

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

Vol. LXXXIII, No. 858

January-February 2007

Editorial

Telling the Story of the God of Love in Asia

Anthony Rogers, FSC

The Church's Mission for an Integral Humanism in Solidarity

Renato Cardinal Martino

Telling the Story of Jesus in Asia

James H. Kroeger, MM

Walking with My Neighbor in Faith

James H. Kroeger, MM

Canon Law Section

Augustine Mendonça, JCD

Javier González, OP

Homilies for February to March 2007

Efren Rivera, OP

Enrico Gonzales, OP

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	FR. ROLANDO V. DE LA ROSA, O.P
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	FR. PABLO T. TIONG, O.P
BUSINESS MANAGER	FR. CLARENCE VICTOR MARQUEZ, O.P
PUBLICATION ASSISTANTS	ANGELITA R. GUINTO ARNOLD S. MANALASTAS

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, the Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published bi-monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and is printed at UST Publishing House, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946 and Re-entered at the UST Post Office on October 23, 1996.

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

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

Subscription Rates (Effective September 2006)

	<i>One Year</i>	<i>Per Copy</i>
Philippines	Php900.00	Php150.00
Foreign: (via Air Mail)	US\$150.00	US\$25.00

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

Address all communications to:

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

Ecclesiastical Publications Office

University of Santo Tomas

España Blvd., Manila 1015 Philippines

Tel. No.: (63-2) 406-1611 local 8251 • Telefax: (63-2) 740-9710

E-mail: eccpubli@mun.ust.edu.ph

ISSN 1908-5567

*Table of Contents***EDITORIAL** 3**FEATURES**

Anthony Rogers, FSC 7 TELLING THE STORY OF THE
GOD OF LOVE IN ASIA

Renato Cardinal Martino 17 THE CHURCH'S MISSION FOR
AN INTEGRAL HUMANISM IN
SOLIDARITY

James H. Kroeger, MM 35 TELLING THE STORY OF JESUS
IN ASIA

41 WALKING WITH MY NEIGHBOR
IN FAITH

CANON LAW SECTION

Augustine Mendonça, JCD 65 CONSULTATION WITH TWO
PARISH PRIESTS IN THE
REMOVAL OF A PARISH PRIEST

Javier González, OP 77 IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A SECULAR INSTITUTE
AND A SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC
LIFE?

**HOMILIES for FEBRUARY –
MARCH 2007**

Efren Rivera, OP 81 PRO-LIFE SUNDAY

84 WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

87 LAST DAY BEFORE LENT

- 91 TI'S THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY!
IT'S LENT
- 94 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
KINGDOM
- 97 TRANSFIGURATION
- 100 THE "GRACE PERIOD"
- 102 THE PRODIGAL
- 105 WHEN JUSTICE IS MERCY

Call for a Renewed Passion for the Evangelizing Mission in Asia

In the recently-concluded First Asian Mission Congress, the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) underscored the increasing awareness of the necessity for a “renewed passion for the evangelizing mission.” This is among the highlights of the first article of this present issue wherein FABC Executive Secretary, Bro. Anthony Rogers, FSC, discusses the critical contemporary issues and innovative approaches on how the Church can address such problems with the help of the much-awaited ***Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*** in Asia. The author offers us a lucid description of what contemporary Asia is and how the Church intends to overcome the various barriers to evangelization. The article also accentuates the vast possibilities offered by information technology which is particularly considered by the current crop of Church leaders as a vital tool to support a renewed commitment to evangelization. However, Bro. Rogers reiterates that it is only through the light of the Gospel that we can attain

social justice and respect for the integrity of creation. The author also outlines the need for the hands-on involvement of civil society, the importance of being a "Learning Church," and the significance of inter-faith discourses.

Cardinal Renato Martino skillfully and succinctly presents in the second article a highly informative back-grounder about the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. As President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (the group tasked by Pope John Paul II to write the said document), Cardinal Martino was at the helm of the creation of this much awaited "doctrinal corpus of the Catholic social teaching." The author says that based on the extent of labor undertaken to generate the document, *Compendium* is ordained to "sow its seeds extensively, to fertilize the soil of the building of society over long periods of time, to motivate and guide the presence of Catholics in history."

According to Cardinal Martino, while we behold a positive acceptance of the *Compendium*, it is in the future that we can determine if the spirit and aim that directed its creation has been given its due regard. Aside from the fervor with which it is being accepted in the Catholic world, the destiny of the *Compendium* will also be gauged by how it will be utilized to enliven pastoral activity in our communities, and, most importantly, by how it can help realize a dynamic involvement of the laity in social and government institutions.

The last two articles, both written by Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM, focus on the organizational nature and activities of FABC, particularly on the proceedings of the

2006 Asian Mission Congress. Fr. Kroeger, in his first article, shares the highlights of the paper he presented during this congress, which is a theological-missiological reflection on the religions of Asia and how the Church interacts with these religions. The author discusses the five missiological foundations which have been one of the fruits of the 35-year existence of FABC. These are fundamental to the Church's dealings with Asians of other faiths.

Emerging from the rich reflection anchored in the pastoral service of the local Churches of Asia, five operative guidelines are presented, which can facilitate the practical dimensions of genuine interfaith dialogue. Finally, using narrative theological sharing and faith reflection, Fr. Kroeger recounts a compelling true story about his experience with a Bangladeshi beggar woman. In the end, the author concludes that the wide array of cultures and languages has further enriched the experience of celebrating our one universal faith.

While the previous article deals more on the missiological foundations of FABC as presented in the 2006 Asian Mission Congress, the second article focuses on how the pastoral-catechetical assembly explored a unique methodology of evangelizing: *story-telling or faith-sharing*. Congress participants listened to several tales and accounts about the elderly, families, youth, children and women, etc. Perspectives from other faiths like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and the indigenous peoples were also considered in the said narratives. Likewise, present-day realities were also underscored in the presentations, including consumerism, the influence of mass media, the problems of

migrants, and the challenge of interfaith dialogue. These areas of concern are very critical to the Church's mission of evangelization in Asia.

A renewed passion for the mission of evangelization in the Asian context would always entail fidelity to the Good News and perseverance in authentic dialogue within the highly diverse cultural and religious milieu of the most expansive and populous continent.

FEATURES

Telling the Story of the God of Love in Asia

A New Light for Our Steps into the 21st Century?

BRO. ANTHONY ROGERS, FSC

**The Best Kept Secrets to be Proclaimed
on the Rooftops?**

Towards a Civilization of Love in the 21st Century

One of the key elements of the First Asian Mission Congress organised by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences in October 2006 was the growing 'consciousness' of the need for a renewed passion for our evangelizing mission. We are fully aware that to tell the story of Jesus in the context of Asia calls us for the deepening of the Social Doctrine of the Church and living this out in the context of our personal and communitarian lives.

More than ever before, we are being faced with radically new challenges today that are affecting the lives of the vast majority of our peoples. With the increasing new challenges that are confronting the people of Asia

that is torn apart by both dehumanising poverty and insane violence. We also see the emergence of new forms of individualism, materialism and hedonism that is not only affecting our socio-political and socio-economic lives but the very cultural foundations of our nation and peoples. We see around us the gradual and the hidden phenomenon of God being privatised or made to seem irrelevant.

It is these new times that urges us to take seriously the demands posed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (No. 37), where he reminds us of the “modern areopagus” where we need to bring to this new emerging world, creative ways of making the Good News relevant to the people of today. This is possible when we are ready to move beyond our traditional definition of “mission territories” to one not just defined by our current geographical, cultural and social boundaries. It is therefore evident that we need to face up to where the essence of the Gospel of Jesus can be planted as the yeast of renewal and revitalisation. These include the new world of information technology, of consumerism of migrants and refugees, of People with HIV/AIDS and many other urgent human needs. All these call for new creative interventions on the part of the Church in Asia.

Our renewed commitment to evangelisation is thus an invitation to make the means of social communication and our involvement in the social transformation through the promotion of justice and peace seems vital. The area of mission inevitably demands of us a new commitment to the use of information technology, to peace and the promotion of human dignity and protection of human rights, especially those of minorities, of women and of children. It goes with-

out saying that the promotion of social justice and the integrity of creation is only possible when these are illumined with the light of the Gospel.

The New Light for our common path into the 21st century is the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (or Compendium)*. This has been the work of many prophets in the Church and especially Pope John Paul II and his collaborators in the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace who have brought this new message for the whole of humanity. We believe that the time is at hand for us in the Church to take seriously the call to tell the Story of the God of Love in Asia. This is indeed our way to bring about a civilisation of love in the 21st century.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) has made a serious commitment to work with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to see to the communication of the message and the formation of all the People of God in Asia. We begin this journey with the Asian Presentation of the *Compendium* to be held in Thailand in January.

Our renewed commitment to evangelization is thus an invitation to make the means of social communication and our involvement in the social transformation through the promotion of justice and peace seems vital. The area of mission inevitably demands a new commitment to the use of information technology, to peace and the promotion of human dignity and protection of human rights, especially those of minorities, of women and of children. It goes without saying that the promotion of social justice and the integrity of creation is only possible when these are illumined with the light of the Gospel.

1. Unity of Faith and Life and Faith and Reason

One of the greatest challenges for the Church today is to relate the faith that we believe with the drastic contradictions that we face in the world today. The Church cannot remain indifferent as a community and as an institution to the growing global hegemony and its consequence of global poverty. It is obvious that this goes against the fundamental Christian principle of the universal destination of all goods and the inherent dignity. This is only possible when we bridge the gap between our understanding of the Scriptures, our acts of private and communitarian worship, our popular religiosities, private and corporate lifestyles and most important witness as an open and welcome community that is seen as united in mind and heart for the well being of the whole human family.

The Church also has to address domestic problems related to the issue of participation especially of the young and women, minorities and the marginalised its formal structures that exercise power and authority. The Church has to seek more earnestly to be truly at the service of others both in internal workings and in its outreach and relationship with the people of the world at large.

2. Engagement in Civil Society and Promotion of Democracy

It has become clearer to the Church that the laity as a result of the immersion and formation in their Christian beliefs have an important role in civil society. This is an integral part of their vocation as Christians. It is their citizenship in society that gives them the right to create a space for citizens to discuss, debate and organize. It is

traditionally a mediating institution between family and state but has emerged as a significant institution as well, in international politics. Civil society is important for strengthening democratic participation and making the voices of the poor heard. Engagement in civil society and promotion of democracy is in line with *Gaudium et Spes*' stress on the subject, agency, freedom and fidelity to conscience.

Committed Christians can contribute to creating or strengthening civil society through collaboration with other groups. The issue of minority rights (a concern of many Asian Christians) requires the mediation of civil society to be heard. Christian engagement in civil society can help break isolation of many Christian communities in Asia and renew the public image of Asian Church which had been tied up with colonialism and imperialism. To once again call the Church to a self-introspection, we ask, where do Asian Churches stand in the widespread yearning for democracy and participation? Can they become signs of democracy to the civil society? How can we make ecclesial structures and ministerial functions more participatory?

3. To be a Learning Church

Gaudium et Spes is imbued with a strong spirit of dialogue and learning from other disciplines, faiths and movements. It moved away from triumphalism when it admitted that the Church does not possess the solution to all problems of humanity. Following the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church must be open to learn from the findings of other disciplines in understanding the signs of the times, as well as, Christianity. Christianity must be studied from a

historical, sociological and phenomenological perspective, in intense conversation with the broader society as well as peoples of other faiths. There is also a lot of learning we can get from the way peoples of other faiths interpret our Scripture and theologies (multifaith hermeneutics).

The Church must also tap the treasures of Asian popular religiosity and great religious traditions towards forming a Church with an Asian face. But how open really are we to a critique of our traditions and to a reformulation of the language of theology and rituals that draws from Asian spiritual resources? There is the danger of inculturation ending up just as a “one-way process”.

We can likewise learn from the questions posed by the youth, who in their exposure to a plurality of cultures via the internet, cable, etc. are becoming more reflexive about their identities. The youth of today subject traditions to interrogation. In post modernity, traditions (including religious traditions) continue to exist, but now, they are contemplated, defended, sifted through, in relation to the awareness that there exists a variety of other ways of doing things.

4. Inter-religious Dialogues

The Church should engage or initiate inter-religious dialogues on all levels—formal (on the level of heads of religious groups with or without government officials) and informal (diocesan, parish and neighbourhood community levels). Inter-religious dialogues in Asia are not just about doctrines but are dialogues of life. They involve joint activities to promote a culture of peace. Social justice must

be the fundamental basis for this active cooperation and collaboration among different groups. It is particularly important for the Catholic community in Asia to strengthen its bonds with Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus and even non-believers. A mature rational critique of modernity can lead to the emergence of a shared perspective on the challenges confronting contemporary Asia—a perspective inspired by our shared humanity.

There is also a need to develop an Asian theology of religions that is critical of any theological position based on a “dogma of intolerance”. The Church should adopt a principled position against fundamentalist or extremist thinking within the religion. In the process, it should demonstrate its firm commitment to social justice.

5. Global Solidarity and New Creativity in Charity

Instantaneous global communication and mass transportation have been utilized as well by civil society including the Church and various liberation movements to make themselves heard. This shows that globalization is no longer just a one-way imperialist process. There is always the interaction between the global, local and the personal. Global connectivity is also empowering those struggling against global hegemony. The increased consciousness of pluralities of ways of thinking has created a space for local narratives from the perspectives of women, the poor, the indigenous groups, etc. to come to the fore. We see that vast changes have taken place in the world since *Gaudium et Spes* which demands reiteration of many of the principles the document laid down.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia

The Second Vatican Council was about the Renewal of the Identity and Mission of the Church in the Modern World. Forty years after the Council, the Church in Asia is ever more convinced that this renewed understanding of Church as Communion for Mission is the origin of our faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus. We are thus fully aware that the transformation of the world today has to begin with the renewal of the inner being of persons. This restoration of the image of God as reflected in the human being, living with human dignity and with the freedom to exercise human rights is what will result in the common good of humanity. As Church in Asia, we recognise the urgent task to build a new Spirituality of Communion that will lead us to redefine the meaning of the fundamental task of the Church to be at the service of the Reign of God.

The urgency to promote the Social Doctrine of the Church has thus grown from our convictions that all the Council documents, especially *Gaudium et Spes*, presents before us the challenge of bringing about a new culture of solidarity that will ensure that human nature is kept intact. We, therefore, need new forms of nurture that are life-giving and our structures of society will embody them. If these values and principles are lived out in life they will become path to "Living Cultures Anew". The greatest challenge in the 21st century is to focus on our understanding of how cultures change and how we can change cultures.

We thus see the need for the following:

1. To deepen our understanding of the theological foundations of the content of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The focus will be on the need for an *Integral and Solidary Humanism and God's Plan of Love for Humanity*.
2. To outline the basic some principles of reflection that would enable the Church in Asia to determine the criteria for judgement and directive for action in the context of Asia in general, and for each country and territory, in particular. It is imperative that we focus on the *Church's Mission and Social Doctrine – The Human Person and Human Rights based on the principles of the Church's Social Doctrine*.
3. To focus on some general pastoral orientations and directive for actions in the area of pastoral initiatives and involvement in public affairs in the world of Asia. This has to be in reference to the implications for Family, Human Work, Economic Life, and The Political Community.
4. To identify the role of the Church in the world of Asia in the International Community, Safeguarding the Environment and in the promotion of Peace.
5. To articulate the specific Ecclesial Actions related to the Social Doctrine of the Church and to identify Pastoral Action in the Social Field and the relationship between the Social Doctrine and the Commitment of the Lay Faithful.
6. To draft some possible plans for action in the World of Work, Civil Society and in the World of Politics, Economics and Culture.

