueva Caceres. De Messa competed with seven other native presbyters of the diocese and won the eureka of Capalonga in Camarines which had become available with the death of B.D. Gregorio Cavalquinto. He was presented as the proprietary parish priest of Capalonga by the governor-general on 2 May 1753 and he received its title and collation from the archbishop four days later.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid. f. 42v. (1747-56) {*Cartas*} doc. 88.

⁵⁶ Ibid. doc. 81.

⁵⁷ USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 3b.

⁵⁸ AAM. *LGE* {*Cartas*} (1747i56) doc. 81; (1753-55) ff. 45v. & 47.

13. *Bachiler Don Christoval Leonardo Quinones*

Among the fifth group of Filipino priests, Quinones led the most eventful career in the Philippine church involving two dioceses. A Spanish mestizo, he was probably born in the diocese of Nueva Caceres in 1712. He graduated with a BA degree at the University of Santo Tomas in 1731 and was apparently ordained by Bishop Molina of Nueva Caceres in the later part of his episcopate (1726-38).⁵⁹

In 1742, he became the proprietary parish priest of Sorsogon, Sorsogon. He turned out to be an assertive pastor who in 1752, vigorously refused to countersign receipts of parcel posts in his parish which had been customarily done by his predecessors, even under pressure from the *alcalde mayor* of the province. He intimated his reasons for doing so to the archbishop of Manila, as ecclesiastical governor of the vacant diocese in his letter dated 28 January, the details of which have been lost.⁶⁰

After he had served his flock for about fifteen years, his prelate Bishop Manuel de la Concepcion Matos, OFM (1754-65) arbitrarily invited the Augustinian Recollects to take over the curacies of Sorsogon, Bulusan, Casiguran and Donsol. Appropriately enough, Governor General Manuel Arandia (1754-59) vetoed this move since it would mean the deprivation of their proprietary pastors, including Quinones. In the meantime, Quinones' health declined and on 2 October 1759, he arrived in Manila with his bishop's permission in search of a medical remedy. He was thus granted the corresponding licenses to

⁵⁹ Escoto & Schumacher. "Filipino Priests"; USTAA. *Graduate Listing* p. 3b.

⁶⁰ Abella. *Bikol Annals* p. 107; AAM. *LGE (Cartas)* (1747-56) doc. 70.

reside and say masses in the archdiocese for the duration of his treatment.⁶¹

After the death of Governor Arandia in 1759, the determined Bishop Matos revived his previous invitation to the Recollects and to this effect, he was able to secure the necessary decrees on 20 October and 6 November 1760 from the most powerful man in the colony: Acting Governor General and Bishop of Cebii Don Lino de Espeleta who was concurrently the administrator of the vacant archdiocese of Manila. Thereupon, Fray Gregorio del Santissimo Sacramento, ORSA took possession of the parish of Sorsogon while Quinones was away and without informing the latter who was also then the acting pastor of Tabaco, Albay. Certainly not a priest to suffer in silence, Quinones filed a suit for the restoration of his proprietary rights in the diocesan court. His parishioners passionately supported his cause not only by joining his suit but also by holding indignation rallies. Nonetheless, Quinones' case dragged on for a period of years which included the British Occupation (1762-64). After the foreign invaders had left, Quinones personally brought his case to Manila before Governor Raon, as the vice regal patron. The latter eventually ruled in his favor after the demise of Bishop Matos in 1765.⁶² Three years later, the governor also initiated the secularization movement in the archdiocese of Manila in cooperation with Archbishop Basimcr Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina (1767-87).

Bishop Matos was replaced by the no less controversial Franciscan Fray Antonio de Luna (1768-73) who turned out to be a thorn in the flesh of Archbishop Sancho especially in the ill-

⁶¹ Ibid. (1759-64) f. 15v.; Abella. *Bikol Annals* pp. 107-8.

⁶² Ibid.

fated Manila Synod of 1771. As a result of their clashes in this council, the Archbishop banished his suffragan to his own diocese. Upon the latter's death in 1773, it was the dauntless Quinones whom Sancho chose as his provisor and vicar general as well as rector of the cathedral in the vacant see of Nueva Caceres. However, due to an unusual turn of events, Quinones ended up working in these positions in three brief but consecutive vacant sees: 1773-75, 1775-76 and 1777-78. This was how it happened: Bishop Luna was succeeded in 1775 by a Mercedarian, Fray Andres de Echeandia who unexpectedly resigned after his consistorial promotion in the same year, then another Franciscan, Fray Francisco Antonio Maceira took possession of the vacant see in late 1776 but died early the following year.⁶³

Before the end of his third term as vicar general of Nueva Caceres, the 66 year-old ecclesiastical administrator, instead of retiring, transferred to the archdiocese of Manila where he was generously rewarded by Archbishop Sancho for his faithful services. On 1 June 1778, the archbishop granted him the entire set of licenses to reside, celebrate masses, hear confessions and preach in the archdiocese for a period of time at the will of His Grace. Then on 4 September 1778, the prelate gave him an ecclesiastical plum: the curacy of Sta. Cruz, Manila where he was appointed acting parish priest in place of the controversial Dominican Fray Joachin del Rosario. Finally, when the latter resigned, Quinones moved in as the proprietary pastor of the bustling parish. He was presented by the governor general on 25 January 1779 and was installed by the archbishop on 4 February.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid. pp. 118 & 127-136; Escoto & Schumacher. "Filipino Priests".

⁶⁴ AAM. *LGE* (1772-83) ff. 25v, 29v & 32.

He was active for five more years until at the age of 72, senility and illness overtook him before he could make his own plans for retirement. His parishioners filed a formal complaint at the ecclesiastical court about his failure to administer the sacred sacraments to them as necessary. The situation was investigated and poignantly, it was found to be true as reported by his parishioners. The provisor and ecclesiastical judge informed Archbishop Sancho accordingly on 31 August 1784. The archbishop, apparently, agonized over his older colleague's case for six more months. It was not until 4 March 1785 that he appointed the Spanish B.D. Bernardo Fernandez Abascal as substitute pastor of Sta. Cruz, noting with regret the "advanced age and chronic infirmities" of Quinones.⁶⁵ Yet the worn-out but strong-willed priest lingered for six and a half more years, outliving the archbishop himself by almost four years. He breathed his last after receiving the last sacraments on 10 September 1791 at the age of 79 in about the fifty-fifth year of his priesthood. He was buried the next day in the parish church of Sta. Cruz in solemn ceremonies presided over by B.D. Gaspar Ximenes, pastor of the adjacent parish of Quiapo who was also a Spanish mestizo. He was succeeded as pastor of Sta. Cruz by the Spanish Dr. Don Joseph Xavier de Torres.⁶⁶

14. *Licenciado Don Miguel Pimentel*

A Chinese mestizo, he was born in Pasay, then a town of the province of Tondo. It is recorded that he studied grammatica,

⁶⁵ AAM. *Oficios del Provisrato* (1784-1826) n.p.; *Asuntos de Varios Conceptos* (1740-1829) A.

⁶⁶ Archives of the Parish of Sta. Cruz, Manila. *Libros Canonicos de Entierros* (D-3) (1791-1802) f. 4v.; AAM. *LGE* (1789-97) f. 94b.

the equivalent of high school, and philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas where he graduated with baccalaureate and licentiate degrees in philosophy although his name does not appear in the surviving catalogue of graduates of the Dominican University. It is further recorded that he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Manuel Antonio de Ocio y Ocampo of Cebii (1735-37) to which diocese he transferred. Initially, he worked as a coadjutor in Augustinian and Jesuit parishes.⁶⁷

We learn a great deal more about him after the death of Bishop Protacio Cabezas of Cebii in 1753 when the vacant see roll under the administration of Archbishop Martines of Manila. From unidentified sources, the prelate gathered on 14 March that Pimentel was "a rude and ignorant priest who also gambles. On the last days of the illness of the bishop, he was playing cards with clerics Condes and Quintanilla and other mestizos not without scandal in the capital. They should be cited for this and supervised to amend their ways."⁶⁸

Notwithstanding this confidential report, the archbishop's vicar general in Cebii, Dr. Alexandre Domigues personally found the opposite about Pimentel who was then an unemployed priest. "He is not one of the ignorant priests as they have informed Your Illustrious Lordship for he has average knowledge of Latin and Theology. He is not rude either but contemplative, highly honorable and esteemed by the Augustinians and some Jesuits under whom he has served. He is hurt by the insults and vilifications hurled against him. However, I have strongly reprimanded him

⁶⁷ Ibid. (1747-56) (*Cartas*) doc. 92.

