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EDITORIAL

Nothing Safe to Eat

ROLANDO V. DE LA ROSA, OP

Food has become, not only scarce, but also unsafe. Beef is contaminated with mad-cow disease, pork with foot-and-mouth disease; vegetables and fish are laced with formaline; softdrinks and juices are preserved with carcinogenic chemicals; and fruits are sprayed with insecticides. Rice appears safe, but who knows? Having been genetically "improved," the rice on our table might contain genetically modified organisms eating us alive.

Isn't it ironic, that while we have succeeded in exploring the vast outer space and have found cures for many diseases, we still cannot provide ourselves with food safe to eat? Where is science leading us? With unbridled experimentations going on, all in the name of progress and the perfection of the human race, scientists might be just speeding up instead, the species' extinction. Notice how movies and contemporary literature prefer to describe civilization's technological failures rather than its achievements. This is symptomatic of our disillusion-

ment with science. Or, to be precise, not with science, but its use by unscrupulous practitioners.

The exponential growth of discoveries gave scientists, especially in industrialized countries, a staggering amount of power at their disposal. But it also bred the arrogance to use such power in a way that is dictated by on profits, not ethics. Many scientists aspire, not only to liberate mankind from the tyranny of physical nature, but also to design and invent a *substitute* for nature. In their desire to enhance human life, they are now overhauling it through chemical and genetic transmutations. They want to build a better world, so they have altered many ecological processes leading to sudden, extreme, and often violent changes in the global ecosystem. They thought of improving human intelligence and communication, so they have invented a virtual network that has trivialized words and commercialized meaning and values. All diseases must be eradicated, so they created "cures" whose unforeseen negative side-effects sometimes reach epidemic proportions.

Every day, new scientific processes are being designed to produce a desired effect. But such processes, once put in operation, acquire a life of their own. They work uncontrollably in accordance with their actual construction irrespective of whether or not they correctly realize the purposes of their maker. In other words, despite the ingenuity and skill of scientists, these processes defy effective human control. How many medical breakthroughs, for instance, led to diseases which, until now remain irremediable?

A professor of molecular biology in England once asked this rhetorical question: "Do people have the right to have children at all?" He answered somewhat dreamily: "It would not be difficult for a government to put something into our food so that nobody should have children. They could provide another chemical that would reverse the effect of the first. Only people licensed to bear children would be given this second chemical." Is this not frightening? Scientists will, in the future, decide who shall live and who shall die; which country shall flourish and which shall disappear from the map; which race shall perpetuate and which shall become extinct.

Max Scheler once wrote: "We realize nowadays that our mastery over things has been an illusion. We cannot dominate nature without destroying or at least, impairing ourselves." Scientists who play God eventually become inhuman. As always, the poor defenseless people living in Third World countries bear the brunt of such inhumanity.

FEATURES

Population: Consumer and Food Producer

†ANGEL LAGDAMEO

Do we have rice crisis or price crisis or both? What is the real situation? There seems to be at the same time some problem of accountability, transparency and credibility! NFA rice is at 18 pesos while commercial rice is at almost 40 pesos. A big problem for the poor! And the Philippines, once upon a time a rice granary in Asia, is now the top importer of rice.

Who is to blame for this crisis? What is the solution to this problem? One answer we are hearing these days is: blame the crisis on our growing population; and therefore there is need for a program of population control.

It is both an economic and moral problem. I would like to quote the answer of a young city councilor from Olongapo under the *Kapatiran Party,* John Carlos de los Reyes. What he courageously and insightfully said can be applied to the problem of rice and food sufficiency. John

Carlos de los Reyes in a convention on the Family held in Cebu said: "The root social problem of our nation is not over-population but massive, enslaving poverty. Philippine poverty cannot be the result of a growing population, but rather the outcome of corruption in both government and business sector.... We are poor not because we are many, but because a few wittingly or unwittingly deprive our kababayans of opportunities to prosper..."

Graft and corruption, not population growth is the major cause of our crisis. Already as of December 2004, the National Statistics Office had projected a population growth rate of 1.99% and not 2.36% as being insisted upon. In fact, the country is already experiencing a decline in the number of births. Population is expanding, but the expansion is not caused by "uncontrolled births" but rather by the elderly population being more healthy and living longer than before. Improved health situation results also in higher survival rates of the new born.

To solve the disproportion between increasing population and decreasing food supply, the fallacious solution is cut down the population. However, Pope John XXIII in his Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra* (no. 189) had proposed the empowerment and education of the same population to solve the problem of decreasing food supply: "The real solution is to be found in a renewed scientific and technical effort on man's part to deepen and extend his dominion over the earth." ... so as to produce sufficient food. Babies therefore are presently consumers, but they are also future food producers. Babies are not liabilities only but are

future assets to replace the present generation and to support our senior citizens.