This is possible with our growing awareness of the importance of the Social Doctrine of the Church in our evangelising mission in the context of Asia. In order to address the underlying issues related to poverty, growing inequalities and violence and wars it is inevitable that the Church in Asia has the responsibility to articulate a clear path ahead. What appears before us to be urgent and immediate is the promotion of direct services to the poor and forms of social development that place emphasis on the need for community participation and cooperation. With this greater unity for integral human development we see the possibilities for the gradual introduction for radical policy changes through education of the people and of policy makers.

The artificial dichotomy between faith and life is one of the central problems of our day. This gives us an opportunity to take a step back and discern in-depth the essential consciousness between both religious people and non-religious people alike. There is the basic the tendency we have to separate not just church and state on an institutional level, but to separate our faith from our daily living and choices. Thus the same disruption shows up in Catholics' daily lives. Many Catholics seem able to support one set of values at church on Sunday morning and an entirely different set during their ordinary lives during the week. When we 'separate' what we believe and how we live, it doesn't take long for our lives to become the opposite of what we profess. *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us that a radically new vision of life is needed to bridge the gap between the profession of faith and the daily lives of Catholics.

BRO. ANTHONY ROGERS, FSC
Executive Secretary, FABC-OHD

The Church's Mission for an Integral Humanism in Solidarity

RENATO CARDINAL MARTINO

President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

Introduction

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (*Compendium*), written by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at behest of Pope John Paul II, was presented to the press on 25 October 2004. This document—long-awaited, since its publication was initially foreseen for shortly after the Jubilee Year, and the result of a long process of work, because of the complex problems involved in its conceptual precision and in drawing up its material content—has been welcomed with great interest.

On the basis of the very process that generated it, however, this is a document destined to sow its seeds very extensively, to fertilize the soil of the building of society over long periods of time, to motivate and guide the presence of Catholics in history, and not merely in some extemporaneous manner. The destiny of the *Compendium*

will be measured by the conviction with which it is received and by the use that is made of it for the re-launching of general pastoral activity in society and, above all, in bringing about a reflective, aware, coherent and community presence of lay Catholics involved in society and in politics. If today we witness a warm reception given to the *Compendium*, it is tomorrow that will determine whether the spirit and purpose that guided its birth have been respected.

Structure and Purpose of the *Compendium*

The *Compendium* offers a complete summary of the fundamental framework of the doctrinal corpus of Catholic social teaching. Faithful to the authoritative recommendation made by the Holy Father John Paul II in No. 54 of the postsynodal apostolic exhortation "*Ecclesia in America*," the document presents "in a complete and systematic manner, even if by means of an overview, the Church's social teaching, which is the fruit of careful magisterial reflection and an expression of the Church's constant commitment in fidelity to the grace of salvation wrought in Christ and in loving concern for humanity's destiny" (*Compendium*, 8).

The *Compendium* has a simple and straightforward structure. After an Introduction, there follow three parts: the first, composed of four chapters, deals with the fundamental presuppositions of social doctrine—God's plan of love for humanity and for society, the Church's mission and the nature of social doctrine, the human person and human rights, the principles and values of social doctrine; the second part, composed of seven chapters, deals with

the contents and classical themes of social doctrine—the family, human work, economic life, the political community, the international community, the environment and peace; the third part, which is quite brief, being composed of one sole chapter, contains a series of indications for the use of social doctrine in the pastoral praxis of the Church and in the life of Christians, above all the lay faithful. The Conclusion, entitled “For a Civilization of Love,” is an expression of the underlying purpose of the entire document.

The *Compendium* has a specific purpose and is characterized by certain objectives that are well spelled out in the Introduction. In fact, the document “is presented as an instrument for the moral and pastoral discernment of the complex events that mark our time; as a guide to inspire, at the individual and community levels, attitudes and choices that will permit all people to look to the future with greater trust and hope; as an aid for the faithful concerning the Church’s teaching in the area of social morality.”

It is moreover an instrument put together for the precise purpose of promoting “new strategies suited to the demands of our time and in keeping with human needs and resources. But above all there can arise the motivation to rediscover the vocation proper to the different charisms within the Church that are destined to the evangelization of the social order, because ‘all the members of the Church are sharers in this secular dimension’” (*Compendium*, 10).

A fact that we do well to emphasize, because it is found in various parts of the document, is the following: The text is presented as an instrument for fostering ecumenical and interreligious dialogue on the part of Catholics

with all who sincerely seek the good of mankind. In fact, the statement is made in No. 12 that the document "is proposed also to the brethren of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, to the followers of other religions, as well as to all people of good will who are committed to serving the common good."

Social doctrine, indeed, is intended for a universal audience, in addition to those to whom it is primarily and specifically addressed, the sons and daughters of the Church. The light of the Gospel, which social doctrine brings to shine on society, illuminates every person: Every conscience and every intellect is able to grasp the human depths of meaning and values expressed in this doctrine, as well as the outpouring of humanity and humanization contained in its norms for action.

Obviously, the *Compendium* concerns Catholics first of all, for "the first recipient of the Church's social doctrine is the Church community in its entire membership, because everyone has social responsibilities that must be fulfilled and in the tasks of evangelization, that is to say, of teaching, catechesis and formation that the Church's social doctrine inspires, it is addressed to every Christian, each according to the competence, charisms, office and mission of proclamation that is proper to each one" (*Compendium*, 83).

Social doctrine also implies responsibility regarding the construction, organization and functioning of society: political, economic and administrative duties, that is to say, duties of a secular nature, that belong to the lay faithful in a particular way because of the secular nature of their

state of life and because of the secular character of their vocation. By means of this responsibility, the laity put social doctrine into practice and fulfil the Church's secular mission.

The *Compendium* and the Church's Mission

The *Compendium* places the Church's social doctrine at the heart of the Church's mission. It shows, above all in Chapter Two, the ecclesiological aspect of this social doctrine, that is, how this doctrine is intimately connected with the mission of the Church, with evangelization and the proclamation of Christian salvation in temporal realities. In fact, among the instruments of the Church's particular mission of service to the world, which consists in being a sign of the unity of all the human race and a sacrament of salvation, there is found also her social doctrine.

The Christian mysteries of the Resurrection and the Incarnation of the Word attest that the message of salvation, reaching its climax at Easter, concerns all people and every dimension of what is human, since Christ's redemptive work, "while essentially concerned with the salvation of mankind, includes also the renewal of the whole temporal order."

The Church, existing in the world and for the world, although not of the world, cannot neglect her proper mission of instilling within the world a Christian spirit: The Church "has an authentic secular dimension, inherent to her inner nature and mission, which is deeply rooted in the mystery of the Word Incarnate." When the Church

becomes involved in human promotion, when she proclaims the rules of a new coexistence in peace and justice, when she works, together with all people of good will, for establishing relations and institutions that are more human, it is then that the Church “teaches the way which man must follow in this world in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Her teaching therefore extends to the whole moral order, and notably to the justice which must regulate human relations. This is part of the preaching of the Gospel.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that when the Church “fulfills her mission of proclaiming the Gospel, she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom.” It is good to emphasize the words “proclaiming the Gospel” and “mission” in this passage, as they indicate the life and action of the Church, her very purpose according to the will of her Founder. This means when she puts forth her social doctrine the Church is doing nothing other than fulfilling her innermost mission: “to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church’s evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message.”

It has thus been possible to understand the Church’s social doctrine in the context of the mystery of creation, of the redemption of Christ and of the salvation—which is integral in character—that he brings: “Jesus came to bring integral salvation, one which embraces the whole person and all mankind, and opens up the wondrous prospect of divine filiation.” It has been possible to place

it better within the relation that exists between evangelization and human promotion, which are intimately connected but must not be confused: "Between evangelization and human advancement—development and liberation—there are ... profound links." It has been possible to consider it as closely connected to the entire Christian life insofar as it is itself "an integral part of the Christian conception of life," according to the memorable expression found in *Mater et Magister*.

The fact that the *Compendium* places social doctrine within the mission proper to the Church prompts us on the one hand not to consider it as something added or peripheral to the Christian life and, on the other hand, helps us to understand it as belonging to a community subject. In fact, the only subject properly suited to the nature of social doctrine is the entire ecclesial community.

The *Compendium*, in No. 79, states: "Social doctrine belongs to the Church because the Church is the subject that formulates it, disseminates it and teaches it. It is not a prerogative of a certain component of the ecclesial body but of the entire community: it is the expression of the way that the Church understands society and of her position regarding social structures and changes. The whole of the Church community—priests, religious and laity—participates in the formulation of this social doctrine, each according to the different tasks, charisms and ministries found within her."

The Church is one body with many members who, "though many, are one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12). The action of the Church is likewise one, it is the action of a

sole subject, but it is carried out according to a variety of gifts through which the whole richness of the entire body passes. "The entire Christian community" is called to an adequate discernment aimed at "scrutinizing the 'signs of the times' and interpreting reality in the light of the Gospel message," but "each individual person" is also called to this same task. "Everyone for their part" and "each individual person": service to the world, so that it may know the ways of the Lord, is brought about through the specific—and at the same time all-encompassing—commitment of every component of the ecclesial community. In this perspective, I wish to offer a reflection concerning the contribution of these different ecclesial components.

Bishops and the Compendium

The *Compendium* is put into the hands of bishops. The conciliar decree *Christus Dominus*, in paragraph 12, offers some points of interest regarding the bishop's function, precisely as teacher of the faith, in formulating, teaching and applying the Church's social doctrine. An integral part of this function of teaching, the decree states, is showing that "earthly goods and human institutions according to the plan of God the Creator are also disposed for man's salvation and therefore can contribute much to the building up of the body of Christ" (No. 12).

The bishop is also called to "teach, according to the doctrine of the Church, the great value of these things: the human person with his freedom and bodily life, the family and its unity and stability, the procreation and education of children, civil society with its laws and professions,

labor and leisure, the arts and technical inventions, poverty and affluence" (Ibid.). Finally, he also has the duty of setting forth "the ways by which are to be answered the most serious questions concerning the ownership, increase, and just distribution of material goods, peace and war, and brotherly relations among all countries" (Ibid.).

This intimate relation between social doctrine and the bishop as teacher of the faith ultimately arises from the indissoluble bond existing between social doctrine and evangelization, a bond spoken of many times in the *Compendium*. The bishop is the pre-eminent teacher of the faith in a particular community that has the specific task of discerning historical events in the light of social doctrine. It is the task of the particular Christian community—as stated in the famous fourth paragraph of *Octogesima Adveniens*—"to analyze with objectivity the situation," "to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words" and "to discern the options and commitments which are called for." This is a task that belongs to the community and is to be undertaken "with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the Bishops who hold responsibility and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all people of good will" (Ibid.) so that the proclamation of the social Gospel may be incarnated in the minds and hearts of concrete men and women who share the same concerns and the same hopes.

The bishop, as the first servant of his community, will find in the *Compendium* the help needed for fulfilling this duty of discernment. The *Compendium* will be a kind of reference point for working out the Church's social doctrine in his diocese, taking into account the papal

social magisterium as well as Scripture and Tradition, and keeping careful watch also over how this doctrine is taught and embodied. The *Compendium* will help the bishop, insofar as he is responsible for spreading social doctrine in his diocese, constantly to remind all ecclesial subjects of their social responsibility. Nor will the bishop consider the application of this same social doctrine in his diocese as foreign to his office of teacher of the faith. Of course, putting its principles into concrete action in situations of politics, the economy and work will belong to other subjects, and in a particular way to Christian associations of the laity and to individual laymen and women. Nonetheless, the bishop is called to maintain an important role of overseeing this application so as to reawaken, even in a prophetic manner, consciences which have fallen asleep, to condemn distortions and errors in its application, to indicate—without getting involved in empirical questions—basic criteria and dynamic guidelines for resolving the human and social problems that call into play the word and actions of believers.

Priests and the *Compendium*

The *Compendium* is put into the hands of priests. The priest, “by virtue of the consecration which he receives in the Sacrament of Orders, is sent forth by the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, to whom he is configured in a special way as Head and Shepherd of his people, in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in service of the Church and for the salvation of the world.” Priestly service to the world takes place according to the specific character proper to the priest.

He is a missionary, but not independently of his liturgical service, of his making Christ present in his preaching and in his very life, of his being a shepherd to his flock, of his value as an instrument of dialogue among Christians and between Christians and all men and women.

The priest serves the Church's social doctrine not when he becomes involved directly in social or economic activities, but by preaching the social Gospel from the altar, by proclaiming in his preaching the freedom of Christ and condemning the denial of human rights and the disregard for the dignity of the person, by showing the uncontainable force of the love and justice that issue forth from the Word, teaching the social value of the Christian faith, by promoting a catechesis—especially among young people and adults—that draws its inspiration also from social doctrine, by prompting the Christian community and the laity, both as individuals and in associations, to open their minds and hearts to the human needs found in their own territory as well as to the needs of the larger world community.

Moreover, to the priest belongs the mission of promoting the “different roles, charisms and ministries present within the ecclesial community,” in relation also to the assimilation and proclamation of the Church's social doctrine. He has the first responsibility, within his community, of fostering and strengthening the awareness that all subjects of the community must have concerning their role in the evangelization of society: parents and families, the laity, the world of school and education, associations, movements, and so on.

Consecrated Life and the *Compendium*

The *Compendium* is put into the hands of men and women religious. Those who have responded to Christ's call to a form of life that already in this world can anticipate the perfection of the Kingdom of God have a special place in the Christian community and, by virtue of their charism, have a unique role in the evangelization of society. Theirs is not a detachment from the world, it is a different way of being within the world. It is a particularly profound and non-evasive way, in that those in consecrated life see social relationships and economic questions not only as they are, but also and above all as they will be and therefore as they should be.

Men and women religious leave everything behind (*cf.* Luke 14:33; 18:29) in order to open their hearts to a greater fullness and to live more completely an undivided love for the Lord (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 7:34), and thus to show prophetically to men and women new forms of relations with the things of creation and with one's brothers and sisters: relations oriented towards sharing, built on the freedom of God's children, relations that accept rather than possess, relations of human promotion rather than oppression.

Consecrated life focuses its gaze prophetically on the Resurrection, when men and women will be "like angles in heaven" (Matthew 22:30), and, already in the present time that we live here and now, it is an anticipation of that mysterious state of perfection that the merits of Christ make possible: All of us, already, are in fact "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). By their witness to the

Gospel beatitudes in their personal and community lives and by their total openness—with their vows of obedience, poverty and chastity—to living with the Lord for the salvation of the world, consecrated persons imbue social, political and economic relations with the radicality of the Gospel.

Consecrated life offers a Gospel-based model of co-existence based on gift and keeps alive the ability of the entire Christian community and of all people to discern in the “already” the “not yet,” to seek communion and charity, in order to provide human relations with a heart even in today’s society.