⁶⁸ Ibid. (1753-55) f. 22v.

for gambling. It was the rector of the cathedral (the Spanish mestizo B.D. Gregorio de San Anttonio), who had his eye on the provisorship, who introduced him to gambling and wine for pleasure. But he is fond of books, he is studious and he is not a vagabond who goes from house to house."⁶⁹ Domingues, therefore, recommended him to be assigned to badly administered parishes together with other model priests of Cebu. On 7 February 1754, he was sent to Viliran, Dumaguete as its acting pastor.⁷⁰

In Manila, on 19 June 1760, Pimentel formally took an oath of transfer to the vacant diocese of Nueva Segovia where a prominent priest of Vigan Licenciado Don Guillermo Pimentel appeared to be his younger brother. In the meantime, on 23 June 1760 he was temporarily given the license to reside and say masses in the archdiocese.⁷¹

In his old age, he returned to the archdiocese of Manila. On 11 December 1771, Archbishop Sancho granted him the privilege to celebrate masses "for a period of time at the will of His Illustrious Lordship."⁷² This was then the archbishop's way of honoring retired priests.

⁶⁹ Ibid. (1747-56) (*Cartas*) doc. 92.

⁷⁰ Ibid. docs. 87 & 107.

⁷¹ Ibid. (1759-64) ff. 48v & 50 (The first entry here was put in the name of Guillermo Pimentel but it apparently refers to Miguel Pimentel who was a resident of Cebii transferring to Nueva Segovia).

⁷² Ibid. (1767-71) doc. 1035.

15. *Bachiller Don Diego Tandoc de Sta. Maria*

This unknown priest of Cebii was evidently an Indio. *Tandoc* in Malay and Visayan dialects refers to "a cupping sucker made of cane, horn or glass (*ventosa*)."⁷³ We are assuming that he belongs to the fifth group of Filipino priests because he appeared to be a contemporary of Bres. Augustin de Mercado and Antonio Pasqualof Nueva Caceres.

In the middle of 1748, Bishop Protacio Cabezas of Cebu gave him dimissories to repair to Manila probably to seek treatment for an illness. On 7 June, the new Archbishop Martines granted him the corresponding licenses to reside and say masses in the archdiocese for three months. He was no longer included in the subsequent clergy list of Cebu issued by Bishop Cabezas on 30 November 1752.⁷⁴ This suggests that Tandoc might have died in the meantime.

⁷³ Jose Villa Panganiban. *Diksyunaryo-Tesaurus Pilipino-Ingles* (Quezon City: Manlapaz, 1972) p. 955.

⁷⁴ AAM. LG(1737-50) doc. 246; (1747-56) (*Cartas*) doc. 91.

A Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal

RUPERTO SANTOS

Summertime in Rome. Collegio Filippino was closed. All the priests were in the United States for summer pastoral ministries. The lay personnel and the Dominican sisters (OP) were also on vacation. I had one week off and I planned to spend it in quiet reflection out of Rome. Fortunately, I was blessed with the gift of a free round trip Swissair ticket to any destination in Europe of my choice. I chose to go on pilgrimage to Portugal to pay homage before the image of Our Lady of Fatima.

It was a hot and humid Wednesday of July 16 when I left Rome for Lisbon. I was booked on the Air Portugal flight TP 5231, leaving Fuimicino airport at 12:30 noontime and arriving in Lisbon at 2:15 in the afternoon. Upon landing, I followed the instructions given by the airport tourist information center, taking the airport city bus 41 for Lisbon. The bus fare was one euro and sixty cents. When I reached Sandalha, I crossed the street and walked down to the Arco do Lego for the bus terminals called Vede do Expressos where the information office instructed me

where to secure my bus tickets for Fatima. I was told to take bus 11, line 1 bound for Braga. The fare cost seven euros. The bus trip to Fatima was one hour and a half but I hardly noticed the time since I chose to sit on the top deck of the double-decker bus and I thoroughly enjoyed the view of rolling hills and the lush countryside.

FATIMA lies in the mountainous central region of the Serra de Aire, just thirty miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Though it is a remote village in the municipality of Villa Nova de Quere, Fatima is now an important religious town of Portugal and a significant destination for Marian pilgrimages in the world.

It was in Fatima that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared six times to three little shepherds. The period of the apparitions covered the period from May 13 to October 13, 1917. The shepherd children she appeared to were Lucia Dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto. In her apparitions before the shepherd children in Fatima, the Blessed Virgin Mary requested that *prayers and sacrifices be offered in reparation for sins, for the conversion of sinners and for world peace*. The Virgin also implored that the rosary be recited daily. The year of the apparitions in Fatima - 1917 - was a particularly difficult year: there was the devastation of World War I to contend with. At that time, Fatima was an uninhabited place used mainly as grazing grounds for animals. Bushes and trees, specifically holmoak trees, covered the ground where the Santuario now stands.

Along the way to Fatima, I also had time to read a pamphlet which I have written, "*A Collection of Prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary*." The pamphlet was printed by the Salesians

(Society of Don Bosco) in 1994. In the book, there were two prayers about Our Lady of Fatima.

First Prayer:

*O most Holy Virgin Mary,
Queen of the most holy rosary,
you were pleased to appear to the children of Fatima
and reveal a glorious message.
We implore you
inspire in our hearts a fervent love for the recitation of
the rosary.
By meditating on the mysteries of the redemption,
may we obtain the graces and virtues that we ask
through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.*

"I am the Lady of the Rosary..." These were the words of introduction of the beautiful Lady when she appeared to Lucia Dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto. She first appeared to the three peasant children at the Cova da Iria on May 13, 1917 and every 13th of the month thereafter except on August. Our Lady appeared to the children on the 19th of August at Valinhos.

In her final apparition on October 13, 1917, Our Lady spoke the following words to Lucia, *"I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not continue to offend our Lord who has been so deeply offended. They must say the Rosary! Pray the Rosary everyday in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of war."*

Second Prayer:

"O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of your mercy.

O Jesus, it is for your love, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary (when offering penance)

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love you. I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love you. Amen."

This was the prayer that Our Lady taught the three children. She told Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta to include this prayer at the end of each decade of the Rosary. It is a prayer of contrition and at the same showing the penitent's utmost fidelity in God's readiness to forgive. The prayer is an affirmation of one's complete trust in God and a firm expression of belief in forgiveness because of God's supreme act of love.

During the third apparition of Our Lady on July 13, 1917, she told Lucia, *"In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."*

A clear and loud voice announcing our arrival at Fatima ended my reading. It was almost five in the afternoon. A kind old woman advised me to cross the street and to walk straight ahead in order to get to the Basilica of the Holy Rosary. In less than fifteen minutes, the bell tower of the Basilica greeted my sight. I did not immediately proceed to the Basilica. Instead, I thought of first looking for a place to stay - a place that was both affordable and near the Basilica. I settled on the Hotel Verbo Divino with address at Apartado, 2. The boarding cost was thirty eight euros a

day with breakfast. Later on I learned from its brochures that Hotel Verbo Divino belonged to the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD fathers). After settling in my assigned room number 203, I hurriedly went to the Santuario.

COVA DA IRIA is the name of the place where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the three shepherd children from May 13 to July 13, 1917 and again from September 13 to October 13, 1917. It is in the Cova's semi-circular valley that the Santuario is presently located. The Santuario is about a mile and a half from Aljustrel.

At the center of the Santuario is a column with the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on top. It is a reproduction of the same statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Montmartre in Paris, France. When the column was erected, three small streams were discovered, a rarity in the whole region of Fatima. The Chapel of the Apparitions stands on the right side of the Santuario. A modern functional glass covering encloses the original small chapel. The trunk covered by the column on which stands the statue of Our Lady of Fatima is the exact spot where the Blessed Virgin appeared to Lucia Dos Santos and Francisco and Jacinta Marto though the holmoak tree on which Our Lady stood during the apparitions is no more. Pious pilgrims of years past had taken whatever remained of that tree as relics.

I went inside the chapel. There I prayed and reflected on the roles of the Blessed Virgin as wife, mother and friend.

The Blessed Virgin Mary as a wife:

Saint Matthew wrote in his gospel that Mary, "had been given to Joseph in marriage but before they lived together,

she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit" (1, 18). In the gospel of Saint Luke, Mary asks the angel, "How can this be since I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God" (1, 34-25).