Is the Catholic Church against population control? No. Rather the Church continues to advocate natural family planning as the morally acceptable way of practicing responsible parenthood. But the Church objects to the use of artificial contraception, such as the use of abortifacients, contraceptive devises, abortion and sterilization. Artificial contraception is wrong not because the Catholic Church forbids them; rather the Church forbids them because they are morally wrong: they violate the creative power of God and destroy the natural fruitfulness of human reproductive capacity.

Pope Benedict XVI, when as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger he was President of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith had said: "God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being. Human procreation requires on the part of spouses responsible collaboration with the fruitful love of God" His predecessor, Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* had condemned abortion, euthanasia and genocide as supreme dishonor to the Creator of life.

To conclude: in the present rice crisis or price crisis of food supply, we must look at population not as the root cause of the problem. The social doctrine of the Church challenges society and government to regard population not as mere consumer but also to help and facilitate their

becoming producers and formal businessmen. By completely eradicating corruption and restoring justice our government can empower population to keep the continuous flow of production and supply.

April 21, 2008

A Sacramental Approach to Environmental Issues

JOHN HABGOOD

For many Christians, participation in the sacraments is a more immediate and more fundamental way of discovering the presence of God than is the reading of abstract theological treatises. Through them, as John Habgood explains, "material reality is shown to be capable of bearing the image of the divine." In this essay Habgood carries this suggestion much further, showing how a sacramental approach to nature can give us a deep-seated

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John Habgood is Archbishop of York of the Anglican Church. Also trained as a chemist, he is the author of numerous articles and several books on relations between religion and science. He is the moderator of the sub-unit on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches, in which context he has contributed considerably to its recent reflections on environmental ethics, AIDS, biotechnology, and nuclear power. This essay originally appeared as Chapter 4, pp. 46-53, in Charles Birch, William Eaken and Jay B. McDaniel (eds.) *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches in Ecological Theology,* published 1990 by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545. This material was prepared for Religion Online by Ted and Winnie Brock.

respect for the earth and other living beings, and how it can, at the same time, guide us in developing technologies that help – rather than frustrate – the fulfillment of divine purpose. For those for whom sacramentalism is at the very heart of Christian faith, this essay offers an indispensable resource for seeing the relation between worship and environmentally responsible action.

Orthodox theology makes much of the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. In the words of Kallistos Ware:

> The human person is not only microcosm, the universe in miniature, but also microtheos, God in miniature. Each of us is not simply *imago mundi,* image of the world, but also *imago Dei,* image of God. Each is a created reflection of the uncreated Deity, a finite expression of God's infinite self-expression. That is why Gregory of Nazianus states ... that man is "a second cosmos, a great universe within a little one" (Peacocke, 203).

Such a claim may sound absurdly anthropocentric. Who are we, mere specks in a vast universe, the accidental products of a process that far exceeds us and, even in earthly terms, only one among a myriad of life forms, who are we to dignify ourselves with such a central role in the ordering of things? Yet the inescapable truth remains that all our knowledge of the cosmos is *our* knowledge, filtered through the medium of our own minds and expressed in terms ultimately derived from our own thoughts and experience. The alternative may be even more arrogant. The quest for completely objective knowledge and the supposition that we can somehow give an

account of the universe from some independent non-human standpoint fly in the face of the facts. Our perspective is, and always remains, human. To say this is not to deny that we can achieve in some fields of knowledge a high degree of objectivity. Nor is it to deny that the totality of things is much greater and more mysterious than our minds can grasp. There is a proper sense in which knowledge, like prayer, ends in silence. But insofar as our knowledge admits its human limitations, the claim that microcosm and macrocosm are related, and may reflect one another, is not absurd.

The theological basis of the claim rests, as Kallistos Ware makes clear, on the belief that humanity is created in the image of God. If this is true of humanity then it must in some sense extend to the whole cosmos because Christ, the perfect image of God, is also in St. Paul's thought the agent and fulfillment of creation.

These are high and abstract thoughts, which may seem very distant from the main concerns of this book. I state them without argument as a prologue to some thoughts about sacramental theology, because sacramental theology itself may seem an absurdly narrow route along which to tackle practical questions about the environment. But if small things can reflect large ones, it may not be such a bad route after all. An eleventh-century Chinese administrator is said to have complained about Buddhists: "When they try to understand what is lofty without studying what is lowly, how can they have a proper understanding of what is lofty?"