The Laity and the *Compendium*

The *Compendium* is put above all into the hands of the laity. By virtue of their baptism, the laity are placed within the mystery of God’s love for the world that Christ has revealed and of which the Church is the memory and continuation in history. Therefore, the laity share in the mystery, communion and mission that characterize the Church, but they do so according to a particular nature, their secular nature. The lives of the laity are directly involved in the organization of secular life, in the areas of the economy, of politics, of work, of social communication, of law, of the organization of institutions in which are made the decisions and choices that become social structures affecting civil life.

The laity are not in the world more so than other ecclesial subjects, they are in the world in a different way:

They deal directly with secular matters, constructing the architecture of relations between members of social and political communities, leaving the mark of their work on the course of world events, determining the organizational and structural aspects of these events.

The Christian lay faithful, with their professional competence and their life experience, serve the evangelization of society as they follow their vocation to “seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.” They bring to the Christian community their passion for human needs and their openness to learn from others, since God is at work also beyond the official confines of the Church. They bring to the world their Christian knowledge that orders things according to God’s plan and their keen desire to serve the ecclesial community that by means of their hands and their work reaches into the recesses of society where people concretely live.

The Christian laity—with their competence and professional capabilities, and by taking on the responsibility to work in a particular context—in a certain way complete the Church’s social doctrine on the practical level and mediate its necessary impact on concrete realities. Evangelization is the proclamation of a new life; the evangelization of society is not an abstract ideological proposal but the incarnation of new criteria of behavior in the work of men and women.

Thus, social doctrine is not mere theoretical knowledge, rather it is meant “for action”; it is oriented towards

life, it is to be applied with creativity and is to be incarnated. The laity have a very particular, although not exclusive, role in this area. Since social doctrine is the encounter between the truth of the Gospel and human problems, the laity must guide this social doctrine's directives for action towards concrete and effective operative results, even if these results are only partial.

The laity are men and women who are willing to take risks and who also concretely experience this doctrine. Drawing up historical, concrete solutions to humanity's problems, they are not, so to speak, an appendix to the Church's social doctrine, but the very heart of this doctrine, since it has a profound "experiential" character.

The laity must not be abandoned in this work of opening new frontiers and of working out new responses. The entire Christian community shall sustain them and encourage them so that they know that—although on the one hand their choices can only be attributed to themselves without involving the entire community, on the other hand their efforts are felt by the community to be the efforts of the community itself—their hard work and expectations are appreciated and valued. Nor shall the Christian community refrain from engaging in a collective effort in temporal realities, lest the community be compromised and suffer internal divisions.

Responsibility for working at the forefront and for making this doctrine a lived experience cannot be relegated solely to the laity as individuals. If the ultimate decisions regarding the economic and political spheres are to

be made by the laity in autonomous responsibility, the fundamental orientational decisions and even the creation of places for the concrete experience of this doctrine and for dialogue must be the undertaking of the entire community.

The Christian laity are intermediaries between, on the one hand, the principles of reflection, the criteria of judgment and the directives for action found in the Church's social doctrine and, on the other hand, the concrete and unique situations in which the lay faithful must act and make decisions. But mediation does not mean a lack of courage, a tendency to weaken or to compromise. If lay Christians are to be salt, light and leaven, they must strive to make ever more clearly seen all that is authentically human in social relations, fearlessly and with openness and hope towards the future. In this, they are assisted by the presence of the ecclesial community, by the encouragement of priests and men and women in consecrated life, by their participation in sacramental and liturgical life, and by the indications that come to them from places of community discernment of the signs of the times.

Witness and Planning

In concluding these reflections on the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, I would like to emphasize the twofold dimension of the presence of Christians in society, a twofold inspiration that comes to us from the Church's social doctrine itself and that in

the future will need to be lived more and more as two realities that together form a single whole. I am referring to the need for personal witness, on the one hand, and, on the other, the need for new planning for an integral humanism in solidarity that involves social structures.

These two dimensions, the personal and the structural, must never be separated. It is my fervent hope that the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* will contribute to the development of mature men and women who are authentic believers and will inspire them to be credible witnesses, capable of changing the mechanisms of modern society by their thought and action. This explains the need for witnesses, martyrs and saints in the area of society as well. These are people who have lived their presence in society as a “witness to Christ the Savior”; Popes have repeatedly made reference to such individuals.

We are speaking here of those whom *Rerum Novarum* considered “worthy of all praise” for their commitment to improve the conditions of workers. Those who, in the words of *Centesimus Annus*, have “succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth.” Those who, “spurred on by the social magisterium, have sought to make that teaching the inspiration for their involvement in the world. Acting either as individuals or joined together in various groups, associations and organizations, these people represent a great movement for the defense of the human person and the safeguarding of human dignity.”

There are many such Christians, many of whom are members of the laity, who “attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life.” Personal witness, the fruit of an adult Christian life, that is, one that is profound and mature, cannot fail to be firmly rooted also in the building of a new civilization, the civilization of love.

Telling the Story of Jesus in Asia

The Message of the First Asian Mission Congress

Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 18-22, 2006

JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.

Jesus lives! Christ is Risen! Our Savior is with us; his life is our life. These affirmations capture our sentiments as the participants of the 2006 Asian Mission Congress. Gathered in Thailand, October 18-22, 2006, we express the same joyful faith as Christ's first disciples, who proclaimed: "I have seen the Lord" (Jn. 20:18); "It is the Lord" (Jn. 21:7); "It is true: The Lord has risen" (Lk. 24:34); "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28). The first disciples rejoiced: their friend, their teacher, their prophet, their compassionate healer, their beloved was miraculously—mysteriously—alive. Fear and disappointment, trauma and devastation became faith and rejoicing. Who could have expected? Who would have dreamed?

Jesus comes personally to his followers. He calls them by name: Mary of Magdala, Thomas, Peter, James, John. They recognize him. He speaks words of peace and reconciliation. The disbelieving disciples are transformed. Yet,

Jesus, the Crucified-Risen One, expands the dimensions of their faith. He challenges them further. He sends them on mission: "Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation" (Mk. 16:15); "Go forth and make all nations my disciples" (Mt. 28:19); "You are witnesses to all this" (Lk. 24:48); "As the Father sent me, so I send you" (Jn. 20:21). And so the disciples set out to tell the Jesus story. They go to places, near and far: James to Jerusalem, Peter and Paul to Rome, Thomas to India. Indeed, to encounter the Risen Lord is to be sent on mission.

In God's gracious providence, over 1,000 of us contemporary disciples of Jesus assembled for the first-ever Asian Mission Congress. A spacious, sprawling hotel in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, became the New Upper Room. We gathered to share our experience, to tell our stories, to meet other disciples from across the vast Asian continent, from Lebanon to Japan, from Kazakhstan and Mongolia to Indonesia. We heard inspiring stories, too numerous to count, stories of life, faith, heroism, service, prayer, dialogue, and proclamation. An infectious mood of joy pervaded us. No one doubted the active presence of the befriending Spirit of God. Together we celebrated our faith and our life as disciples of Jesus through sharing, listening, praying, celebrating the Eucharist. The multiplicity of cultures and languages added light and color to the celebration of our one common faith.

This pastoral-catechetical congress explored a unique methodology of evangelizing: story-telling or faith-sharing. We listened to narratives about the elderly, families, youth, children and women, BECs. We heard perspectives from Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Tribals. Contemporary

contexts were highlighted: Consumerism, Media, Migrants, and Interfaith Dialogue. How significant these are to the mission of evangelization in the present context of ethnic conflicts and religious tensions!

The Story of Jesus was the unique thread, weaving all these life experiences into one grand narrative. All the colors, peoples, languages, cultures, values, religions, and arts of Asia's peoples formed one grand tapestry. Lord, how marvelous are your ways! How deep your designs!

The world is full of stories. Human life is unimaginable without stories. Stories tell us who we are and they link us with other peoples, all across Asia and even throughout the world. Through them we explore life's deeper dimensions, including the mystery of our own being. Stories impact our life and our faith. They transform perspectives and values. They form community. Stories contain a hidden dynamism and transforming power, incalculably so when they emerge from experience. They are remembered much longer than lessons learned in school or books that are read.

Jesus was known as a story-teller. As a *rabbi*, a teacher, his favorite method of instruction was telling parables, insightful vignettes that revealed the depths of God's Reign. Who does not know the parable of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son? Jesus' parables challenge us with new possibilities in our relations with God and all our brothers and sisters. Many might think of Jesus, who was born in Asia, as merely akin to the great Asian wisdom teachers, such as Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Gandhi. But more marvelously, we Christians believe

that Jesus is the God who became Man, sent by the Father. He is God's love story in the flesh—God's Incarnate Story.

The Asian Mission Congress sought to enflesh many of the challenges found in Pope John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Asia* (EA): "narrative methods akin to Asian cultural forms are to be preferred. In fact, the proclamation of Jesus Christ can most effectively be made by narrating his story, as the Gospels do" (EA 20f). Pope John Paul II recommends following "an evocative pedagogy, using stories, parables and symbols so characteristic of Asian methodology in teaching" (EA 20g).

The local Churches in Asia can be faithful to Christ's mission mandate by telling and retelling the Jesus story both in words and effective deeds of service. Repeatedly, the Church communicates its faith that originates in its experience of Jesus. The Holy Spirit, the Great Storyteller, guides the Church in all situations to tell, especially through the witness of a transformed life: "what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and touched with our hands"; it is none other than "the Word of Life" (*cf.* 1 Jn. 1:1). Mission means keeping the story of Jesus alive, forming community, showing compassion, befriending the "other," carrying the Cross, witnessing to the living person of Jesus.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus observed: "Did we not feel our hearts on fire as he talked with us on the road and explained the scriptures to us (Lk. 24:32)?" For us, the way to Chiang Mai has become our Emmaus road. At the Mission Congress we shared our experiences of faith. Stories from Bangladesh and Hong Kong, from Thailand and China, from Japan and Nepal—from all

across the Asian continent—set our hearts on fire. Echoes of *Ecclesia in Asia* resounded loudly: “A fire can only be lit by something that is itself on fire” (EA 23b). The Church in Asia is to be “a community aflame with missionary zeal to make Jesus known, loved and followed” (EA 19a). Jesus casts fire on the earth and prays that it be ablaze (*cf.* Lk. 12:49). “The Church in Asia shares his zeal that this fire be re-kindled now” (EA 18c). We know that our 2006 Mission Congress, sponsored by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) and its Office of Evangelization, thanks to the Holy Spirit, was able to set many hearts ablaze.

The Asian Mission Congress, particularly the exchange of our faith-stories, has provided new perspectives for our task of dialoguing with the peoples (especially the poor), the religions, and the cultures of Asia (*cf.* FABC V: 3.1.2). The stories of Asia’s poor today (beggars, people living with AIDS, migrants, the outcasts) must be read within Jesus’ story and his Paschal Mystery. Asia’s many venerable religions may be seen within God’s universal design of salvation—that all would be saved (I Tm. 2:4). The riches of Asian cultures can be a most suitable vehicle for communicating the Jesus story. This task has “a special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural situation of Asia” (EA 21b). The insightful “triple dialogue” promoted by the FABC for over three decades can be accomplished in “new and surprising ways” (EA 20f)—one of which is in the exchange of gifts through the sharing of our life’s story.

At this First Asian Mission Congress we rediscovered the “joy of evangelization.” Pope Paul VI’s words ring true; effective mission is to be done “with ever increasing love,

zeal and joy" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, EN 1). Jesus' disciples must "proclaim with joy the Good News which one has come to know through the Lord's mercy" (EN 80).

We, the Congress participants, commit ourselves to carry home to our own communities new insights into the story of Jesus, particularly its Asian dimensions. We seek to be on fire, ready to bring home vivid and inspiring stories, which could light the flame of mission in young hearts. We wish to follow Jesus' words to the possessed person (the scriptural passage we adopted at the Congress): "Go home to your own people and tell them what the Lord in his mercy has done for you" (Mk. 5:19).

We seek to approach evangelization in an Asian way, an evocative way through stories, parables and symbols, a method so characteristic of Asian pedagogy, as Pope John Paul II has so perceptively noted. It is, therefore, a way of sharing our faith with others, an authentic path of dialogue. Still we who believe in this distinctive approach to evangelization, will also "not be timid when God opens the door for us to proclaim explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence" (FABC V: 4.3).

On this World Mission Sunday we thank the Lord of the harvest for the countless missionaries who have come to serve in Asia through the centuries. We prayerfully commend to the Lord's love and protection the thousands from Asia who now serve in various parts of the globe.

We beseech Mary, our Mother and the Star of Evangelization, to intercede for us that our hearts may remain on fire with love of Jesus her Son, whose story we shall tell and retell through words, deeds and the witness of our lives.

Walking with my Neighbor in Faith

Ten FABC Insights

JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.

The 2006 Asian Mission Congress, sponsored by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) through its Office of Evangelization and hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand is an important milestone in the journey of the local Churches in Asia in the Vatican II era. To gather over 1,000 Catholics from all parts of Asia and beyond is a momentous undertaking. Done for the purpose of renewing Asia's Christian communities in their mission of evangelization, this congress can validly be compared to an ongoing "Asian Pentecost."

This presentation is a theological-missiological-pastoral reflection on the religions of Asia and the Church's interaction with these venerable faiths. It unfolds in two major stages. After a brief introduction to the FABC, the missiological foundations of the Church's approaches and attitudes to other religions are presented. Drawing upon the insightful literature of the thirty-five year FABC experience, five missiological foundations are identified; they are basic to

a constructive encounter of the Church with the followers of Asia's religions. This is followed by a second major section that speaks of mission praxis in the Asian context. Emerging from the rich reflection anchored in the pastoral practice of the local Churches of Asia, five operative guidelines are presented; they can facilitate the practical dimensions of genuine interfaith dialogue. Finally, faithful to the methodology of the Asian Mission Congress (narrative theological sharing and faith reflection), a story of a Bangladeshi beggar woman will be included. The presentation begins with an overview of the content of the material to be covered.

OUTLINE

- A. An FABC Introduction.
- B. Missiological Foundations.
 - 1. Church's Commitment to Missionary Evangelization in Asia.
 - 2. FABC's Vision of Integral Evangelization.
 - 3. Announcing the Person and Promises of Christ.
 - 4. Interfaith Dialogue as a Key Dimension of Mission.
 - 5. God's Saving Design is at Work in the Asian Reality.
- C. Mission Praxis in the Asian Context.
 - 1. Basic Attitudes Essential to Dialogue Practice.
 - 2. Specific Attitudes toward Asia's Venerable Religions.
 - 3. Necessity of a "Spirituality of Dialogue."
 - 4. Dialogue Serves a New Humanity and the Kingdom.
 - 5. Local Church: Identity, Ministries, and Service.
- D. Narrative of a Bangladeshi Beggar Woman.

AN FABC INTRODUCTION

The FABC is a transnational episcopal structure that brings together fourteen bishops' conferences from the following countries as full members: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos-Cambodia, Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. FABC has eleven associate members drawn from the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of East Timor, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macau, Mongolia, Nepal, Siberia, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Thus, in total, twenty-eight countries are represented in the FABC, which grew out of the historic gathering of 180 Asian Catholic Bishops with Pope Paul VI during his 1970 Asian visit.