First, as a wife, the Blessed Virgin Mary was FAITHFUL. She did not hide anything. She had no secrets. When Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, " she was actually saying, "What you said is impossible since I am living a clean and honest life. I am not playing or fooling around. My life is open and transparent." The Blessed Virgin Mary was committed to Joseph and she honored that commitment. She was a faithful wife to Joseph.

Faithfulness is to be true to our commitment and to live a life of integrity and credibility. When one says 'yes' or *I do*, it signifies a readiness to fulfill that promise, to live it and even to die for it. The *fiat* of the Blessed Virgin Mary was an eternal 'yes.' It was a yes to sacrifice, to service and to suffering. She stood with Joseph as *a faithful* wife from the flight to Egypt to the quiet life with Jesus in Nazareth.

Second, as a wife, the Blessed Virgin Mary had FEAR of the LORD. It was fear born out of love for the Lord. Her fear of the Lord made her commit an unconditional fiat to God. Her fear of the Lord inspired her to commit herself to God's service. It led her to obey God, to cooperate with His divine plan of salvation, and to conform her life in accordance with His will.

Imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary, our fear of the Lord should hinder us from abusing or using people and should

instead motivate us to respect them. Our fear of the Lord should encourage us to attend to the needs of others and to help build them up. Our fear of the Lord must make us avoid sin and make us model ourselves after the Blessed Virgin Mary who stood by Joseph as a faithful wife, who gave her unconditional *fiat* to God because of her great love for Him, and who was so solicitous and concerned about other married couples as she was with the wedding couple in Cana that led her Son, Jesus to perform his first miracle.

The Blessed Virgin Mary as a mother:

Humanly speaking, Jesus belonged to Mary because she was His mother, and He was her only Son. But the Blessed Virgin Mary did not keep Jesus only for herself. Although she fully realized what her motherhood would entail and what it meant to give her Son to the world, she still unconditionally gave her '*fiat*' and willingly shared Jesus with us. Unselfishly, she let herself become the instrument of His love and of His saving acts.

The Blessed Virgin Mary has always had a special role as the mother of Jesus yet she always chose to remain in the background. She never claimed any attention or credit, nor did she ask for any special treatment for herself. Her thoughts were always directed towards God. Her acts were always for Jesus.

First, as a mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary did not claim Jesus only for herself but offered Jesus to God, thus *as a mother she led Jesus to God*. She let Jesus be for us. Saint Luke wrote that, "*When the day came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to*

present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord" 'every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God.' And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." (2, 22-24)

Children are God's gifts but they belong ultimately to God. They are only entrusted by God to parents. So, children must be brought up according to God's ways. Their lives must be pleasing to God. Mothers, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, must always lead their children to God. They must see to it that their offspring live as worthy children of God. Jesus reminds us, *"If any of you should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and fall, it would be better for you to be thrown into the depths of the sea with a great millstone around your neck."* (Matthew 18, 6)

Second, as a mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary *lived for Jesus*. She was always united with Jesus. She was there for Jesus and with Jesus. *She loved Jesus* and loved whom Jesus loved. Because of her love, the Blessed Virgin Mary understood Jesus and accepted His ways. Saint Luke narrated that on hearing the shepherds, Mary *"treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them"* (2, 19). After finding Jesus teaching at the temple and upon hearing his response that he was doing his father's business, Mary *"kept all these things in her heart"* (Luke 2, 51).

The Blessed Virgin Mary devoted her time and her whole self to Jesus. She showed us that we owe everything to God, that all things belong to Him. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, we must also surrender all our aspirations and ambitions to Him, use all our talents and treasure for His glory and in His service. We must live for God and love Him as Mother Mary did.

Mary as a friend:

The Blessed Virgin Mary showed her care and concern for others at the wedding in Cana, Galilee. She was sensitive to the situation and possible embarrassment facing the wedding couple. She was also concerned about the needs of the wedding guests. She turned to Jesus, trusting Him completely. She then instructed the servants at the feast, *"Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you"* (John 2, 5).

First, as a friend, the Blessed Virgin Mary was always ready to *SERVE*. She was always available for the needs of others. She did not need to be asked or cajoled for help. Until now, the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to be sensitive to our needs. We are assured of her protection and care in times of trouble. She will always present our prayers and petitions to Jesus. She will supply what is missing in our journey to heaven.

Second, as a relative, the Blessed Virgin Mary was always ready to *SHARE*. Saint Luke narrated that, *"Mary then set out for a town in the hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, 'You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy'"* (1, 29-44).

Knowing that she would be the mother of the Savior, the very first thing Mary did was to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She wanted to be of service and to provide companionship to

Elizabeth who was also expecting a child in her old age. Mary wanted to share Jesus with her cousin.

Who could calm Elizabeth's fears and anxieties better than Jesus? What better gift can we give to others than the presence of Jesus? Mary realized this immediately. We must emulate her and make ourselves always available in service of others. We should share Jesus with others. Just like what happened in the wedding in Cana and in the town in the hills of Juda, the presence of Jesus will also sanctify our lives.

The services the Blessed Virgin Mary manifested for the wedding couple in Cana and for her cousin Elizabeth are the very same services she is doing for us. She is reaching out for us. *The Blessed Virgin Mary is constantly visiting us - to serve us, to share Jesus with us, and to intercede with Jesus on our behalf to sanctify us.*

I concluded my reflection with the recitation of the Holy Rosary. I bid Our Lady of Fatima goodbye, promising to return the next day.

The following day, July 17, I attended the Holy Mass at the Chapel of the Apparitions. After the nine o'clock morning Mass, I rode the minitrain for a panoramic tour of Fatima. There were five stops. I utilized only four stops to visit the following:

1. The *Casa de los Pastores* is a little hamlet at Aljustrel half a mile from the parish church of Fatima. The three shepherd children, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta were born here and lived here.

2. The *Lugar de los Apariciones* is a small rocky hillside mound surrounded by olive groves. Situated west of Aljustrel,

the place, *loca do cabeco*, is where the angel appeared to the three children on two different occasions.

3. The *Iglesia Parroquial de Fatima* of the diocese of Leiria is where the three children were baptized.

4. The *Santuário (Cova da Iria)* was my final destination. I got off from the minitrain and from there went directly to the Basilica of the Holy Rosary.

The BASILICA of the HOLY ROSARY, FATIMA has altars with the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. The statues around and inside the Basilica are of the famous saints who had special devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A side chapel to the left of the main altar has the tomb of Jacinta Marto. On the right side of the side chapel lie the mortal remains of her brother, Francisco. Near the main altar is the burial place of Don Jose Alves Correia de Silva, the bishop of Fatima during the time of the apparitions.

I took a seat in front of the main altar and reflected on this biblical passage:

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, *'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'* Then Jesus called a little child, set the child in the midst of the disciples, and said, *'I assure you that unless you change and become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes lowly like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, whoever receives such a child in my name receives me'* (Matthew 18, 1-5).

Jesus used the terms *'child, children, little ones'* to present as role models for the disciples. Why? A child is always considered to be helpless, powerless and vulnerable. Left alone and without proper supervision, a child is prone to accident. Yet a

child represents total humility. A child accepts his limitations. He recognizes his needs. He knows and admits his dependence on someone bigger and greater than him.

We must present ourselves before God in the same manner. For greatness is measured by our childlike dependence on God. We must rely on God and be totally dependent on Him. When we are left alone or separate ourselves from God, we will surely fail and lose our way to heaven. Without God on our side, we are helpless and hopeless. Without God, we are nothing. If we are united with God, we are saved. By relying on and trusting in God, we can overcome sin and Satan. *Only from God can come true protection and security.*

Like a child, we must humbly accept our personal insignificance. *Only God provides good and lasting things. Only in God can we find true salvation.*

I went to the side chapels and paid my respects to Francisco and Jacinta Marto. Then I recalled their significant lives and that of Lucia Dos Santos.

FRANCISCO was born on June 11, 1908. He was the son of Manuel Marto and Olimpia de Jesus. Francisco was the brother of Jacinta and the cousin of Lucia. During the apparitions, Our Lady made known to Lucia that Francisco and his sister Jacinta would be with her in heaven sooner. Knowing that he would be with Our Lady, Francisco chose to go to church rather than to school. He even advised Lucia and Jacinta to proceed to school while he went to the church to keep Jesus company in the Blessed Sacrament.

On October 1918, Francisco became sick. He told his family not to be worried, saying, *"Our Lady wants me in*

heaven with her." He offered his sufferings to Jesus and told Lucia, *"I am suffering a lot but never mind. I suffer everything for love of Jesus and Our Lady. I would like to suffer more, but I am unable to do so."*

At ten in the morning of April 4, 1919, Francisco departed from his earthly dwelling to live forever with Our Lady. He was interred in a simple grave in the parish cemetery. On March 2, 1952, his mortal remains were transferred to the side chapel on the right side of the main altar in the Basilica of the Holy Rosary.