Aside from a modest central structure, there are nine FABC offices, which carry out many concrete initiatives and projects. The offices, purposely scattered among various Asian nations, are focused on evangelization, social communication, laity, human development, education and student chaplaincy, ecumenical and interreligious affairs, theological concerns, clergy, and consecrated life. Each of these offices sponsors a wide variety of activities that promote the growth of the Asian local Churches.

The supreme body of the FABC is the Plenary Assembly, which convenes every four years. The themes, places, and dates of the eight plenary assemblies have included the following: "Evangelization in Modern Day Asia" (Taipei, Taiwan: 1974); "Prayer – the Life of the Church in Asia" (Calcutta, India: 1978); "The Church – Community of Faith in Asia" (Bangkok, Thailand: 1982); "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of

Asia” (Tokyo, Japan: 1986); “Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium” (Bandung, Indonesia: 1990); “Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life” (Manila, Philippines: 1995); “A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and Service” (Samphran, Thailand: 2000); and, “The Asian Family toward a Culture of Life” (Daejeon, Korea: 2004). These and other materials are available in the three (soon to be four) volumes of *For All the Peoples of Asia* (Manila: Claretian Publications). The *FABC Papers* are available on the UCANews website with its *FABC Papers* link; see number 100 for a comprehensive index.

The FABC has been the most influential body in the Asian Church since the Second Vatican Council. It has strengthened the bonds of communication among the bishops in the region and has contributed to the development of a shared vision about the Church and her evangelizing mission in Asia (copious FABC quotes in this presentation will reveal the depths of this FABC vision). For the Church in Asia to truly discover its own identity it must continually engage in a three-fold dialogue with the peoples (especially the poor), the cultures, and the religions of Asia. This programmatic vision has guided the FABC for over three decades and it formed the basic structure of the 2006 Asian Mission Congress. One can validly assert that the FABC is truly “Asia’s Continuing Vatican II.”

MISSIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Church’s Commitment to Missionary Evangelization in Asia. The Catholic Church in Asia is committed to bring the Good News to Asian peoples. However, local

Christians are not always committed to this mission; this is precisely one reason for the efforts made to sponsor this continental mission congress. The FABC documents assert that: "...the preaching of Jesus Christ and His Gospel to our peoples in Asia becomes a task which today assumes an urgency, a necessity and magnitude unmatched in the history of our Faith in this part of the world. It is because of this that we can repeat the Apostle's word, and repeat it joyfully, 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel,' (I Cor. 9:16) for it is 'the love of Christ which presses us' (II Cor. 5:14) to share with our peoples what is most precious in our hearts and in our lives, Jesus Christ and his Gospel, the unsurpassable riches of Christ (cf. Eph. 3:8)." [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 8]

Asian Christians believe that: "...it is as *servants of the Lord* and of *humanity* that we Christians share the same journey with all the Asian peoples. The Church was not sent to observe but to serve—to serve the Asian peoples in their quest for God and for a better human life; to serve Asia under the leading of the Spirit of Christ and in the manner of Christ himself who did not come to be served but to serve and to lay down his life as a ransom for all (Mk. 10:45)—and to discern, in dialogue with Asian peoples and Asian realities, what deeds the Lord wills to be done so that all humankind may be gathered together in harmony as his family. As servant of Yahweh and of humanity, the Church will seek above all faithfulness to God and to the Asian peoples, and will also invite to full participation in the Christian community those who are lead to it by the Spirit of God." [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 6:3]

The Church in Asia admits its limitations: "...how insufficient for the most part has been our missionary consciousness and responsibility. We have so frequently forgotten that the summons and challenge to make known the person and message of Jesus Christ to those who do not know him is a mandate addressed to even the youngest Christian community" [Source: FABC III (Bangkok): 9:9]. "Unfortunately for many Catholics, faith is only something to be received and celebrated. They do not feel it is something to be shared. The missionary nature of the gift of faith must be inculcated in all Christians" [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.2.3].

FABC's Vision of Integral Evangelization. This task of evangelization is holistic and comprehensive in its scope; Pope Paul VI noted: "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" [Source: Paul VI, EN 18]. FABC describes missionary evangelization: "Mission, being a continuation in the Spirit of the mission of Christ, involves a being with people, as was Jesus: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (Jn. 1:14)" [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.1.2]. "Evangelization is the carrying out of the Church's duty of proclaiming by word and witness the Gospel of the Lord" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 25].

The **content** of evangelization is noted: "...mission includes: being with the people, responding to their needs, with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God's Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing and word. Mission will mean a dialogue with Asia's poor,

with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions (FABC I)” [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.1.2].

“Local Churches, servant and inculturated, are the subject of the evangelizing mission.... The principal elements [are] as follows: 1) simple presence and living witness; 2) concrete commitment to the service of humankind; ... 3) liturgical life... prayer and contemplation; 4) dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions; ... 5) proclamation and catechesis.... The totality of Christian mission embraces all these elements” [Source: CTC (Hua Hin, 1991): 36].

“Integral Evangelization requires that we become witnesses in our lives to the values and norms of the Gospel based on our baptismal consecration” [Source: SFMWA (Hong Kong): 28].

The FABC has also spoken about the **motivation** for missionary evangelization: “Renewal of a sense of mission will also require a renewal of our motivations for mission. There has been perceived in some way a weakening of these motivations so necessary to persevere in this demanding task. Why indeed, should we evangelize? ... a) We evangelize, first of all, from a deep sense of *gratitude to God*.... b) But, mission is also a *mandate*.... c) We evangelize also because we *believe* in the Lord Jesus.... d) We evangelize also because we have been *incorporated by baptism into the Church*, which is missionary by its very nature.... e) And finally, we evangelize because the Gospel is *leaven* for liberation and for the transformation of society” [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.2].

Announcing the Person and Promises of Christ.
The Churches of Asia see a clear Christological component

to evangelization; they assert: "While we are aware and sensitive to the fact that evangelization is a complex reality and has many essential aspects—such as witnessing to the Gospel, working for the values of the Kingdom, struggling along with those who strive for justice and peace, dialogue, sharing, inculturation, mutual enrichment with other Christians and the followers of all religions—we affirm that there can never be true evangelization without the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and the primary element of evangelization without which all other elements will lose their cohesion and validity" [*Source*: BIMA I (Suwon): 5-6].

"It is true that in many places Christ cannot yet be proclaimed openly by words. But He can, and should be, proclaimed through other ways, namely: through the witness of the life of the Christian community and family, and their striving to know and live more fully the faith they profess; through their desire to live in peace and harmony with those who do not share our faith.... Our proclamation of Jesus must also be urgently directed towards the workers, the poor and needy, and the oppressed...." [*Source*: BIMA III (Changhua): 10-11].

FABC continues: "...challenged by the stark reality of millions on our continent who have not yet been evangelized, we welcome...this opportunity to face with a sense of urgency the task of making Christ known, loved and followed by the vast multitude of our brothers and sisters" [*Source*: BIMA I (Baguio): 2]. "More than two billions of Asians have perhaps never encountered the Person of Jesus in a knowing and conscious way; more than two billions of Asians have never really heard His message. While this fact fills us with sorrow, it also spurs us on to

longing and hope, because we know He will accompany the ways of all those whose footsteps are lovely because they bring the good news of His mercy and love” [Source: BIMA III (Changhua): 4].

“We affirm...that ‘the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and primary element of evangelization.’ ...But the proclamation of Jesus Christ in Asia means, first of all, the witness of Christians and of Christian communities to the values of the Kingdom of God, *a proclamation through Christ-like deeds*. For Christians in Asia, to proclaim Christ means above all to live like him, in the midst of our neighbors of other faiths and persuasions, and to do his deeds by the power of his grace. Proclamation through dialogue and deeds—this is the first call to the Churches in Asia” [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.1]. “The local Churches of Asia will proclaim Jesus Christ to their fellow humans in a dialogical manner” [Source: CTC (Hua Hin): 51].

Interfaith Dialogue as a Key Dimension of Mission.

Asia’s bishops have a deep appreciation of the role of dialogue in the evangelization process; they hold: “Inter-religious dialogue is another integral part of evangelization which in the situation of our Churches needs to become a primary concern. We live in the midst of millions of people belonging to the great religious traditions.... In this context we believe that interreligious dialogue is a true expression of the Church’s evangelizing action in which the mystery of Jesus Christ is operative, calling us all to conversion.... We would wish to see interreligious dialogue become a reality at the grassroots level of our Church, through greater openness and reaching out of all

their members towards their brothers and sisters of other religious traditions” [Source: BIMA II (Trivandrum): 14].

“The Church, the sacrament of God’s message in the world, continues Christ’s work of dialogue.... The Church is particularly concerned with man’s religious experience, the motivating and leavening agent in his culture. This means that the Church must constantly be involved in dialogue with men of other religions (*cf. Nostra Aetate* 2). The Christian finds himself continually evangelizing and being evangelized by his partners in dialogue (*cf. Evangelii Nuntiandi* 13)” [Source: BIRA II (Kuala Lumpur): 11]. Therefore, “It suffices for the present to indicate here the continued building up of the local church as the focus of the task of evangelization today, with dialogue as its essential mode, ... through interreligious dialogue undertaken in all seriousness” [Source: IMC (Manila): 19].

Indeed, since the Church in Asia is a “small flock,” the FABC insightfully asserts: “Mission may find its greatest urgency in Asia: it also finds in our continent a distinctive mode [dialogue]” [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.1]. “From our experience of dialogue emerged the conviction that *dialogue was the key we sought*—not dialogue in the superficial sense in which it is often understood, but as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives...” [Source: BIMA I (Baguio): 5]. “In the context of dialogue we tried to penetrate the meaning of the uniqueness of Christ—in our own inner experience, in our contact with others; ... we realized that there is still much to be discovered, and much that is already discovered but not sufficiently integrated in our lives and in our missionary

effort.... We feel that the Christian experience in contact with the age-old religious experience of Asia has much to contribute to the growth and the transformation in outlook and appearance of the Universal Church" [Source: BIMA I (Baguio): 12].

FABC adds an important point of clarification: "Dialogue does not call for giving up one's commitment, bracketing it or entering into easy compromise. On the contrary, for a deeper and fruitful dialogue, it is even necessary that each partner be firmly committed to his or her faith" [Source: BIRA IV/7 (Tagaytay): 10].

God's Saving Design is at Work in the Asian Reality.

FABC documents are premised on a broad vision of God's loving plan of salvation; thus, "Christians believe that God's saving will is at work, in many different ways, in all religions. It has been recognized since the time of the apostolic Church, and stated clearly again by the Second Vatican Council (*cf. Gaudium et Spes* 22; *Lumen Gentium* 16), that the Spirit of Christ is active outside the bounds of the visible Church (*cf. Redemptor Hominis* 6). God's saving grace is not limited to members of the Church, but is offered to every person.... His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of His grace" [Source: BIRA II (Kuala Lumpur): 12].

"God, the Father of all, has called all men to share in his life and love through his son Jesus Christ. The risen Christ and his Spirit are active in the world making this love a present and growing reality, making all things new. This same love urges us on to dialogue

with people of other religions, because we have, especially since the Second Vatican Council, an increasing awareness of the positive role of other religions in God's plan of salvation" [Source: BIRA III (Madras): 2].

FABC continues: "In Asia especially this involves a dialogue with the great religious traditions of our peoples. In this dialogue we accept them as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 14]. And again: "... a clearer perception of the Church's mission in the context of the Asian reality helps us discover even deeper motivations. Members of other religious traditions already in some way share with us in the mystery of salvation" [Source: CTC (Hua Hin): 50]. Furthermore: "We are glad that Vatican II affirmed the presence of salvific values in other religions. We are grateful for the timely insights.... The Gospel fulfills all hopes, a Gospel which Asia and the whole world direly need" [Source: BIMA I (Suwon): 7].

On this theme Pope John Paul II has written: "The Spirit's presence and activity affect not only individuals, but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions.... The Church's relationship with other religions is dictated by a twofold respect: 'Respect for man in his quest for answers to the deepest questions of his life, and respect for the action of the Spirit in man'" [Source: *Redemptoris Missio*: 28-29]. Within the awareness of the Holy Spirit's action and their commitment to dialogue, Asia's bishops boldly state: "...we shall not be timid when God opens the door for us to *proclaim* explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence" [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 4.3].

MISSION PRAXIS IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

Basic Attitudes Essential to Dialogue Practice. The commitment of Asia's bishops to interfaith dialogue is clear and consistent; the FABC enunciates foundational attitudes essential to this dialogue. "In Asia, the emphasis in interreligious dialogue falls not so much on academic or theological discussions, as on the sharing of life at all levels. Christians carry out the mission entrusted to them by Jesus Christ when they participate fully in the social and cultural life of the societies in which they live, enriching others by the values they have learned from the Gospel, and finding themselves enriched by the spiritual treasures of their neighbors of other faiths. Thus, the 'dialogue of life' is central to Christian life in Asia... Christians in Asia are called to live their faith deeply, in openness and respect for the religious commitment of others" [*Source*: FIRA IV (Pattaya): 4].

Dialogue demands transformed attitudes: "...to be able to engage in genuine interreligious dialogue, we need to deepen our self-knowledge and continuously discover our personal identity...we need to be continually healed of negativities like suspicion and fear...in order to go deeper into ourselves in this inward journey to the God of the Ongoing Dialogue, we need to integrate Asian forms of prayer.... We acknowledge here the tremendous opportunities we have of learning from the other religious traditions of Asia, especially from the mystical traditions" [*Source*: FIRA I (Ipoh): 3.2-3.3].

"Any dialogical enterprise requires certain basic attitudes, as exemplified in Christ: (a) a spirit of humility, openness, receptivity, and ... for what God wishes to tell

us through them [Asia's religions]; (b) witnessing to the saving grace of Christ, not so much by the proclaimed word but through love in the Christian community, so that its universal validity is seen and felt as such; (c) a placing of priority on fellowship..., so that we are led spontaneously and naturally to deeper religious dialogue" [Source: BIRA I (Bangkok): 18].

FABC promotes a balanced appreciation of dialogue: "... for a deeper and fruitful dialogue, it is even necessary that each partner be firmly committed to his or her faith.... While firmly adhering to our commitment to Christ, it is indispensable for dialogue that we enter into the religious universe of our dialogue partner and see his or her sincere and unflinching faith-commitment. More than that, we should appreciate the commitment of the other.... That is why listening attentively with our heart to the personal commitment of faith and witness of the other partner can not only facilitate dialogue, but also enrich us and make us grow in our faith, and help us to reinterpret it" [Source: BIRA IV/7 (Tagaytay): 10-11].

"Dialogue is a crucial challenge to the Churches in Asia in their growing commitment to the building of the kingdom. This challenge is fraught with risks.... However, with the confidence that the Spirit is with us and helps us in our weakness (Rom. 8:26), we commit ourselves to this task of dialogue..." [Source: BIRA III (Madras): Conclusion].

Specific Attitudes Toward Asia's Venerable Religions.

The FABC in its first plenary gathering enunciated a profound—even poetic—appraisal of Asia's religions: "In

this dialogue we accept them as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation. In them we recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. Over many centuries they have been the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength. They have been (and continue to be) the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 14]. "How then can we not give them reverence and honor? And how can we not acknowledge that God has drawn our peoples to Himself through them?" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 15]

"Only in dialogue with these religions can we discover in them the seeds of the Word of God (*Ad Gentes* 9). This dialogue will allow us to touch the expression and the reality of our peoples' deepest selves, and enable us to find authentic ways of living and expressing our own Christian faith. It will reveal to us also many riches of our own faith which we perhaps would not have perceived. Thus it can become a sharing in friendship of our quest for God and for brotherhood among His sons" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 16]. "Finally, this dialogue will teach us what our faith in Christ leads us to receive from these religious traditions, and what must be purified in them, healed and made whole, in the light of God's Word" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 17].

Asia's bishops continue: "On our part we can offer what we believe the Church alone has the duty and joy

to offer to them and to all men: oneness with the Father in Jesus His Son; the ways to grace Christ gives us in His Gospel and His sacraments, and in the fellowship of the community which seeks to live in Him; an understanding too of the value of the human person and of the social dimensions of human salvation—a salvation which assumes and gives meaning to human freedom, earthly realities, and the course of this world's history" [Source: FABC I (Taipei): 18].

Necessity of a "Spirituality of Dialogue." Over three decades FABC has asserted that spirituality is linked to authentic dialogue: "In Asia, home to great religions, where individuals and entire peoples are thirsting for the divine, the Church is called to be a praying Church, deeply spiritual, even as she engages in immediate human and social concerns. All Christians need a true missionary spirituality of prayer and contemplation" [Source: FABC VII (Samphan): C-2].

"At the center of this new way of being Church [in Asia] is the action of the Spirit of Jesus, guiding and directing individual believers as well as the whole community to live a life that is Spirit-filled—that is, to live an authentic spirituality. It is nothing more and nothing less than a following of Jesus-in-mission, an authentic discipleship in the context of Asia" [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 9:1].

"To risk being wounded in the act of loving, to seek to understand in a climate of misunderstanding—these are no light burdens to bear. Dialogue demands a deep spirituality which enables man, as did Jesus Christ, to hang

on to his faith in God's love, even when everything seems to fall apart. Dialogue, finally, demands a total Christ-like self-emptying so that, led by the Spirit, we may be more effective instruments in building up God's Kingdom" [Source: BIRA IV/7 (Tagaytay): 16].

"In Asia, the dialogue of prayer and spirituality is highly valued. Prayer together, in ways congruent with the faith of those who take part, is an occasion for Christians and followers of other faiths to appreciate better the spiritual riches which each group possesses, as well as to grow in respect for one another as fellow pilgrims on the path through life. Human solidarity is deepened when people approach the divine as one human family" [Source: FIRA IV (Pattaya): 8].

The Asian bishops have a "friend of dialogue" in the person of John Paul II (see *Redemptoris Missio* 55-57); elsewhere in the same document the pope has written: "...the interreligious meeting held in Assisi was meant to confirm my conviction that 'every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart'" [Source: RM 29].

Asia's bishops face the challenge of dialogue with realism: "Interreligious dialogue is never easy, it calls for its own spirituality. It is our resolve, therefore, to live and witness to this spirituality of dialogue..." [Source: FIRA I (Ipoh): 4.2]. "...credible evangelization demands from us Christians in Asia a life of authentic contemplation and genuine compassion.... Only an ego-emptying, and consequently powerless, Christian community has the credibility to proclaim the folly of the message of the cross. Such a process of evangelization

fosters a culture of dialogue in Asia" [Source: FEISA I (Pattaya): 7.4.1-2]. Finally, "The call of the laity to holiness and consequently, to the apostolate of the Church..., is a demand of their Christian identity in virtue of the Christian's full incorporation into Christ and in the Holy Eucharist" [Source: BILA III (Singapore): 6].

Dialogue Serves a New Humanity and the Kingdom.

FABC asserts that dialogue is always oriented outward in service of people and God's kingdom. "Dialogue is a crucial challenge to the churches in Asia in their growing commitment to the building of the kingdom. This challenge is fraught with risks arising out of confusing socio-political tensions, besides other causes. However, with the confidence that the Spirit is with us and helps us in our weakness (Rom. 8:26), we commit ourselves to this task of dialogue in order to unite the whole universe in Christ so that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:28)" [Source: BIRA III (Madras): Conclusion].

"We build the Church in order to build the Kingdom in our Asian societies and cultures.... Our mission therefore must be a dialogue with those of other religious ways that will require us both to proclaim and be proclaimed to, to speak and to listen, to teach and to learn. Through such a dialogical mission, God's Reign will grow in Asia and the Church will become more truly an Asian Church, inculturated in Asian realities" [Source: FIRA II (Pattaya): 3.5].

"The Kingdom of God is therefore universally present and at work. Wherever men and women open themselves to the transcendent divine mystery which impinges upon them and go out of themselves in love and service to

fellow humans, there the reign of God is at work.... This goes to show that the Reign of God is a universal reality, extending far beyond the boundaries of the Church. It is the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ, in which Christians and others share together. It is the fundamental 'mystery of unity' which unites us more deeply than differences in religious allegiance are able to keep us apart" [Source: CTC (Hua Hin): 29-30].

With clear resolve, Asia's bishops state: "Therefore, we commit ourselves:...To take every opportunity to make Jesus Christ and his message known in a way that is acceptable to Asians, presenting him to them with an 'Asian face,' using Asian cultural concepts, terms and symbols; ...To present the Gospel message as humble servants of the Kingdom of God, always sensitive to the religious and cultural traditions of the people where the Spirit leads us to make Jesus known" [Source: AMSAL I (Tagaytay): 2].

"This common spiritual pilgrimage demands that we take inspiration from the praxis of Jesus, especially his table fellowship with publicans and sinners, wherein we discover the primal form of the Church of Christ. Before Christianity got established as a structured religion, it was a spiritual movement: Jesus' journey with the poor towards the Kingdom of God. In close dialogue with the poor and the religious cultures of Asia, the Church would be able to rediscover its pristine dynamism which demands a radical emptying (*kenosis*) in its thought patterns, ritual forms and community structures. This age of journeying with sisters and brothers of Asian religions is a privileged moment (*kairos*) for the Church to return to its original call" [Source: FEISA I (Pattaya): 7.5.1].

Local Church: Identity, Ministries and Service. To promote and concretize this dialogical vision, the FABC links its implementation with Asia's local Churches and their ministries. "Each local Church is determined by her human context and lives in a dialectical relationship with the human society into which she is inserted as the Gospel leaven. Since each local Church should embody into the context the task entrusted to her by the servant Lord, she has to discover time and again what ministries and what ministerial structures she requires in order to fulfill her mission to offer to a human society the salvation brought about by Jesus Christ..." [Source: ACOM (Hong Kong): 25].

"The renewal of our sense of mission will mean ... that the acting subject of mission is the *local church* living and acting in communion with the universal Church. It is the local churches and communities which can discern and work out...the way the Gospel is best proclaimed, the Church set up, the values of God's Kingdom realized in their own place and time. In fact, it is by responding to and serving the needs of the peoples of Asia that the different Christian communities become truly local churches" [Source: FABC V (Bandung): 3.3.1].

The FABC forcefully asserts: "Asian Churches then must become truly Asian in all things. The principle of indigenization and inculturation is at the very root of their coming into their own. The ministry of Asian Churches, if it is to be authentic, must be relevant to Asian societies. This calls on the part of the Churches for originality, creativity and inventiveness, for boldness and courage" [Source: ACOM (Hong Kong): 26].

“Now—as Vatican II already affirmed with all clarity and force—every local church *is* and cannot be but missionary. Every local church is ‘sent’ by Christ and the Father to bring the Gospel to its surrounding milieu, and to bear it also into all the world. For every local church this is a *primary task*.... Every local church is responsible for its mission....” [Source: IMC (Manila): 14]

With great conviction, Asia’s bishops state: “...the decisive new phenomenon for Christianity in Asia will be the emergence of genuine Christian communities in Asia—Asian in their way of thinking, praying, living, communicating their own Christ-experience to others. The consequences will be tremendous ... [in] all aspects of their life.... If the Asian Churches do not discover their own identity, they will have no future” [Source: APMC (Hong Kong): 14].

“Each local church has its own vocation in the one history of salvation, in the one Church of Christ. In each local church each people’s history, each people’s culture, meanings and values, each people’s traditions are taken up, not diminished or destroyed, but celebrated and renewed, purified if need be, and fulfilled ... in the life of the Spirit” [Source: IMC (Manila): 15].

A BANGLADESHI BEGGAR WOMAN

In light of the foregoing presentation of the FABC’s profound understanding of the Church’s mission of fostering relationships and dialogue with Asia’s religions, this presentation concludes with an integrating quote and the narration of a true experience. Pope John Paul II, speaking in Manila during his 1981 Philippine visit, asserted that

the goal of interfaith dialogue should be altruistic (not focused only on personal enrichment); he stated: "Christians will, moreover, join hands with all men and women of good will [and] work together in order to bring about a more just and peaceful society in which the poor will be the first to be served." Yes, the Asian way of mission is dialogical service of the needy; this approach can clearly reveal the face of Jesus in Asia today. This was poignantly brought home to me in a transforming experience that I consider a gift of the Lord to me.

During the Lenten season some few years ago, while I was a visiting professor in Dhaka, Bangladesh, I had a "graced moment," a "defining experience" in my missionary awareness and perspective. It has remained seared in my consciousness and has forced me to ask many foundational questions about faith, mission and my own commitment. It involves a Bangladeshi beggar woman.

I saw her on the road, in front of the large walled compound of a wealthy family dwelling. I could not clearly see her face, as she was several hundred feet ahead of me. Her tattered clothes covered a malnourished body; she was alone, although other beggars were walking ahead of her on the road. I was proceeding along the same path, leisurely taking a late afternoon walk.

Suddenly a luxury car approached with its horn blowing. The driver probably wanted the beggars to disperse and also wanted the gate of the compound opened by the servants. The woman appeared startled as the car turned sharply in front of her and the gate swung open. Within seconds two large dogs emerged from the compound and jumped at the woman, knocking her to the

ground. She screamed and cried both from fear and the pain caused by the dogs nipping at her. I stood frozen, horrified at the sight.

A well-dressed madam promptly emerged from the chauffeur-driven car. She ordered the driver to bring the car into the compound; the dogs were called to return inside; the servants were commanded to close and lock the gate. And, the beggar woman? She was left alone on the ground—outside the gate. I stood helpless, gazing at this appalling scene.

Only the other frightened beggars came to the aid of the woman. Only they showed mercy and compassion. I stood at a distance and wept at this scene of crucifixion. I admitted to being a guilty bystander. My fears and inadequacies left me paralyzed. I had not one *taka* coin in my pocket to give; I could not offer one word of consolation in the Bengali language which I did not speak; I did not approach the woman for fear of misinterpretation that a foreign man would touch a Bengali woman in public in this strictly Islamic culture. I simply wept in solidarity. I wept long and hard. And, in succeeding years, I have frequently returned to that scene and prayed to God: “Do not let me forget that experience. Allow it to shape my life and mission vision. Permit it to remain a ‘defining moment’ in understanding my mission vocation.”

My Christian faith provides me with a vision to interpret this experience. I believe in a God who radically compassionate to everyone—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian. Thus, relying on God’s grace, I look forward to meeting once again that Muslim Bangladeshi

beggar-woman—she who so deeply shared in the paschal mystery—in the resurrected life with Christ the Lord in heaven. I am confident she will be there!

ABBREVIATIONS

ACMC	– Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church
AMSAL	– Asian-born Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life
BILA	– Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate
BIMA	– Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate
BIRA	– Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs
CTC	– Conclusions of Theological Consultation (Hua Hin - 1994)
EN	– <i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
FABC	– Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences
FEISA	– Faith Encounters in Asia
FIRA	– Formation Institute for Interreligious Affairs
IMC	– International Mission Congress (Manila)
RM	– <i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
SFMWA	– Statement on Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia

NOTE: All these abbreviations used in the text refer to FABC documents found in the three volumes of *For All the Peoples of Asia*, produced by Claretian Publications in Manila.

James H. Kroeger, M.M. has served mission in Asia since 1970 (Philippines and Bangladesh) and holds Licentiate and Doctorate Degrees in Missiology from the Gregorian University in Rome. Currently he is professor of systematic theology, missiology, and Islamics at the Jesuit Loyola School of Theology in Manila. In addition, he is President of the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists (PACM), Advisor to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Office of Evangelization (FABC:OE), and Secretary-Convenor of the Asian-born Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (AMSAL). His most recent books are: *The Future of the Asian Churches* (2002), *Becoming Local Church* (2003), and *Once Upon a Time in Asia* (2006) [Claretian Publications, Manila].

CANON LAW SECTION

Cases and Inquiries

CONSULTATION WITH TWO PARISH PRIESTS IN THE REMOVAL OF A PARISH PRIEST

Augustine Mendonça, JCD

A parish priest was involved in a car accident in which he suffered serious brain injury. After several months of treatment in the hospital he returned to his parish. Physically he looked all right, but his brain injury began to show its effects on his memory. The parishioners began to notice some abnormal behavior in his daily activities and even in the celebration of the Eucharist. They reported the situation to the bishop and the bishop, after ascertaining the facts of how the priest's physical and mental state was affecting his parish ministry, requested him to resign with the assurance that he would be given a ministry that would suit his physical and mental health. The parish priest refused to resign. In the absence of the group of priests that should be constituted by the presbyteral council in the diocese specifically for consultation by the bishop in case of removal

of a parish priest from his office (cf. can. 1742), the bishop discussed the matter with the Priests Personnel Committee in order to issue the decree of removal. But he was reminded of the fact that such an act would be illegitimate if he did not consult the two parish priests from the group constituted by the presbyteral council for this purpose.

In order to clarify this matter, the bishop asks whether the two priests he should consult in case of removal of a parish priest should be "parish priests" in the strict sense or is it sufficient that the Priests Personnel Committee, which includes also some parish priests, is consulted by the bishop to act legitimately in the act of removal of a parish priest from his office?

* * * * *

This is certainly not an isolated case. The relatively large number of cases involving the removal of parish priests decided by the Apostolic Signatura in recent years is indicative of the frequency of the problem faced by many dioceses around the world. The decisions issued by the Signatura provide insightful jurisprudence on diverse aspects related to the removal of parish priests from their office. The case outlined above presents a particular problem, that is, the use of two parish priests specified by law in the decision a diocesan bishop makes in decreeing the removal of a pastor. Because this is an important and interesting issue, I will first delineate the juridic and jurisprudential principles related to this particular requirement of law and then express my view on the questions raised by the bishop.

First of all a bishop should always keep in mind that the law is his best security when he has to make decisions related to the good of all the people entrusted to his care, including parish priests who share so intimately in his pastoral ministry. The decision a bishop makes in removing a parish priest from his office to which he has been legitimately appointed, either indefinitely or for a determined period of time, involves the good of the faithful as well as the fundamental rights of the priest himself. These two are very important values which the law strives to protect and promote in the procedure it provides for the removal of a parish priest from office. The law tries to strike a balance between the promotion of the common good (proper pastoral care of the faithful) and the protection of the rights of the parish priest provided in the canons on procedure for the removal of parish priests. This is evident in the requirement of the law that the bishop consult two parish priests before decreeing the removal of a pastor. This requirement is stated expressly in canon 1742, §1:

If the instruction which was carried out has established the existence of one of the causes mentioned in can. 1740, the bishop is to discuss the matter with two parish priests selected from the group established for this purpose in a stable manner by the presbyteral council at the proposal of the bishop.