JACINTA, sister of Francisco, was born on March 11, 1910. She was six years old during the apparitions of the angel. When Lucia decided not to go to Cova da Iria on July 13 because of the hostility and indifference of their townmates, Jacinta encouraged Lucia to change her mind, saying, *"Francisco and I are going and I shall speak to Our Lady myself."* Jacinta was the only one who received two visions. The first vision was about the suffering of the Holy Father because of the persecutions against the Church and of wars. Upon seeing the vision, Jacinta exclaimed, *"Poor Holy Father, we must pray very much for him."* The second vision was that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The vision made her a devotee of the Immaculate Heart. She always prayed, *"Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation. Sweet Heart of Mary, convert sinners, save souls from hell."*

A year after the apparitions, Jacinta contracted bronchial pneumonia that caused her extreme pain. She bore her sufferings as a means for the conversion of sinners. On February 20, 1920, Jacinta was rushed to a hospital in Lisbon. Our Lady visited her there thrice. On the night of that same day, Jacinta, breathed her last and was taken to heaven as promised by Our Lady. She was buried in the cemetery in Villa Nova de Quereçm and was trans-

ferred to the parish cemetery of Fatima in 1935. On March 1, 1951, the still preserved mortal remains of Jacinta were buried in the side chapel on the left side of the main altar of the Basilica of the Holy Rosary.

During the Great Jubilee 2000, Pope John Paul II visited Fatima on May 12 and 13. It was his third visit to the place. At the Holy Mass of May 13, the Holy Father beatified Francisco and Jacinta Marto. Pope John Paul II affirmed the simple and saintly lives of Francisco and Jacinta. The Holy Father attested in his homily that, *"With this ritual, the Church places in its candelabrum these two candles which God lighted that they might illuminate humanity in its time of darkness and doubts."*

LUCIA was born on March 22, 1907. She was the youngest of seven children of Antonio and Maria Rosa Dos Santos. Our Lady told Lucia that she would take Francisco and Jacinta before her and that she would remain on earth to spread the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. Our Lady, however, assured Lucia that *"my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."*

In 1921, the Bishop of Leiria arranged Lucia's transfer to the Dorothean Sisters of Vilar near Porto. She made her profession in 1928 at the Institute of Saint Dorothy. In 1948 she entered the Carmelites of Coimbra. She took the name Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart.

It was in Pontevedra on December 10, 1925 that Our Lady visited Lucia once again and entrusted to Sister Maria Lucia a great promise of salvation. In order to gain this promise of salvation, devotees must observe the First Five Saturdays on each First Saturday of five consecutive months; they must

confess and receive Holy Communion; recite five decades of the Rosary; and keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Sister Maria Lucia is still with the Carmelites of Coimbra and remains with us as an apostle of the Immaculate Heart of Mary until her final reunion in heaven with Our Lady together with Francisco and Jacinta.

It was almost five in the afternoon when I emerged from the Basilica of the Holy Rosary. To complete my pilgrimage, I made the sacrament of penance. I then walked around the Santuario with a feeling of satisfaction and serenity. This trip was indeed memorable. It was a grace-filled event and one that I wanted to do again.

I passed the Chapel of the Apparitions, bidding goodbye to Our Lady again. But this time I did not only promise to return. I also pledged to bring her Immaculate Heart to others. I went back to my hotel and prepared my things for my early morning bus trip back to Lisbon and the late afternoon flight back to Rome. I felt safe and secure because I knew that Our Lady would be journeying with me. She continues to journey with me still.

Cases and Inquiries

JAVIER GONZALEZ, OP

MIXED AND DISPARITY OF CULT MARRIAGES

What is the stand of the Catholic Church regarding mixed marriages and in particular between Jews and Catholics?

There are two questions here. The first one is on the stand of the Catholic Church regarding mixed marriages, that is, those marriages contracted between Catholics and baptized (therefore, Christians) non-Catholics. The second question is about the Church's stand on the "mixed marriages" between Jews and Catholics. Since "Jews" here, in the context of the question, are, to the eyes of the Church, presumably non-baptized, then the use of the expression "mixed marriages" applied to such marriages is not very appropriate; they should be described, properly speaking, as "disparity of cult" marriages. Let us try to draw a brief answer to both questions.

1. What is the Church's stand on Mixed Marriages?

The stand of the Catholic Church concerning mixed marriages has changed a lot in the last forty years: there has

been in the Church a transition from inimical *opposition* to the celebration of such marriages to the modern ecumenical *cooperation*, inspired by the principles on Religious Freedom and on Ecumenism laid down by the Second Vatican Council.

Is the Catholic Church today against the celebration of mixed marriages? The answer is no. In general, the present Church legislation is significantly friendlier towards mixed marriages than the previous Code. As a matter of fact, the Church approves, in principle, their celebration, although she has always discouraged them, particularly in cases where the non-Catholic partner has stronger religious convictions than the Catholic party, with the consequent danger of the latter losing his or her faith.

In addition to this reason already mentioned, there are also others that may help to understand why the Church, in general, discourages the celebration of mixed marriages:

(1) First, because statistics seem to indicate that the number of unhappy marriages is greater when the spouses have dissenting religious beliefs than when both of them share the same faith;

(2) Second, because of the lack of *full communion* between the spouses: There is one Church of Christ, subsisting in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter with the bishops in communion with him, although many elements of truth can be found outside of her visible structure (*Lumen Gentium*, 8);

(3) Third, the difficulty that sometimes the catholic party finds to have his or her children baptized and educated in the Catholic faith; and

(4) Fourth, because a Catholic who marries a non-Catholic creates a situation that is likely to be dangerous to his/her faith as well as to the faith of the children who may be born of the union.

In short, the stand of the Church, favourable to the celebration of mixed marriages although with some reservations, has an easy explanation: the spouses' variance with each other in a number of essential things. For even when both of them accept each other's convictions with reverence, love and tolerance, important discrepancies, for instance concerning the baptism and religious education of their children, remain unsolved in most cases.

One may ask: Cannot these differences be solved with a good preparation and counselling? Preparation and planning for marriage has necessarily to include the counselling of the young couple on moral and legal issues, finances, sex, personal fulfilment, and adjustments to each other. But, knowing the nature of marriage, when husband and wife do not agree on their faith and religious convictions, their longing for unity will remain unfulfilled in important matters, and tensions will most likely inevitable. Obviously, and in spite of that, when in their preparation the couple see that many of their religious beliefs and practices can be shared and that they profess a great love for God and for one another, then there is ground to feel confident about their conjugal stability. "Practical ecumenism" may also lessen the traditional religious barriers.

It should be said that the recent change of attitude on the part of the Church on this point has been motivated not only by *sociological* factors (Catholics and non-Catholics live together in many countries), and *ecclesiological* reasons (the

Church does not want to be an elitist, isolated society but rather the "People of God" embracing all levels of communion), but also by *ecumenical* principles (her teachings on religious freedom). In the end, the existing reality of mixed marriages is just the tip of the iceberg of a broader and much complex phenomenon: the one of the unity of all Christians, a field in which important positive progress is taken place nowadays.

2. *In the case of a non-baptized Jew and Catholic "mixed" marriages.*

First of all, an important clarification of terms: the expression "mixed marriages" applied here to the marriages between non-baptized Jews and Catholics is not very appropriate, technically speaking, as we already said, since the expression "mixed marriages" is used in the legislation of the Church (canon law) to describe only the marriage between a Catholic and a baptized (therefore, Christian) non-Catholic. It is only by affinity that people call also "mixed marriage" the one contracted between a Catholic and a non-baptized, although strictly speaking the latter is a "disparity of cult" marriage.

Accordingly, the marriage between a Jew and a Catholic, being a marriage between a non-baptized and a Catholic, would be not a "mixed marriage" properly speaking but rather a "disparity of cult" marriage. The difference is important when applied to the validity *of marriage*, because in order to get married in the case of a mixed marriage only *permission* from the bishop is required, while in the case of a disparity of cult marriage a *dispensation* by the same authority is needed since there is an impediment that would otherwise invalidate such marriage. The law of the Church says that "a marriage is

invalid when one of the two persons was baptized in the catholic Church or received into it... and the other was not baptized" (can. 1086).

What are the requisites on the part of the Catholic Church to validly contract a disparity of cult marriage, that is, a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized, as in the present case between a Catholic and a Jew? The canonical requisites are basically three:

(1) First, a dispensation from the mentioned diriment impediment (can. 1086) by the local Ordinary so that said marriage may be valid;

(2) Second, if circumstances so advice it, a dispensation from the observance of the canonical form to which Catholics are bound. The Code of canon law foresees that "If there are grave difficulties in the way of observing the canonical form, the local Ordinary of the catholic party has the right to dispense from it in individual cases...; for validity, however, some public form of celebration is required." [can.H27§2]; and

(3) Third, a declaration and a promise by the Catholic party that he or she is ready to remove any danger of apostasy of his/her faith as well as *to do everything in his/her power* to have the children baptized and educated in the catholic faith. (Obviously "to do all in one's power" does not mean an absolute promise at the risk of jeopardizing the marriage itself!).

Regarding the manner to do the promise, Episcopal Conferences have normally issued some norms in order to keep some uniformity within a country or region. In the Philippines, the CBCP has approved a formula for the promises to be made in writing by the Catholic party as well as for the declaration of

the non-catholic party. (To the non-Catholic party no promise is demanded: only the (written) assurance that he or she is aware of the promises made by his/her Catholic spouse).

The marriage ceremony may be held either in a church, oratory or, with due permission, "in another suitable place" (can. 118).

The disparity of cult marriage is not a sacrament, since only one of the parties is baptized; however, it is a canonical marriage, that is, a perfectly valid marriage contracted in accordance with the laws of the Church. Therefore, if one day the non-baptized party received baptism, such marriage would automatically acquire the category of sacrament.

Concluding, what is the stand of the Catholic Church regarding the marriage between a non-baptized Jew and a Catholic? It is simply the stand that the Catholic Church has regarding the disparity of cult marriages above explained. The Church approves, in principle, their celebration, although she has always discouraged them, particularly in cases where the non-Catholic partner has stronger religious convictions than the Catholic party, with the consequent danger of the latter losing his or her faith. In order to minimize such a danger, some requisites are demanded previous to the marriage celebration.

Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers for May-June 2004

EFREN RIVERA, OP

May 2, 2004 <> Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday

Readings (C): Acts 13:14. 43-52; Rv 7:9. 14-17; Jn 10:27-30

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). The whole of Jn ch. 10 is about the Good Shepherd. It is distributed over a period of three years thus: Year A, Jn 10: 1-10; Year B, Jn 10: 11-18; Year C, Jn 10: 27-30. In Year C the passage mentions three benefits that come from the sheep-shepherd relationship. First is that of mutual or interpersonal knowledge between the sheep and the shepherd; because of this the sheep follow the shepherd (Jn 10: 27). Secondly, the sheep get the promise of eternal life or the assurance that they will not perish (Jn 10: 28a). A description of the promised life can be found in Rv 7: 16-17 (see the Second Reading), "Never again shall they know hunger or thirst, nor shall the sun or its heat beat down on them, for the Lamb on the throne

will shepherd them. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." Thirdly, the sheep get the benefit of belonging to Jesus as well as to the Father (Jn 10: 28b-29).

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 27a "My sheep hear my voice, I know them..." Value of open communication between two persons, the basis of interpersonal relationship.

V 27b "They follow me." Value of following a good shepherd.

V. 28a "I give them eternal life." Value of life... specially eternal life.

V 28b "They shall never perish." Value of being saved from perdition.

V 28c "No one can take them out of my hand..." Value of belonging to Jesus.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you experienced the value of being shepherded by a Good Shepherd?
- Have you experienced belonging to somebody... or not belonging to anybody at all (being an orphan... being a loner).

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Hopefully, Shepherds will cultivate interpersonal relationships with their flock.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us cultivate the sense of belonging to one nation.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. Let us train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

YOU BELONG TO ME

An old love song (in the fifties!) emphasized that the beloved belongs to the lover even when they are apart. (The song began with the words, "See the pyramids along the Nile, watch the sun set on a tropic isle, just remember darling all the while, you belong to me..."). The sentiment can be exaggerated or even distorted. One could mean that one can own a person as chattel! Sadly this is still the conviction of quite a number of husbands - those who have hibernated in caves where the good news of women's rights have not yet penetrated.

Understood properly, belonging to somebody is a great thing, and not belonging to anybody is tragic. A child normally belongs to his or her parents. It is sad when one is an orphan. A husband belongs to his wife, and a wife belongs to her husband. Trouble has arrived when they start having other romantic interests. I belong to my community and my community belongs to me. If that were not so, we would not be a REAL community at all!

I belong to my country and my country belongs to me. If this were not so, one should remember the poem about a man without a country:

Breathes there the man with soul so dead
 Who ne'er to himself hath said
 This is my own, my native land.
 Whose heart has ne'er within him burned
 As home his footsteps has turned
 Upon wandering in a foreign strand.
 If there so breathes, go mark him well —
 For him no minstrel's raptures swell.
 High though his titles, proud his name
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim.
 Despite his titles, power and pelf
 The wretch concentered all in self
 •And doubly dying shall go down
 To the vile dust from when he sprung
 Unwept, unhonored and unsung.

Let us strive to belong. First and foremost, let us belong to Christ!

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

May 9, 2004 ◇ Fifth Sunday of Easter

Readings (C): Acts 14: 21-27; Rv 21:1-5; Jn 13:31-35

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). For John, the departure of Judas to arrange for the capture of Jesus is the true beginning of the Passion of Jesus. Ironically, however the events that will follow constitute the "glorification" of Jesus. This insight reminds us that the Passion of Christ is not to be separated from his resurrection. It is through the Passion-Resurrection - or what we now call the Christian Paschal Mystery - that Jesus is glorified.

However, there is one more way whereby Jesus is glorified, **namely, when his disciples put into practice his commandment of love.** Existentially, this is a more significant glorification.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 31 "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Value of true glory. For John, glory is not just the acclaim that people receive on earth or after their death. That is just the glory of human heroes. For John, glory is something that belongs to God in the first place, and then God shares it with human beings. Glory is the brilliance of God and the brilliance of what he has done for people and for the world. In a word, it is the brilliance of God's love. God is glorified by Jesus because in Jesus people see the greatness of God's love.

V. 33 "My children..." Value of the father-child relationship even outside a natural family. Jesus is the "father" of his disciples, and his disciples are to see themselves as his "children."

V. 34 "I give you a new commandment: love one another." Value of Christian love. To love people is a commandment found in the Old Testament and also in other religions. But in the Christian context, it becomes something "new" because it is exemplified by Jesus' love. It is new because there is a new model of it. Remember, a car is new when it is a new model.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you acted as a "child" of Jesus even though you are already an adult?

- Have you experienced how Christian love differs from other kinds of love?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO

(Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us aim at glorifying God by showing to the poor how much God loves them. We know how successful Blessed (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta was in this mission.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us keep insisting on TOTAL human development. Being advanced in technology or in commercial products must be secondary to the human relationship called "love". It is being HAPPY that counts, not being more advanced in technology and enterprise.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. Let us train ourselves in the values pointed out above-(n. 2).

WE GLORIFY GOD WHEN WE SHOW LOVE

In our times a number of people have glorified God by showing people, especially poor people, how much God loves them. We could think all the men and women who, in recent times have been elevated to the altar as Blesseds or as Saints. Perhaps the best known is Blessed (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta.

We should not forget that in Pope John Paul U we have a living person who continuously glorifies God. He continues the tradition of his predecessors, notably Pope John XXIII, who now has the title of "Blessed."

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

May 16, 2004 ◇ Sixth Sunday of Easter

Readings (C): Acts 15: 1-2, 22-29; Rv 21:10-14, 22-23; Jn 14:23-29

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). On this Sunday before Ascension Thursday, (as on the Fifth and Seventh Sundays of Easter) the Gospel Readings of the three Sunday cycles are all taken from the Farewell discourses (Jn 13: 31 - 17: 26). In Year A (Jn 14:15-21) the note of farewell is strong, and so is the promise of "another Paraclete". In Year B (Jn 15:9-17) love, keeping the commandments, joy and friendship are emphasized. In Year C (Jn 14:23-29) the emphasis is on being true to the word of Jesus. Moreover, the whole Trinity is brought into play: Jesus (the Word), the Holy Spirit, and the Father. There is also a highlighting of Peace as the farewell gift of Jesus.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 23a "Will keep my word." Value of faithfulness to the teaching and example of Jesus. The "word" of Jesus is not only his oral teaching but also his example and indeed his very self. Remember, he is the "Word of God."