The requirement of consulting "two priests" in the removal of a parish priest is not something new in the 1983 Code. In the procedure provided in the 1917 Code for the removal of an irremovable parish priest, for the validity of the decision to be made, the law required of the bishop to consult twice "two [synodal] examiners" before the decree

of removal was issued (*cf.* can. 2148, §1, 2151 and 2153 of *CIC 17*). The same was true also in the process for the removal of movable parish priests and transfer of parish priests (*cf.* can. 2159 and 2165 of *CIC 17*). The importance of this consultation was based on the fact that this was a very important decision affecting the life of a community of the faithful as well as the rights of the parish priest to be removed, therefore it should be made with utmost prudence in consultation with the members of the presbyterium. (See *Communicationes*, 11 [1979], p. 86.) The same theological and juridical reasons underlie the above canon of the present Code.

The legislator has not changed his mind on this matter. This is clear in the evolution of canons 1742, §1 and 1745, 2° during their drafting. Canon 438 of the very first schema of procedural law, which is the predecessor of the present canon 1742, §1, stated that when the bishop has completed the instruction of the case, he is “to discuss” the matter with “two priests, particularly synodal examiners or members of the presbyteral council.” The discussion that ensued on 17 May 1979 resulted in the change of the above phrase to “two diocesan [synodal] examiners.” And the draft canon 441 of the same schema, the predecessor of the present canon 1745, 2°, stipulated that “at the hearing, the two priests mentioned in canon 438 should have the function of assessor [*munus assessoris*], unless others are to be designated in case it is impossible for them to be present.” A later draft in canon 447, mention is made of “two diocesan priests,” to be designated in accord with the norm of canon 438, with whom the bishop must

discuss the reasons for removal. But the draft canon 1718 of the 1980 schema introduced the conciliar principles in the determination of the parish priests who would assist the bishop in making the decision with respect to the removal of a parish priest from his office. This canon said: "If [the instruction which was carried out] has established the existence of the cause mentioned in canon 1716, the bishop is to discuss the matter with two parish priests selected from the group established for this purpose in a stable manner by the presbyteral council at the proposal of the bishop." This formula remained basically unaltered in canon 1766, §1 of the 1982 schema and was promulgated in canon 1742, §1 of the present Code. The same principle was confirmed also in the related canons 1721 of the 1980 schema and 1769 of the 1982 schema, now canon 1745, 2°.

In brief, this *iter* of canons 1742, §1 and 1745, 2° clearly emphasizes the requirement that the bishop must consult or discuss the matter "with two parish priests selected from the group established for this purpose in a stable manner by the presbyteral council at the proposal of the bishop." How are these "two parish priests" designated and how are they to act when asked by the bishop to assist him in making his decision on the removal of a pastor from his office?

First, the bishop has the discretion to choose a number of "parish priests," who belong to the presbyterium of his diocese, to be included in the list which he should submit to the presbyteral council.

Second, the presbyteral council will choose, from the parish priests found in that list, some or all to constitute the group, which will be used by the bishop in case of removal of a parish priest from his office. The bishop has no voice in the constitution of the group itself. The law does not indicate how many should be included in the group. Because it is said in the law that the bishop is to discuss the matter with "two parish priests from the group," it implicitly affirms that the group must consist of more than two members. The presbyteral council's choice is limited to the list of parish priests supplied by the bishop for the purpose. It cannot, on its own, add or subtract from that list.

Third, the choice of the group members from the list by the presbyteral council, because it functions in a collegial manner, must be carried out in accord with the norm of law. Therefore, the council should be formally convoked by its president (can. 166) and the decision concerning each parish priest to be chosen must be made by a majority of those present as determined by the universal law or by the statutes of the council (*cf.* can. 119, 1°).

Fourth, each parish priest thus elected by the presbyteral council must be immediately informed of his being elected as a member of the group in question, and the elected must inform the one presiding over the council whether or not he accepts the election within *eight useful days* after receiving the notification. Otherwise the election has no effect (can. 177, §1). Any irregularity in this procedure might affect the subsequent decision made by the

bishop, as will be illustrated in the example to be described below. The details of the proceedings must be committed to writing in case there is a challenge in the future to the manner in which the council had made its decisions on this particular issue.

Fifth, the parish priests chosen by the bishop for assisting him in making the decision on the removal of a pastor have only a simple consultative task and the decision, whether negative or affirmative, pertains solely to the bishop, which he is to make with utmost prudence and informed conscience.

Sixth, can the parish priest to be removed object to the parish priest or parish priests chosen by the bishop as his advisers in the removal process? For example, if the parish priest to be removed feels that one or both parish priests chosen by the bishop for consultation about his removal from office is or are prejudiced or biased toward him, can he ask the bishop to replace them with some other parish priest(s)? During the revision process it was suggested that this possibility should be available to the parish priest to be removed. There was also another proposal to grant "parish priests advisers" a deliberative vote in the decision to be made concerning the removal of parish priests. Both proposals were brusquely rejected by the Consultors with the statement: "Consultors think that such suggestions must be rejected." (See *Communicationes*, 11 [1979], p. 290, can. 438.) With regard to the possible exception from the parish priest to be removed against one or both "parish priests consultors" on the basis of bias or prejudice, L.

Chiappetta says: "According to my opinion, this is a right he has 'from natural law itself', which the positive law cannot suppress." Therefore, if an exception to the choice of one or both parish priests consultors is raised by the parish priest to be removed and the bishop fails to consider it, the parish priest removed can challenge the decree of removal precisely on this basis.

Seventh, the consultation the bishop has with the two parish priests is not collegial, although the bishop may discuss the matter with them together. For validity, however, the bishop must seek their counsel and not their consent; and he is not to act contrary to the unanimous counsel of the parish priests, unless he has a reason which is overriding (can. 127, §2,2°). The parish priests consultors, on their part, must offer their opinion sincerely and observe secrecy, if the bishop insists on this obligation (can. 127, §3).

Eighth, the details of the discussion the bishop has with the parish priests consultors must be committed to writing at least in summary form, either by one of the parish priests consultors or by the chancellor. This document should be included in the acts of the case.

Ninth, canon 1745, 2° says that, when any necessary instruction is completed, the bishop must consider the matter together with the same parish priests mentioned in canon 1742, §1, unless "others" must be designated in the event it is impossible to have those same parish priests again. The question is: Can the bishop discuss the matter at this second time with two parish priests who do not belong to the group from which the previous two consultors were

chosen? In other words, would it amount to violation of the procedure if the bishop were to choose two parish priests who do not belong to the group? The majority view seems to affirm that the bishop must go back to the group constituted by the presbyteral council for this purpose and choose two parish priests from that group.

Tenth, omission of any of the essential elements required by law to be observed in the removal of parish priests would render the procedure illegitimate due to violation of law in procedure and the parish priest to be removed can legitimately place hierarchic recourse (*cf.* can. 1734-1749); it seems he could also initiate a judicial recourse before the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura (*cf.* can. 1445, §2).

Eleventh, during the *Plenaria* of the Code Commission held 1981, a proposal was made to the effect that the norms of canons 1740-1752 should be extended to all clerics who hold an ecclesiastical office. The reply of the Code Commission was: "This procedure is restricted to parish priests only because of the singular importance of this office. Therefore, it cannot be indiscriminately extended. A common administrative procedure is provided for others." (See *Communicationes*, 16 [1984], pp. 89-90.)

From the above insights we can conclude that the discussion of the matter pertaining to the removal of a parish priest from his office with two parish priests chosen by the bishop from the group of parish priests constituted by the presbyteral council is an important procedural requirement which involves the fundamental rights of the

parish priest to be removed. Therefore, if this discussion or consultation with two parish priests is not done by the bishop, his decree would be invalid and would be open to a challenge through hierarchic recourse. But the jurisprudence of the Apostolic Signatura seems to suggest that the rituals to be observed in the choice of those parish priests may not affect the legitimacy of the decree of removal. This point has been illustrated by the following case recently judged at the Signatura:

A parish priest, who had already completed his seventy fifth year of age and had refused to submit his letter of resignation, was removed from his office for failing to implement the post-conciliar diocesan pastoral plans for the renewal of all parishes of the diocese. He placed recourse against the decree of the diocesan bishop. After futile efforts on the part of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to resolve the problem through compromise, the decree of the bishop was confirmed by the same Congregation. The removed parish priest placed recourse against that decree before the Apostolic Signatura. One of the procedural violations alleged by the advocate of the parish priest was that one of the two parish priests chosen from the group constituted by the presbyteral council for the purpose of consultation in case of removal of parish priests had **not** indicated his acceptance of the election as a member of the group within the time period stipulated by law (can. 177, §1). The Signatura found evidence of proper observance of the procedure on the part of the bishop in consulting the two parish priests. The following statement summarizes the conclusion of the Signatura on this particular point:

It is thus evident that the bishop acted in good faith and without malice in light of the information given to him. If in fact Rev. Savio was not a member of the group—which had not been proved—the error of the bishop is to be attributed to the negligence of the Secretary of the Presbyteral Council who, contrary to the norm of canon 177, §1 (“an election must be communicated immediately”), notified those elected only in July of the election that had taken place in April, and finally he informed the bishop of the matter in October, after the case had already been discussed twice with the two parish priests.

With regard to this matter, we must also keep in mind that, at least in two sentences, the Fathers of this Sacred Tribunal had thought that the irregularities committed in relation to the selection of two parish priests mentioned in canon 1742, §1 are not so serious as to invalidate the entire procedure (*cf.* decisions *c.* Fagiolo, 27 February 1993, Prot. No. 18190/86 CA, and *c.* Stickler, 16 December 1989, Prot. No. 18467/86 CA).

In light of the explanation of all the procedural principles presented above, I am of the opinion that a bishop should discuss in confidence all matters pertaining to the removal of a parish priest from his office only with the two parish priests chosen by him from the group constituted by the presbyteral council in a stable manner for that very purpose. This procedural requirement has a specific purpose, that is, to see that a decision is made with utmost prudence and care for the dignity of the pastor in question and for the good of the community of the faithful. The above

case judged at the Signatura in some sense confirms that a violation of this requirement could risk hierarchic recourse with undesirable consequences for the life of the particular church. Therefore, a bishop should always try to comply with the requirements of law so that he does not have to face unnecessary challenges to the decisions he has to make for the good of his diocese. I am of the opinion that consultation with the Priests Personnel Committee or with any other group or persons on matters related to the removal of a parish priest would not be in conformity with the procedural requirements determined by law.

IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SECULAR INSTITUTE AND A SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC LIFE?

Fr. Javier Gonzalez, O.P.

I am interested in knowing the differences between a Secular Institute and a Society of Apostolic Life. Could you, please, help me to spell them out?

* * * * *

Yes, there are some differences between Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life. Such differences, from the canonical point of view, can be appreciated more closely when comparing the respective definitions of both institutions given by the Code of Canon Law.

A *secular institute* is “an institute of consecrated life in which Christ’s faithful, living in the world, strive for the perfection of charity and endeavour to contribute to the sanctification of the world, especially from within.” (can. 710)

Societies of apostolic life, on the other hand, “resemble institutes of consecrated. Their members, without taking religious vows, pursue the apostolic purpose proper to each society. Living a fraternal life in common in their own special manner, they strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions.” (can. 731 §1)

Therefore, some of the similarities and differences between these two kinds of institutions are the following:

1) Both Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life are *forms of consecrated life* through the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. However, the manner or the way of professing these counsels is not the same: in the Secular Institutes the consecration of their members is carried out through public or semi-public vows, while in the Societies of Apostolic Life there are not public vows in the fashion of the Religious Institutes, but through other “sacred bonds” (promises, etc.) described by the proper constitutions.

2) Both forms of consecrated life practice the evangelical value of fraternity among their members. However, in the case of the Societies of Apostolic Life, that fraternal life is *in common*, that is, they live in community (in fact, in the past they were called “societies of life in common without vows”). This element of “fraternal life in common” is not present in the Secular Institutes, whose members rather live in the world—not in cloisters or convents—either alone, in their families or in fraternal groups, in no way mistakably with the fraternal life in common proper to the Religious Institutes or to the Societies of Apostolic Life. The purpose of living in the world (*in saeculo*) is in order to sanctify it from within, without separation from it or renouncing to what is *secular* or *temporal*: “Like a leaven, they endeavour to permeate everything with an evangelical spirit for the strengthening and growth of the Body of Christ” (can. 713). The details, in line with the respective

charism of each institution, are left to their own Constitutions. In the Secular Institutes, the houses they have are normally used for those in authority, for the sick, for the formation of members, etc., where people live in genuine fraternity, but not a fraternal life *in common*.

3) Regarding their *habit*, each institution has its own peculiarities, described in their respective Constitutions. Certainly the members of Secular Institutes, since they live in the world, do not wear a habit, nor oftentimes any distinctive external sign, although it is not forbidden by the Code of Canon Law.

4) Regarding *incardination* and their *dependence from the diocesan Bishop*, the members of Secular Institutes can enjoy a double incardination and, correlatively, a double form or manner of dependence from the diocesan Bishop: They may be either incardinated *in a diocese*—which is the most common and favored form by the law—and are subject to the diocesan Bishop, or incardinated *in the institute*, particularly those who are appointed to works proper to the institute or to the governance of the institute, in which case they are subject to the Bishop in the same way as religious; this norm is not measurable nor equally applicable *a priori* to all cases, which are always particular. Clerical members incardinated in a diocese are subject to the diocesan Bishop, except for whatever concerns the consecrated life of their own institutes.

5) Regarding their own form of *governance*, the respective constitutions are to determine it. (They are to

determine, for instance, the period of time for which Moderators exercise their office and the manner in which they are to be designated.) This is done obviously in accordance with the nature of each institute or society, and in conformity with the universal law of the Church (cf. Can. 717 and 734).

February – March ‘07

Sunday Homilies

<p>FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – LK 5, 1-11 February 4, 2007</p>
--

Pro-Life Sunday

Teachings:

1. Today's Gospel passage is usually entitled "The Miraculous catch of fish."
2. In the New Jerome Bible Handbook (NJBH) it is called "Positive response to Jesus' kingdom message."
3. In Luke's scheme, this passage is also "The Call of the First Disciples." Compare it with Mt 4, 18-22 and Mk 1, 16-20. In these latter passages, there is no miraculous catch of fish. It is simply Jesus' invitation, "Follow me," that moves Simon (Peter) and Andrew, James and John (sons of Zebedee) to become disciples of Jesus. But in Luke the deciding factor is the moving experience of a miracle.

4. In Luke's story, too, attention is focused on Simon. It is from Simon's boat that Jesus teaches. It is Simon who dialogues with Jesus. It is Simon who falls at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." And it is to Simon that Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching people."

Values: (*In Bibliarasal groups, Sharing can be done on these points*).

1. "The people pressed on him... Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from land." – Value of finding a practical solution so that one is not pressed on by people and yet not distancing oneself too much from them.
2. "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." – Value of trusting the Master's superior knowledge.
3. "Do not be afraid." – Value of casting fear aside due to the presence of a person who is in control. – Recall how these words influenced the papacy of Pope John Paul II.
4. "They left all and followed him." – Value of letting a miracle move oneself to become a follower of Jesus.

Sample Homily: Search for a Philippine Guru

Following their penchant for imitating what Uncle Sam Americans do, Filipinos in showbiz have mounted a search for the "Philippine Idol," imitating the USA search for "the American idol." Even fundamentalist

Evangelicals who usually raise a ruckus because of the popular devotion shown by Catholics to Mary and the saints have not raised objections against such a search. It seems that idolatry is limited to statues and not to living beings. One can have idols as long as these idols can see, can breathe, can sing.

But what we really need is not a breathing or even singing idol. We need a guru, a teacher. Preferably, this guru should teach us from Simon Peter's boat, that is, the papal office. Jesus today teaches us through the Gospels and through the Popes who apply the teachings of the Gospels to the situations of our times.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME –

LK 6, 17. 20-26

February 11, 2007

World Day of the Sick

Teachings:

1. Today's Gospel reading has three parts: (a) An introduction informing us that Jesus came down from a higher place to "a stretch of level ground," v. 17; (b) Four Beatitudes, vv. 20-23; (c) Four Woes, vv. 24-26.
2. In the New Jerome Bible Handbook (NJBH) the selection comes under "The gathering of the New Israel".
3. Luke is teaching his readers how Jesus established the "New Israel" by first selecting twelve leaders (*See* Lk 6, 12-16) and with these leaders he goes down to level ground to teach the need for the "old Israel"—the Pharisees—to change their attitudes if they are to become truly God's new people.
4. In contrast to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Luke's Sermon on the Plain is more down to earth and more appealing to Christian people whose background is not Judaism but Graeco-Roman or Hellenistic culture.

Values: (*In Bibliarasal groups, Sharing can be done on these points*).

1. "A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the

coastal region of Tyre and Sidon" (part of Phoenicia, not Palestine) "came to hear him and be healed of their diseases." – Value of having a wide, international appeal. – Value of seeking Jesus as Healer.

2. Luke gives importance to only four, not seven or eight Beatitudes: Being poor, being hungry now, being in mourning now, being persecuted on account of Jesus. *These are presented as Gospel Values.*
3. "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy," in anticipation of the full coming of the Kingdom of God. – Value of having entered the Kingdom of God (by being part of the Christian community).

Sample Homily: Jesus' Message to the Poor and the Rich

While Matthew speaks quite abstractly about "the poor in spirit," Luke speaks concretely of "you poor," that is, the crowd of people following him and listening to his teachings. Today's Gospel passage does not speak theoretically but addresses people who have become followers of Jesus. Most of these people were materially poor. But there were also well to do people who shared their wealth with others to the point of becoming "poor" themselves. It is not a question here of individual poverty but collective poverty. And it is not a question of that poverty that reduces people to becoming needy. Rather, it is a question of sharing goods so that no one is lacking in the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter.

Pope Benedict XVI said as much in his first Encyclical Letter, "Deus Caritas Est." He said: "Communion (*koinonia*)

consists in the fact that believers hold all things in common and among them there is no longer any distinction between rich and poor. As the Church grew, this radical form of material communion could not in fact be preserved. But its essential core remained: within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life” (N. 20).

More briefly, the Pope said: “The Church is God’s family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life” (N. 25).

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME –

LK 6, 27-36

February 18, 2007

Last Sunday before Lent

Teachings:

1. Today's Gospel passage is part of Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" and treats one of Luke's favorite topics, *Love of One's Enemies*.
2. The corresponding material in Matthew comes under two headings, "Teaching about Retaliation" (Mt 5, 38-42) and "Love of Enemies" (Mt 5, 43-48).
3. Luke's periscope contains the **Golden Rule** (see Mt 7, 12): "Do to others as you would have them do to you." Luke gives to it the context of love whereas in Matthew it seems like an afterthought. Those people who are called "tax collectors" by Matthew are simply called "sinners" by Luke.
4. Some memorable verses in Matthew are missing in Luke, namely: "Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles" (Mt 5, 41); "Your heavenly Father makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5, 45).
5. Both Luke and Matthew agree that the reason for Christian charity is being the child of a heavenly Father: "you will be children of the Most High for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked"

(Lk 6, 35 b); “that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise...” (see above, n. 4).

6. Whereas Matthew concludes saying, “Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5, 48), Lk says, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6, 36).

Values. (*In Bibliarasal groups, Sharing can be done on these points*).

1. For Luke, there are three basic ways of loving one’s enemies: [a] “do good to those who hate you;” [b] “bless those who curse you;” [c] “pray for those who mistreat you.” – Theoretically, it is very hard to do these things. But we are enabled to do them by example and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Or one may say that these become possible when we are moved by the Holy Spirit. It is good to hear testimonies of people who have been so moved.
2. The Golden Rule is expressed positively in the Gospels. Wise teachers of China and other countries and peoples have expressed it in negative terms: “Do not do unto others what you do not want them to do unto you.” – Not doing something may prove that you are a wise man. ***But it is when you do an act of charity that you prove you are a Christian.***
3. Striving for perfection (Matthew) and seeking to be merciful (Luke) are in themselves different values. But in a person’s life—as in the life of St. Faustina Kowalska—they can converge to become one’s life project.

Sample Homily: From Mercy to Mercy

Today, the last Sunday before Lent, the Gospel passage invites us to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” After Lent and Easter Sunday, the theme of God’s Mercy will again be presented to us on the Second Sunday of Easter, which has become “Divine Mercy Sunday,” thanks to Pope John Paul II, of happy memory.

There was once an earthly father who did not know how to be merciful to his own brother, a priest, nor to his own son, his firstborn. Both had offended him grievously, in his perception. His priest brother attempted many times to reconcile with him, but to no avail—until this priest finally died without the desired reconciliation. Mr. Earthly Father did not bother to show any remorse.

Then it was Mr. Earthly Father’s turn to be on his death bed. When he was admitted to a hospital, his thoughts were far from getting reconciled with his first born son. But, wonder of wonders, after a few days, he called for Mr. Firstborn and embraced him, and said, “I love you, my son.” Both of them were in tears.

What happened? The secret weapon was the Divine Mercy chaplet propagated by St. Faustina Kowalska. You see, I’m telling you the story of my own father and my uncle and my elder brother. When papa was admitted to the hospital, I was teaching a class of Sisters. I brought them to the hospital, and around papa’s bed we prayed the chaplet of Divine Mercy. I also had a class of seminarians. To the hospital they also went with me to pray

the chaplet. Every time I visited my father, I prayed the chaplet with whoever was in the room. I also left leaflets of the prayer for other visitors to pray.

My dad had a beautiful death. Somehow, one afternoon, my other brothers and my sisters (we were six in all) had the premonition that it was going to be papa's last night, although he was not at all in agony. We all went to his room. We recalled mama and the good old days. We said our goodbyes. I went home to my room. My three sisters stayed with papa. Early next morning, one of my sisters called to say papa had gone. He died without any struggle. I hurriedly went to the hospital. Papa's body was still warm. I put on him a scapular of the Divine Mercy and invited those in the room to pray.

When papa was buried, he still had the scapular of Divine Mercy on him. It was his guarantee that when he reached the pearly gates, St. Peter will usher him to the throne of Divine Mercy.

FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.

ASH WEDNESDAY – MT 6:1-6, 16-18
February 21, 2007

Tis' the Season to be Jolly! It's Lent!

Cuaresma is the unfortunate word which the Filipinos by force of habit calls "The Lenten Season". To them Lent is such a gloomy time so that anyone who appears to them with a long face, is customarily described as a person with a "Cuaresma face" ("Mukhang Cuaresma"). The great majority of Filipinos regard *Cuaresma* as simply a number—the forty days when they prepare themselves for the most solemn day of Jesus' crucifixion and death: Good Friday. Most probably, this attitude is rooted on the Filipinos' penchant for the melodramatic. As a people, we have a share of the world's sorrows all right, but when tragedy hits us we tend to prolong the gloom in its wake to the hilt. Look at our soap operas, they are all tears. The leading characters to express their sadness are not content to cry, they wail. They flood their eyes with tears. They truly cry a river. There is nothing wrong with accepting defeat and the sadness it brings, but to celebrate it as though we as a nation are headed to misery all the time, and to nothing more, is tragic indeed. It hurts when we laugh as we observe how we celebrate civil holidays reminding us of our "national falls"—the Fall of Corregidor, the Fall of Bataan, the Fall of Tirad Pass, etc., etc. Instead of immortalizing the courage of our heroes, we seem to memorialize more our defeats as though these "falls" prove right the name we bear as a nation from the very beginning: Juan de la Cruz. Should

not our name challenge us to victory since the cross is meaningless without the resurrection of Jesus? We celebrate Good Friday only because it is inseparably united with Easter Sunday. Our Lenten observance should not bring us to Good Friday alone but to Easter Sunday—beyond death and suffering indeed!

There is no wonder that the Gospel-Reading for Ash Wednesday emphasizes the spirit which should animate our acts of sacrifice: fast and abstinence, prayer and other tokens of devotion, alms-giving. In the midst of the pain these acts of sacrifice entail, we should practice them all with a happy heart. Happiness is, after all, the promise which true religion hopes to fulfill. A sad religion is sad indeed! Christianity preaches the cross with its joyous consequence: resurrection. Happiness—a never ending one—is what Christianity is all about. But this happiness is not cheap. It is never attained without sweat and toil, otherwise, it will be reduced simply into frivolity, which as teen-agers would say, born out of “gimmick”. There is no shortcut to heaven—only the long and narrow way: the Way of the Cross.

The discipline that we undertake during Lent—fast and abstinence, prayer and almsgiving—are modest acts of sacrifice which when offered wholeheartedly become religious acts which strengthen our bond with God. God will be touched by these offerings. Only when they are done for a show that God will reject them since they are done out of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is originally a Greek word which has an innocent meaning: stage performance. So, what is wrong with “hypocrisy”? Nothing. There is nothing wrong with stage performance so long as it is

done in a legitimate theater. But in the Church? There is no room for stage performance in the Church because everything there is done for real. Religious worship and the sacrificial offerings it entails demand that all these are rooted in the heart. God sees and judges the heart and accepts only what is offered wholeheartedly. Otherwise, even God will become a player in a stage show. That is entertainment. That is not religion.

Thus, the beginning of Lent presents to us a truly realistic backdrop to understand the happiness which Christianity as an authentic religion promises to give us—not a happiness brought by frivolities and cheap escapades, but an eternal life brought by genuine love—a self-sacrifice which does not end with death on the cross but with the triumph of resurrection. The imposition of the ashes is a penitential act which symbolizes our recognition of our mortality, which for being a humble act, cries out to God for mercy. God never despises a humble and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). A person with this kind of heart is never far from God. Salvation to him is near. Happiness has already started to enter into his experience even if paradoxically, he feels from the depths of his heart the pain of his mortality. This is indeed the experience of “Lent”, an old Anglo-Saxon word, which originally means “spring”. Springtime, happy time—the blooming of our mortal being into the likeness of God who came to teach us the way to eternal happiness: from the cross to resurrection. With the experience of this “Spring”, the Eucharistic Preface of Lent invites us to give thanks and praise to God during this “joyful season” of Lent. So, take off that long face! *Bawal ang mukhang cuaresma sa cuaresma!*

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – LK 4:1-13

MIGRANTS' SUNDAY

February 25, 2007

The Constitution of the Kingdom

It is easy to tell a lie. To tell a lie is our most common temptation and the devil, himself an expert liar, muster all his talents to bring man to fall into this temptation. He did this successfully to Adam and Eve and he thought he could do it again with the Son of Man. Jesus, however, proved to be a tough case. He was convinced of his redemptive mission. Not even the most intense hunger can dissuade him from its fulfillment. Not even the offer of a kingdom—this world with all its wealth and power—can make him turn against his Father and build a kingdom not in accord with the eternal plan. To succumb to the devil's lie is to end his earthly life in misery and with this, the second but more tragic fall of man as a consequence. With Adam's sin, man became unhappy. Only with Jesus will man become happy again.

The devil presented to Jesus the lie which man daily meets in this earthly life: Besides this material world, there is no other kingdom to hope for, there is nothing more to expect. Death is the final period, no more, no less. For this reason, only one thing is necessary: to belong and to survive successfully in this world. The devil presented to Jesus an effective strategy to integrate himself with this new plan: be a political king, be an

economic wizard. Jesus' hunger and thirst did not bring him to hallucination. The truth was clear to his mind even if the devil's offer was indeed powerful enough to blind the ordinary man's vision of his destiny. But Jesus is not an ordinary man. He is the "Word made flesh", the wisdom himself (Jn 1:14). The devil's guile was no match to this wisdom personified. Jesus right from the start presented the argument that won him the case: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him" (Lk 4:8). One may have all the wealth and power of this world but if he is not with God, man will be miserable still. No wealth, no power can indeed buy happiness for man. Only God can make man happy.

Only the Kingdom of God promises man genuine happiness. The real meaning of happiness finds its explanation in the basic constitution of this Kingdom: *The Beatitudes* (Mt 5:2-12/Lk 6:20-26). *The Beatitudes* defines for us albeit in an outline form who are truly happy: the ones who find favor with God. And the ones whom God favors, believe it or not, are the poor. Why? Because they are the most neglected sector in the kingdom of man. Politics and economics are indifferent to the poor. In the hands of the rich and the powerful, the principles of economics and politics may be so used that the socially elite may remain permanently in their privileged position. Hence, there is only one principle that rules the kingdom of man: the first will forever be the first, the last will forever be the last. With this principle, nothing changes. Funny, the more we attempt to change the political and economic system of our society, the more it becomes the same. The only change that we see in the so-called

political and economic revamp is change of faces but their names sound the same: they all belong to same political clan, the same political party and the same political plan: "The first will forever be the first, and the last will forever be the last". The ultimate hope rests only on the Kingdom of God. When we examine carefully *The Beatitudes* as the constitution of this Kingdom, we will discover its basic dynamics: "The last will be the first, and the first will be the last" (Mk 10:31). There is indeed a radical revamp when the Kingdom of God is finally fulfilled. God will be the liberator of the ever neglected sector of the society—the poor—and woe to the rich, woe to the powerful! (Lk 6:24-26) But will there be no possibility of salvation for them? Nothing is impossible with God (Mk 10:27). *The Beatitudes* is a universal constitution. It includes everybody as prospective citizen of this Kingdom. The rich and the powerful can become "poor in spirit". They can abandon their privileged position and use their power and wealth to the service of the poor. Doing this, they align themselves with the poor and thus, join the ranks of the "poor in spirit", who too, are included among the "happy ones" of *The Beatitudes* (Mt 5:3). Jesus never tells a lie. He is the absolute opposite of the devil. He preached only the truth when he proclaimed: "The Kingdom of God is at hand!" (Mt 4:17) Yes, it is true, the Kingdom of God is near to us all—the "poor" and the "poor in spirit" alike!