V. 23b "My Father will love him/her and we will come to him/her and make our dwelling with him/her." Value of God's love for a human being. This gift is given to each and every human being upon his/her creation. But in Jn 14:23, evidently, Jesus speaks of a special love that can also be called God's "indwelling" in a person.

V. 26 "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit..." Value of having an Advocate who will teach and remind. He is not just an *abogado* in a law court. He is a guide and an inspiration in day-to-day living.

V. 27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Value of Peace. Jewish *Shalom* is the totality of all God's blessings to be enjoyed on earth. It has a temporal character. Christian Peace is superior. It is a benefit given to the disciples after the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. It is the *Abiding Presence of the Victorious and Glorious Christ in the hearts of his disciples*.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Did you ever rebel against God but finally found peace? How did it happen?
- Have you experienced being catechized by the Holy Spirit?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us be more aware of the presence of the Holy Trinity - Father, Word, and Holy Spirit - among us.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us cultivate the culture of peace. Let us possess the conviction that violence only leads to more violence. Let us be convinced that whatever the problem may be, *maaari naman natin pag-usapan 'yan (we can talk about it until we reach a solution)*.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. Let us train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

ABIDING PEACE

A certain lady could find no peace after her husband was abducted and cruelly murdered by criminal characters ironically connected with the police. She wanted revenge! Her husband was tortured and dumped like garbage into the sea. In fact he was found floating in the sea only after his face had decomposed into a skull. It was not just her husband's ordeal that had to be avenged. What about her own days and nights of anguish when searching for him?

However, a spiritual counselor urged this lady to forgive and forget. He also commended her as well as her husband's soul to the Lord's Divine Mercy. At first the lady would not give in and was distraught day after day. But after weeks and even months of prayer, she finally found peace.

Still, the peace was not complete. She had filed a case in court and still wanted it to be pursued. Her situation was aggravated by the tightening of her finances due to the many expenses that pursuing the case entailed. So the spiritual counselor kept praying for her. Hopefully, one day, she will come to that peace that Jesus promised in today's Gospel reading.

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

May 23, 2004 <> SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION
36th World Communications Day

Readings (C): Acts 1:1-11; Eph 4:17-23; Lk 24:46-53

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). The Gospel Reading for the Solemnity of the Ascension, Year C, gives us the last eight verses of the Gospel according to St. Luke. Compared to Matthew's ending, which is sometimes called "The Great Commission" to make disciples of all nations (see Mt 28:16-20), we can call Luke's endings as "The Last Blessing". Moreover, in Matthew, Jesus promises to be with his disciples always, to the end of time, whereas in Luke, he promises to send the Holy Spirit "to clothe them with the power from on high" while he himself withdraws and "is taken up to heaven." This writer is not trying to point out contradictions between Matthew and Luke, for what some people call "contradictions" are really just different views of a complex reality. What this writer wants to emphasize is that Luke has his own theology distinct from Matthew's. As Luke will show in his next volume, that is, the Acts of the Apostles, his theology is strong in Pneumatology (teaching about the Holy Spirit and his works), in the call to repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and in the role of the disciples as witnesses.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 47 "Repentance, for the forgiveness of sins would be preached..." Value of (preaching) Repentance. Christian repentance or *Metanoia* is more than remorse for sin, which in itself is not enough for salvation. Judas, for example, had remorse for

his sins but he still died as a wicked man (see Mt 27: 3-10). By contrast, Peter had *Metanoia*. He got reconciled with Jesus, and as a result Jesus restored him to his primacy among the disciples (see Jn 21: 15-19). He was given a chance to make a new beginning when Jesus once more challenged him: "Follow me" (Jn 21:19).

V. 48 "You are my witnesses..." Value of being a witness (of the power and work of Jesus).

V. 50 "Blessed them..." Value of (Jesus') blessing. The biblical tradition presents prayers of blessing as having an unstoppable effect.

V 52 "They did him homage..." Value of recognizing Jesus as alive, victorious and powerful, or giving homage to him. The homage spoken of here is far different from the homage given to a man (for example, a national hero) after he dies. The homage Luke had in mind is the recognition of the reality (or truth) that all power is now possessed by Jesus and he can share it with others through the giving of the Holy Spirit.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you experienced *Metanoia* (a turning back to God) after listening to a preacher?
- Have you experienced Jesus' blessing(s) on your life?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us, like Luke, pay attention to the Holy Spirit. To the preaching

of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. To the role of each and every Christian to be a witness to the "aliveness" of Jesus Christ. It is by giving us his Holy Spirit that Jesus shares his living power, his dynamism, with us.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us count our blessings! Even the good things of earthly, temporal life, are gifts of Jesus Christ.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS!

When the exchange of the peso to the dollar drops, some people express alarm, and others get depressed. Actually, as a leading Filipino-Chinese businessman has forecast, this drop is inevitable and will become worse. But should we therefore panic? Not if we believe that Jesus continues to bless us as he blessed his disciples before he withdrew from their sight.

Our neighboring countries have experienced calamities from which we have been spared: earthquakes, floods, epidemics. Our migrant workers continue to be highly appreciated wherever they go. We enjoy freedoms that many people only dream of, especially freedoms that our women and children enjoy. We still face the problems of life with a smile. Our suicide rate is among the lowest in Asia and even in the whole world.

Indeed, we should count our blessings and say: Thank you, Jesus!

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

May 30 2004 <> PENTECOST SUNDAY

Readings (C): Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn20: 19-21

Ordinary Time resumes on Monday

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). For the Solemnity of Pentecost the same Biblical readings are used every year. The Gospel Reading is taken from John chapter 20, just about ten verses before the first conclusion of the book. Verses 19 to 21 build up to the climax in v. 22: He breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven then; if you hold them bound, they are held bound." The various manifestations of Jesus to his disciples and the giving of the Holy Spirit are compressed by John into just one day, that is, the day of Resurrection. Luke spreads them to a longer period of fifty days.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V 19b "Peace be with you." The value of Christian Peace, see above, Jn 14:27, Sixth Sunday of Easter (May 16).

V. 20b "At the sight of the Lord the disciples rejoiced." Value of group rejoicing. Let us note that this rejoicing of the Christian community is focused on the presence of the Risen Christ.

V. 21b "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Value of Christian mission. In today's Gospel passage, this is the second gift given by Jesus.

V 22 "Then he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven

then..." Value of the Holy Spirit being given and received. This is the third gift. Note that the Holy Spirit is given particularly for the purpose of forgiving human sins.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Do you recall any occasion or several occasions when you have received gifts one after the other?
- Has there been any event in your life when it became clear to you that your ability to forgive others is connected with your openness to the Holy Spirit?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us first ask the Holy Spirit to "melt" us and "mold" us so that he can "fill" us. And after he has filled us, let us ask him to "use" us. Let us become servants of the Holy Spirit.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us remember that no person has all the "gifts" or talents needed for the total development of our society. Let us pool our talents. In the Philippine stage, even if we are not doing a stellar role, let us all contribute our bit parts so that our presentation to the world audience could be a success. If you are a thread of one color, merge with others who have other colors, so that a beautiful multicolored tapestry could emerge.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

GRACE UPON GRACE

The Holy Spirit is said to have seven-fold gifts. It is not so important to enumerate them. It is more important to remember that seven is the biblical number for perfection. The idea is that we cannot attain perfection if we do not pool the different gifts that come from the Holy Spirit. In practice, these gifts are more than seven - they are innumerable. We have to keep doing our part so that from all the different gifts of people, a harmony of good works and a harmony of praise rising up to God would be achieved.

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

June 6, 2004 <> SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Readings (C): Prv 8:22-31; Rom 5:1-5; Jn 16:12-15

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). The Reading turns around two points. First, there is a totality of truth to which the Holy Spirit will guide us. Secondly, this totality of truth is not a combination of propositions but an ultimate reality shared by the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. In other words, it is the mystery of the Godhead shared by Three Persons.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V 13b "He will guide you to all truth." Value of a gradual rising up to a summit that cannot be immediately attained (see v. 12, "you cannot bear it now"). If you cannot

jump or fly to the top, try walking up step by step. Without the help of tribal people native to the Himalayas, the Serpas, Sir Hillary would never have reached the summit of Mt. Everest (fifty-one years ago).

V. 14-15 "(The Holy Spirit) will take from what is mine... Everything that the Father has is mine." Value of three persons sharing something that each one possesses differently.. In a triangle, every inch that belongs to one angle also belongs to the two other angles but in a different direction. <> Value of harmony in diversity... of unity in plurality.

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3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you experienced sharing a life (like the Dominican life, the Franciscan Life, the Augustinian life, etc.) that is ideally one and the same but is in reality different in each person living it? (Think of "Filipino life" "American life" "Chinese life").
- Have you experienced growth in the spiritual life through the years?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us have harmony in diversity.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us have unity in plurality.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

TOWARDS THE ULTIMATE REALITY

What we do NOT know about God is much greater than what we DO know about him. This is one of the basic teachings of Asian spiritual masters. It is also the experience of Christian mystics. Even St. Thomas Aquinas, who knew so much Theology, said that everything he had written was just "straw" in comparison to the foretaste of heaven that was granted to him in the last few days of his life.

Today, people can read the Diary of St. Sr. Faustina Kowalska, Apostle ("Secretary", "Dispenser") of Divine Mercy. Its title is "Divine Mercy in my Soul" and it is published locally by several groups, among them Divine Mercy Channel (Destiny Channel 77) at the 33rd floor of Atlanta Center, 31 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila. St. Sr. Faustina shares with her readers quite a number of insights on the Most Holy Trinity. She always emphasizes how small she feels when faced by the immensity of God's greatness.

We must always be humble enough to acknowledge that, in spite of all the researches and meditations that we do, we will always fall short of knowing how great God is. A practical application is what to do with the question: how does God save people? We cannot fully answer it. We know God saves everyone through Jesus Christ. But how? Not necessarily by bringing them all into the Catholic Church. How then? God has ways of doing it that we do not know about!

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

**June 13, 2004 <> SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND
BLOOD OF CHRIST**

Readings (C): Gn 14:18-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Lk 9:11-17

Feast of the Sacred Heart on Friday, June 18.

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). In year A the Gospel Reading is Jn 6: 51-58, the final portion of the discourse on the Bread of Life at the synagogue of Capernaum. In year B it is Mk 14: 12-16. 22-26, which gives us the institution of the Eucharist. In year C, our present year, it is Lk 9: 11-17, which is about the feeding of five thousand men from just five loaves and two fish, and twelve baskets were filled by the left-over. Discourse, Institution, Miracle - all these three are intimately connected and they all help us understand the different sides of the Eucharist that Jesus gave us. Luke's story about the first miracle of the loaves does not differ much from that of Mark 6: 30-44 and Mt 14: 13-21. They all agree that Jesus **TOOK** the loaves, raised his eyes to heaven and said the **BLESSING**; then he **BROKE** the loaves and **HANDED THEM TO HIS DISCIPLES**. The four actions of **TAKING**, **SAYING A BLESSING**, **BREAKING**, and **HANDING OVER** are all found again at the Last Supper (Lk 22:19;-Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22).

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 11 "Jesus spoke to the crowd about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured." Value of the connectedness of the Eucharist a) with the teaching about the Kingdom of God and b) with healing.

V. 13a "Give them some food yourselves." Value of taking the responsibility of giving food to people without provision. Jesus, as Leader, actually takes this responsibility and he gets his disciples involved.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you experienced or witnessed how the Eucharist helps in the (miraculous) healing of people?
- Have you experienced or witnessed how devotion to the Eucharist has led some (well-to-do) people to help the poor rise from poverty?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO
(Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us remind everybody that the celebration of the Eucharist is not meant to end inside the Church. We, like the first disciples of Christ have the duty - pointed out by Christ himself - to provide for the people who are without food.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us support all the government and even non-government programs that will ensure sufficient food for all inhabitants of the Philippines.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

The Eucharist should be "celebrated" not only within church walls, but in the streets and byways, among the poor.

Clearly, we are not talking here about a "liturgical celebration" (we should follow the rules for that). Too often, people forget that the Eucharist was prefigured or prophetically announced in the miracle of the multiplication of loaves. Too often, people do not see the connection between the two. Simply put, the connection is that participation in the Eucharist should not end inside the Church. We take Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist so that he can live in our hearts through his love. This love should lead us to do something effective to alleviate poverty. As Jesus said at the first miracle of the multiplication of loaves: "Give them (the hungry multitude) some food yourselves."

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

June 20, 2004 <> 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (C): Zech 12:10-11; Gal 3:26-29; Lk 9:18-24

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). The Liturgy's "Ordinary Time" resumed two weeks ago, that is, in the week after Pentecost. However, the next two Sundays after Pentecost gave way to the Feasts of the Most Holy Trinity and to *Corpus Christi*. This means that we have skipped the 10th and 11th Sundays in Ordinary Time.

We now continue taking the Gospel according to Luke chapter by chapter. The situation in Luke's Gospel differs from that of Matthew and Mark on several points. For Luke, Jesus is at the end of his Galilean ministry. For Mark (8: 27-38) Jesus is in a journey outside Galilee. For Matthew Jesus

is at Caesarea Philippi, a pagan territory, and is preparing for his discourse on the Church (see ch. 18). Hence, in Matthew, the pre-eminence of Peter is spelled out after his profession of faith (Mt 16:17-19). Luke, for his part, gives us Peter's profession of faith but he omits Christ's words about the pre-eminence of Peter among the disciples (but see Lk 22:31-32).

For all the three Synoptic writers, Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, is a very significant moment in the formation of the first disciples. They have scaled one summit. Now Jesus trains them for a higher one, the recognition of his Divinity. The first disciples will scale that summit only when the Risen Christ appears to them. Before that, the disciples must follow Christ to Calvary.

Luke is the only Evangelist who points out that cross-carrying has to be a daily task (v. 23).

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 18 "Praying in solitude." Value of prayer before an important moment (Jesus was about to ask his disciples the question about his being the Messiah).

V. 22 "The Son of Man must suffer greatly..." Value of prophesying an event to prepare listeners to accept it. (Lk 9: 22 is the First Prophecy about the Passion. In Luke this will be repeated in 9:44, 12:50, 17:25, and 18: 31-33).

V. 23 "Take up his cross daily..." Value of daily cross carrying. One has to sacrifice to be faithful to his daily obligations as a parent, as a teacher, as a worker, and so on. A Christian

must see such obligations as due not only to individual persons and to society, but in the first place, as fidelity to Jesus Christ.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you had to carry some heavy crosses in following Jesus?
- Would you give some examples of your daily cross carrying? Are you doing it for Jesus?

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO
(Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Jesus is both an earthly Messiah and a Divine and Eternal Redeemer. The Philippine Church has to maintain a balance between these two poles. Following Christ should normally make our earthly life better even in a material way.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Some cartoonists in newspapers have a number of times shown the typical Filipino citizen as carrying the crosses of Philippine Society. For most people, such cross-carrying is fruitless. It does not lead to the emergence of a better Philippines. We must find out the reasons why. We must look for the root causes of our problems, and put an effective remedy to them. The Christian Community must prove to be the Messiah of the Filipino people.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

EARTHLY MESSIAH

In itself, the title "Messiah" does not require divinity. Historically speaking, when Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he was not professing faith in the divinity of Jesus. He was still far from that moment when he will look at the empty tomb of Christ and realize that Christ had risen from the dead. It was not until the apostolic group was confronted by the Risen Christ that one of them, Thomas, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28).

What, then, did Peter profess in today's Gospel reading? He professed that Jesus was the King (Prophet/Priest) promised by God to bring deliverance and prosperity to Israel. St. Paul will later explain that the deliverance will be basically from personal and societal sin. The Acts of the Apostles will show that the messianic prosperity will be mainly due to the sharing of goods by Christian communities.

Today, it is when Christians work for the deliverance of society from sin and for the equitable distribution of wealth that they prove to be true followers of the Messiah. Society has to be delivered from the graft and corruption of government officials, trafficking in drugs, widespread gambling, prostitution run by white-slavery gangs, child abuse, etc. Prosperity will be the result. And when it comes, people must be ready to share it equitably.

The Messiah has come. There is really no reason why we should not be partaking of the Messianic promises. No reason except our own lack of cooperation with God's plan.

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

June 27, 2004 <> 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (C): 1 Kgs 19:16, 19-21; Gal 5:1. 13-18; Lk 9:51-62

1. SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL TEACHING (Supplement to Bibliarasal Step Three). Today's Gospel reading is the beginning of what has been styled as "The Journey to Jerusalem" in the gospel according to Luke. Liturgically, we already made such a journey during the Lenten season. Now we are starting a kind of review bearing in mind the independence of the particular passages rather than their relation to the Paschal Mystery that Jesus celebrated in Jerusalem.