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – LK 9:28B-36

March 4, 2007

Transfiguration

There is no shortcut to success. The road to victory is paved with sweat and at times, with blood. No pain, no glory. Peter, John and James had to learn the hard way this message. They, each one according to his appointed hour, would have to share with Jesus the bitter cup (Mk 10:39). Like Jesus, they all would die for their faith. Certainly, they would not be able to handle all the difficulties of Jesus' way—the narrow way—without the grace of God. Only with the grace of God can indeed man find Jesus' yoke easy and his burden light (Mt 11:30). Without this grace, all prescriptions of the law and all predictions of the prophecy will never be fulfilled. Minus Jesus, Moses and Elijah would only appear on the mountain as foreboding presence of condemnation and despair. Is there anything more ominous than the presence of a lawgiver like Moses who gives you a standard of behavior far beyond human moral capability and yet fails to give you the corresponding inner strength to fulfill it? Will you find hope in the words of a prophet who tells the utmost happiness of heaven, only to tell you in the end, that such heaven is beyond man's reach? The transfiguration of Jesus in the company of Moses and Elijah is an unspeakable consolation not only to Peter, John and James. The transfiguration of Jesus anticipates for us the joy we will all experience if we live

persevering in grace until our end. This grace is fellowship with God, communion with God, friendship with God. But fellowship with Jesus is definitely not an easy task. It means sharing with Jesus' bitter cup. Peter, John and James wanted to avoid this cup and therefore planned to stay permanently in the experience of an anticipated heaven in the Transfiguration of Jesus. They proposed to build tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. But Jesus had another plan. The Mountain of Transfiguration was not the only mountain waiting for them in Israel. Way beyond was another high place: Golgotha.

It would take Peter, John and James a long time to understand the meaning of Transfiguration. Only after Pentecost, when they already possess the principle of grace—the Holy Spirit—would they discover in retrospect the infallible link that bound the Mountain of Transfiguration and Golgotha together. There could be no transfiguration without crucifixion. From this crucifixion flows the grace of God which opens to man who became the enemy of God by his sin, the possibility of friendship with God once again. This grace is free all right but is never cheap. It has its own demands which requires man to abide by this friendship not only in good times but likewise in bad, not only in success but likewise in failure, not only in pleasure but likewise in pain, not only in glory but likewise in suffering. Transfiguration had become a reality to Peter, John and James not during its exact occurrence in their lives, when they saw the glory of Jesus flanked by the Lawgiver Moses and the Prophet Elijah, on his sides. It was during the time of their suffering for their faith when finally they shared

the bitter cup which Jesus himself drank that they understood fully well the mystery of Jesus' Transfiguration. There, in times of persecution, at the moment of martyrdom, they realized completely what transfiguration was really about. It was not so much the glorious change of appearance as much as the absolute transformation of their hearts to God. This too will be our transfiguration. We will only be transfigured when we turn away from sin and return to the Gospel, when we abandon the life of sin and embrace the life of grace, when finally, without reservations, without "ifs" and "buts", we wholeheartedly commit ourselves to God to live and die for him.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – LK 13:1-9

March 11, 2007

The “Grace Period”

The Jews of Jesus’ time were accustomed to read the will of God in disasters and calamities. Not really very different from us, Filipinos. We interpret catastrophes—natural or otherwise—as signs of an avenging God. We regard the tragedies that happen in our lives as a punishment that come from heaven. We sinned, therefore, God condemned us. Jesus rejected this kind of interpretation. Some Galileans were victims of Pilate’s atrocious revenge. They were murdered in the wake of the Governor’s order and immediately the popular opinion circulated that God allowed this to happen because those Galileans were sinners. It was heaven’s justice, so to speak. Jesus presented the contrary position. Instead of agreeing at this widely accepted opinion, he cautioned his countrymen not to judge rashly. In fact, in matters of conscience, only God can make a true judgment on man’s interior dispositions. Who is a sinner, who is a saint is matter outside the narrow vision of man. Only God has the ability of penetrating gaze that reaches into the depths of the human heart. So, why we, human and, therefore, fallible are prone to rash judgment?

Jesus instead of condemning those Galileans brought his listeners’ attention to an attitude which we hardly have for sinners. He spoke in a parable—the case of a fig tree

which for a long while did not bear any fruit. The gardener begged the owner of the vineyard to be patient and allow him for a period of one year to care for the fig tree. The gardener is actually asking his master for a "grace period". Jesus is like this gardener who is so merciful he does not want sinners to die without benefiting from the great mercy of the Father. He knows that man is a sinner but notwithstanding his sinfulness, man still wears a heart of flesh, which for being soft, is permeable to the working of grace. Grace is more original than sin. In his original plan, God created man in the state of grace and not in the state of sin. Man has fallen, it is true, but God's plan remains the same: grace will eventually win over sin. Goodness is stronger than evil and man is not as hard hearted as the devil who in pride will never repent for his sin. That is why God became man for us—we are not like the devil who once he makes an evil decision cannot have a change of heart. Devils cannot and do not repent. We, humans, on the other hand, are creatures of time and granted the "grace period", can recant our sinful decision and begin following the right path. We indeed have the possibility of repentance and conversion of heart! For this reason, God became man and with Jesus, grace entered into time so that in time grace will finally win over us. That is how lucky we are. We are weaker than angels all right, but precisely in our weakness, there, we find our strength. Our weakness never fails to attract the abundant mercy of God.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – LK 15:1-3, 11-32
March 18, 2007

The Prodigal

The Gospel-Reading for this Sunday is a parable of Jesus which has gone down into history with a popular title: **The Prodigal Son**. But if we look in the English dictionary what “prodigal” means it will point to “some-one who is reckless in giving”. As the parable goes, it seems that the father was in fact more prodigal than his youngest son. He was so reckless in giving that he granted the claim of the youngest son to inheritance way ahead of time. In the Philippine setting, it would be considered grossly inappropriate, not to say utterly insulting, for a child to ask for his inheritance while his parents are still alive. In this parable, the Father did not only grant his son’s request, he let him go and do whatever he wished with his newfound wealth. The Father was indeed reckless in giving and therefore, should be called “prodigal” with reasons which apply more to the Father than to the youngest son. This prodigality of the Father must have made so much an impact on the elder brother that he could not help but put his Father to the task. He demanded an explanation why after all the misdemeanor of his younger brother, the Father still accepted him back as though nothing had happened. The Father’s explanation can be summed up with just one pointed statement: “Your brother whom everybody calls “prodigal”

is my son!" This answer had a tremendous lesson to teach the elder brother. He too should learn how to be "prodigal". The elder brother begrudged the grand banquet the Father threw on his younger brother's return while nothing of that sort was shown to express appreciation of his faithful service. In showing his resentment, the elder brother had revealed a hidden attitude. He was serving the Father all right but in a calculated, self-seeking way. He was not self-forgetful in giving. Indeed, he was not "prodigal".

Jesus taught us how to be "prodigal" in forgiving our brother. He answered Peter's question "How many times must I forgive my brother?" by upholding mercy without measure. "Seventy times seven" was not actually statistics but a figure of speech referring to infinity (Mt 18:22). Truly, we should not make an accounting of our brother's failures in the same measure that God does not make an accounting of our own. Does he not make the sun shine and the rain fall to sinners and saints alike? (Mt 5: 45) If so, why can we not do the same? After all, the one asking for mercy and forgiveness is our own brother? Can we reject him and deny him acceptance? The fact is we cannot deny our brother since our relationship in mutual fraternity is imposed by providence and not by our own volition. A brother is a brother whether we like it or not. The realistic attitude of the Father in the parable is a lesson to learn and practice. His youngest son, no matter how "prodigal" was still his son. This explains why the Father could not but forgive him. Thus, contrite for his sin, the youngest son gained acceptance once more in his Father's household. Should not the

elder brother be similarly forgiving to his younger brother? Good or bad, the fact would forever remain: the Prodigal Brother was his brother.

Jesus in the “Parable of the Prodigal Son” has taught us one most practical and realistic lesson in life: we forgive as we are forgiven. We are all brothers to one another and from this fact, we cannot escape. So, instead of denying the reality of our brother, no matter how sinful he has become, we face the truth on its face: “He is my brother. Disowning him will not make him any less my brother. So, let me make a virtue out of necessity. In the name of the Father, who treated us all alike as his children, let me then forgive and accept back my brother.”

With this recklessness in giving, we can all become “The Prodigal Son”!

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – JN 8:1-11

March 25, 2007

When Justice is Mercy

Strange. Here came a group of prominent citizens—the Scribes and the Pharisees—with a criminal case on their hands, so immense that it was punishable by death, and how did Jesus face them? Like a child playing with his fingers. While this group was making their accusation, Jesus was scribbling something on the ground. Was it just a way of amusing himself to escape from the drudgery of encountering another inconsistencies from his usual adversaries: the Scribes and the Pharisees? The greatest of these inconsistencies involved the pot calling the kettle black. The case presented to Jesus was indeed during those times a heinous crime: adultery. The people who brought the adulterous woman to Jesus had hands itching to implement the capital punishment: stone her to death. But wait, Jesus instead of resolving the case right away, playfully did some writings on the ground. What was he scribbling—a joke? One medieval scholar thought otherwise. He opined that Jesus was writing on the ground “The Ten Commandments”. In the backdrop of “The Ten Commandments”, could anyone in this group of accusers claim himself innocent of any crime? Had anyone of them guilt-free from any violation of even a single of these commandments?

Whether we agree or not at this scriptural commentary, the fact remains that Jesus was not at all taking seriously

this group of accusers. Why would he? Similar cases deserve similar treatment. Here is a case where if you grant a resolution to one, you have to grant the same resolution to all. The wedge argument indeed! So, what would happen as a consequence? All of them—the accused and the accusers—should be put to death. Jesus would not allow all this blood to spill. So, he presented the only resolution to the case: *mercy*. Begrudgingly or not, the crowd who came as accusers left without a single stone thrown to the accused. If they had done their sinister plan, they would just kill themselves. They would be throwing the stones not to the adulterous woman but to heaven and those stones would in turn fall on them and kill them just the same. Thanks be to God, Jesus' mercy won the day. The life of the adulterous woman was spared and hopefully, her accusers learned another lesson of compassion from Jesus.

The encounter of Jesus with the adulterous woman and her accusers was a lesson of justice. In God, justice and mercy have met. For God's justice is mercy; and his mercy, justice. In the long run, all of us will enter heaven under the title of mercy. Lahat ng papasok sa langit ay pasang-awa. We will be forgiven because we forgive. Indeed, the people of heaven has just one name—"The Forgiven"—because, here, there is only one reason why they were allowed to enter: They had forgiven and they had been forgiven. In heaven, mercy indeed lives forever!

FR. ENRICO GONZALES, O.P.



PHILIPPINE POSTAL CORPORATION
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Liwasang Bonifacio
1000 Manila

Permit No. Old
Date Granted June 21, 1946

SWORN STATEMENT
CLARENCE VICTOR

The undersigned Fr. MARQUEZ, OP business manager XXXXXX
publisher of BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS (title of publication) 6 issues/year
frequency of issue English, Filipino in which printed at UST Publishing House
office of publication Boletin Eclesiastico entered as 2nd Class (first, second and/or third
class) office of entry UST Post Office, Mla. after having duly sworn to in accordance with law, hereby
submit the following statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by act 2580 as
Amended by Commonwealth Act 201.

ADDRESS

Editor Fr. ROLANDO DE LA ROSA, OP
Managing Editor na
Business Manager Fr. CLARENCE VICTOR MARQUEZ, OP
Owner UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
Publisher UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
Office of Publication UST BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO

If publication is owned by a corporation, stockholders owning one percent or more of the amount
of stocks na

Bond holders, mortgage or other security holders owning one percent or more of the total amount
of Security na

In case of daily publication average number of copies printed and circulated of each issue during
the preceding month of na

1. Sent to paid subscribers na
2. Sent to others than paid subscribers na
- Total na

In case of publication other than daily total number of copies printed and circulated at the last
issue date September-October 2006

1. Sent to paid subscribers 580 copies
2. Sent to other than paid subscribers 220 copies
- Total 800 copies

OFFICIAL MAIL PERMIT
The undersigned Fr. CLARENCE VICTOR MARQUEZ, OP
Designation and Signature
(Business Manager)
SUBSCRIBED AND SIGNED TO, before me this SEP 27 2006 200 in
The City of Manila, Province of Manila exhibiting to me his/her Community Certificate
No. 16798334 dated Manila on Jan 14, 2006

ATTY. LEONARDO SYJOCO
NOTARY PUBLIC
Person Administer Oath
UNTIL DEC. 31, 2006
PTR NO. MLA-4556789
MLA. Jan. 05, 2006

Doc. No. 463
Page No. 70
Book No. XIII
Series of 2006

FILE COPY

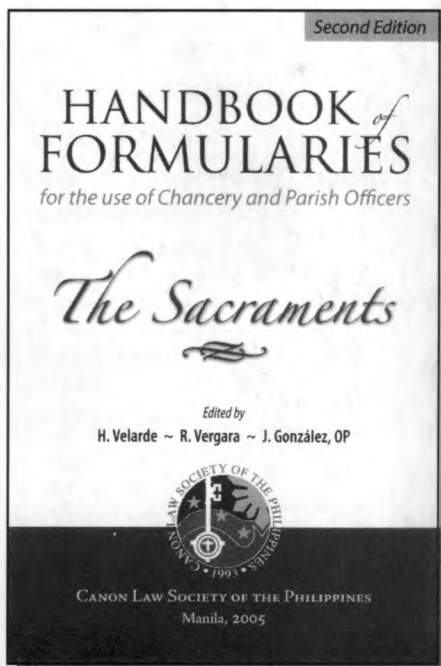
ATTENTION: Chancellors and Parish Priests

Do you need to prepare various forms and documents, like:

- ☐ Certificate of Baptism ...
- ☐ Permission to Baptize in a private house ...
- ☐ Authorization to correct or change entry in baptismal registry ...
- ☐ Declaration of parenthood by an unwed mother or father ...
- ☐ Appointments to / Removal from Offices ...
- ☐ Transfer of Parish Priest ...
- ☐ Profession of Faith / Oath Taking ...
- ☐ Penal Procedures ...
- ☐ Other prescribed forms for the different Sacraments ...?

The **HANDBOOK OF FORMULARIES**, published by the Canon Law Society of the Philippines (CLSP), contains 170 ready-made formularies covering the above list and other forms related to the Sacraments. It also carries succinct explanations of pertinent canons and procedures.

It is in the spirit of service that CLSP has come out with this expanded second edition of the "*Book of Formularies*." Indeed a very practical handbook for Chancellors and Parish Priests.



Second Edition
Soft board cover, with flaps
Bookpaper inside
294 pp.; 6" x 9"

Price per copy: PhP 250.00
(Plus mailing expenses)

Address all orders and inquiries to:

CLSP SECRETARIAT
Room 312, 3/F CBCP Building
470 General Luna Street
Intramuros 1002 Manila
Telefax: (63-2) 523-5301
E-mail: cbcpcanonlaw@yahoo.com

FACULTY OF CANON LAW
University of Santo Tomas
España Blvd. 1015 Manila
Telefax: 731-4066
E-mail: ecclesia@mnl.ust.edu.ph