The first subsection of the passage is the rejection of Jesus by a Samaritan village. The incident bares the truth that even in the later stages of their formation, the disciples of Jesus had not yet learned his message of peace and non-violence.

The second subsection is a collection of Jesus' answers to people who wanted to follow him. They varied according to the character or situation of the would be followers.

2. VALUES THAT WE CAN PICK FROM THE PASSAGE (Bibliarasal Step Three).

V. 51b "Jesus resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem." Value of character. Jesus was a man of great character. Once he had accepted his Father's will that he should offer his life as a ransom for all humankind, he would not let anything stop him on his journey to Jerusalem.

V. 55 "Jesus turned and rebuked (the disciples who wanted a violent punishment of the Samaritans)." Value of

non-violence. As Acts 8:6ff will show, Samaritans will eventually be converted to the Christian faith.

V. 62 "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God." Value of resoluteness to go forward.

3. POINTS FOR SHARING (Bibliarasal Step Five).

- Have you met people with a strong Christian character? Tell us about it.
- Do you know a case that will show the truth of v. 62? Tell us about it.

4. WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO (Bibliarasal Step Six).

a) In relation to Philippine Church Life Today. - Let us not lose steam in implementing the reforms of Vatican II and PCP II.

b) In relation to the Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Life of Filipinos Today. - Let us have the political will to attain the total human development of our people.

c) In relation to Spiritual and Personal Life. We have to train ourselves in the values pointed out above (n. 2).

RELENTLESS JOURNEY

For the Third Gospel, the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem was not a sentimental journey. It was the journey of a man who had strong character and was convinced that he had a

mission to fulfill for the Kingdom of God. Though the mission will cost him his life, "Jesus resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem." No one, nothing, can stop him.

In the narrative of Luke, the first obstacle thrown at Jesus was the refusal of a Samaritan village to show hospitality to him and his disciples. Hospitality was a sacred duty according to a tradition that went way back to Abraham (see Genesis 18), It was an insult to refuse hospitality even to people who might be suspected of being unfriendly. But Jesus bore with it. He was willing to wait for a time when the Samaritans would be more receptive to his message (see Acts 8:6). By word and example he teaches non-violence to his disciples.

Even people who were friendly to Jesus knowingly or unknowingly were putting obstacles in his path by misunderstanding him and his mission. Jesus pushes them aside. He has to go on! It was by the sheer force of his determination that he will eventually reach Jerusalem and offer the sacrifice that will save the world. He was truly a man of great character.

Spiritual and Personal Values: see above, n. 2.

Bishops' Meet 2003: Final Statement

**FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES-
OFFICE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION (FABC-OSC)**

The eight annual FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet on the theme "Family in Communication, Communication in the Family" was held November 24-29, 2003 in Negombo, Sri Lanka. The theme is in preparation for the eight FABC Plenary Assembly on Family August 16-22, 2004 in Korea. FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet is a meeting of Bishop-chairmen and secretaries for communication in FABC member conferences, and presidents of Catholic media organizations in Asia. Here is this year's:

Final Statement

We, 30 participants of the FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet 2003, Bishops, Secretaries of our National Communication Commissions and married couples from 11 Asian countries, met in Negombo, near Colombo, Sri Lanka, from November 24 to 29, 2003, to study and discuss "Family in Communication, Communication in the Family."

The family provides the first experience of love and communication. Today it feels powerless and endangered under the impact of global economic, social and political developments including the mass media. The bonds that have held our families together for centuries in the face of tremendous material hardship and poverty are loosening. This is destabilizing marriage and family life and endangering the very foundation of our societies.

This meeting explored Asian experiences of family communication in today's context from three perspectives - theological, social and experiential, with couples from three Asian countries sharing deeply how their own families were coping with change.

The Theological Perspective

The Holy Trinity is reflected in the human family. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons. They communicate with each other in an eternal, interpersonal relationship of love (*ad intra* communication). The Trinitarian God through creation communicates His life and love to the world. Further, through Divine Revelation, God communicates His redeeming love to human kind (*ad extra* communication). So father and mother and offspring become a trinity. They relate in love among themselves and with the rest of the world.

The Social Perspective

The Asian Family, a unique microcosm of Asian reality, is now entering into a new media-culture influenced by

emerging communication technologies. The new technologies enable family members to relate to each other even though separated by long distances. Many though are also bewildered by the disruption of traditional lifestyles. Older family members are unable to comprehend and cope with the new technologies, while young people seem to be swept along by them without any understanding or awareness of their impact. Opposing values beamed into the sacredness of the home also adversely affect family hierarchies and inter-personal communication.

The Experiential Perspective

The experiences of three couples from three different Asian societies highlighted certain similarities: the need for a clear and deep understanding and agreement between parents on family values; their willingness and ability to enter into a 'listening dialogue' with their children; the awareness that family communication evolves as the family grows in age and number and under the impact of social and economic developments sometimes forcing family members to work at odd hours or long distances from home. Prayer is an important aspect that enriches communication between spouse and spouse, parents and children. In a continent where huge masses of people are often struggling to make both ends meet, it cannot be forgotten that material poverty can also be a hindrance to communication.

The Church and Christian families cannot be oblivious to these changes. Fully conscious of the Church's responsibility for this, we present the following orientations:

Orientations

The means of communication are gifts from God (*Communio et Progressio*, 2; *Aetatis Novae*, 22). They are powerful tools for good. Nevertheless, forces of commercialism or ideologies opposed to Christian and human values are vying for control of new media technologies through subtle, and sophisticated manipulative techniques. Hence, the importance of Communication Formation and Media Awareness for families. Parents need to be aware of media/electronic games that promote values other than spiritual and moral. Young People must understand the new media culture in order to better integrate it into their lives (cf. BISCOP IV). Media must remain instruments for knowledge, understanding, development and fulfillment.

True Christian family life is a "witness of life" and a spiritual exercise in itself (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nos. 21, 46 & 76). Family members respect, listen to, dialogue with and heal each other. They grow in holiness through a spirituality that evolves over time. The family is a cradle of love, which enables each member to feel nurtured and find fulfillment in a life-giving environment.

In Asia, it is necessary for Christians to work with communities of other religions striving to protect age-old values of family and community, self-sacrifice, respect and caring.

We recognize that no single solution is valid for every family in every situation for all stages of growth and development. A family situation is always dynamic. It grows in age, maturity and even its economic situation changes with time. Keeping this in mind, we make the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. It should be the special concern of Bishops' Conferences to be involved in any way possible in the promotion of communication in families, and groups of families.

2. Parents should teach by example. Good communication between spouses creates and sustains a "culture of communication" in the home. Setting aside time for the spouse and children despite pressing, economic needs, is key to good communication within the family.

3. Families are encouraged to share media like watching TV programs together. Parents and children discussing together the use of TV, with the children even participating in the decision about the use of TV, can be an enriching experience of communication and a means for growth and maturity for all.

4. Encourage Asian practices of sharing in the celebrations of family events with the extended family, neighbors, both Catholic and other communities. Catholic families must be made aware of family apostolate. Look for what is unique to each culture and promote family togetherness through communication like story telling (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 20). Outreach to the sick, elderly and those specially challenged helps to bring people together.

5. Preparation for marriage should include also the development of sufficient awareness for the need and ways of non-verbal communication, the ability to listen to each other, accepting each other's feelings, and putting oneself into the other's shoes (cf. Mk 1:31).

6. Ensure a better dissemination of information that promotes Christian values and strengthens the quality of our faith.

Publicize more Church-related rating of movies, where available. Review and assess TV serials and children's programmes on a regional and/or language basis to encourage wider viewership of good programmes.

7. It is important to honor communicators who develop good programs and stand for values in social communication. Such endorsement, especially when given in collaboration with other religious and cultural groups, can be powerful signals for other professionals.

8. Seminarians and priests are to be prepared early enough for pastoral services, not only for Catholic families but also inter-faith marriages. The first encounter of an inter-faith couple with a Catholic priest is often crucial. Inter-faith marriages also in their communication need special pastoral care.

9. Promote marriage-enrichment movements like Engaged Encounter and Marriage Encounter as well as youth movements preparing for life (cf. BISCOP IV). In a continent where Christians are a minority, we must work with other churches, religious organizations to improve the communication abilities of couples and families.

10. Work more closely with NGOs and existing bodies that are concerned about the media influence, especially the impact of media, on children.

11. The spirituality of the family is to be developed within the family itself, through its relationship with God, its interpersonal, and relations with others. Encourage families to pray, and attend liturgical services together.