I have no wish to make exclusive claims for sacramental theology. For some Christians the sacraments form

only a small part of their religious experience. For others, among whom I include myself, they lie at the heart of Worship. They hold together in a unique manner the inner relationship with God and the Outer relationship with material reality, reaching out to embrace a universe whose meaning is finally disclosed in Jesus Christ. In the sacraments microcosm and macrocosm meet.

Sacramental theology centers on the perception that items of material reality – water, bread, and wine – can be given a new meaning and status by being brought within the saving action of God in Christ. This is both a revelation and a transformation. The true potential of bread, for instance, Is revealed by its transformation into a means of communication with God. This is beautifully summed up in the ancient offertory prayer:

> Blessed be God through whom we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of heaven.

The prayer is a subtle balance between recognizing God's gift, acknowledging our human role in developing and using it rightly, and accepting its potential as a conveyer of God's own reality. Bread, at once the most basic and ancient of foods, is also the human product that perhaps more than anything else, made possible the civilized world. This fundamental support of life, says the prayer, will reveal a new level of meaning, made possible and actual by God's own involvement in material reality through Christ.

Behind the prayer lies a theology of the incarnation and, more immediately, the discourse on the bread of life

in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Whether the author of the Gospel meant this to be his substitute for an account of the Last Supper need not concern us here. The point is that it is impossible to read it now without seeing the bread as the body of Jesus given for the life of the world in a eucharistic context. But it is significant that it is not confined to a eucharistic context. The bread given by Jesus is not just contrasted with ordinary bread, profoundly important though that is, but with the manna eaten for forty years by the Israelites in the wilderness. In other words even miraculous food, food that had saved a nation from starvation, food that lay at root of its self-understanding as a people saved by God, even this was not to be compared with the bread now promised. The "bread from heaven" is no incidental feature of life with Jesus. Its meaning spreads out to embrace the totality of relationship with him. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If a man cats of this bread, he will live for ever" (Jn. 6: 51). And it points beyond Jesus himself. "I am" in the sentence "I am the bread of life" picks up and echoes the most profound and mysterious title of God, "I am that I am (Ex. 3:14).

Some of those who have no doubts about the value of the sacraments in their proper liturgical context find themselves uneasy when sacramental theology appears to "take off" in an apparently illegitimate fashion and to claim sacramental significance in everything. The process of widening sacramental horizons has already begun in John 6, which is why I have used it as the basis for my exposition. It fits well with a theology of worship and of the church which interprets them as expressing on a small scale and in an explicit way truths, often hidden, about

what God is doing in the whole human drama. To think like this is not to ecclesiasticize everything. In fact, precisely the reverse. Church and sacraments are the making visible of what is already there but might otherwise remain unrecognized.

The essential point is that material reality is shown to be capable of bearing the image of the divine. It rests on the staggering claim that this is what happened in Jesus and what constitutes the truth in the doctrines of the incarnation and of salvation. Thus what happens to water, bread, and wine when they are used as vehicles of God's grace is no isolated miracle. All matter shares this potential, and specific sacramental actions, which themselves belong within a specific historical, theological, and liturgical context, are the God-given means by which this truth is safeguarded and made known.

They are not the exclusive means, however. Thomas Traherne in *Centuries of Meditations,* saw the same truth as part of a childlike vision of the world before the distortions and separations of adult consciousness take over:

> You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are everyone sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and kings in scepters, you never enjoy the world (Traherne, 29).

At a much lower level of awareness there can be a sense of the goodness. or meaningfulness, or value of the

world, which forms part of many people's basic religious awareness, even if it is only glimpsed in fleeting moments. What such experiences tend to lack, though, is the complex interplay between what God has given and what human beings must do, and the illumination that comes from setting individual experience within a developed and subtle religious tradition.

I contend, therefore, that the sacraments themselves remain one of our best clues as to how we should treat the world aright, and in what follows I sketch out in a preliminary fashion how this might help the environmental debate.

The Recognition of Potential

What might it mean to live in practice as if anything or everything might become a vehicle of divine grace?

Perhaps it is easier to start by imagining the opposite, a universe in which anything or everything is ripe for exploitation. The essence of such a regime is that human needs and desires are sovereign, and the stuff of the world can be bent to human purposes with no respect paid to what it is in itself or what it might become within the purposes of God. In the sacramental vision the world is seen as created by God, owned by God, and ultimately finding its fulfillment in God.

Paradoxically the practical consequences of these two visions may not always be very different. Rubbish, for instance, may be seen as a resource by the sacramentalist who is concerned not to dismiss anything as mere waste, as well as by the commercially minded entrepreneur who sees that there is money to be made from it. Deep

motivation may be one thing, but seeing a problem as an opportunity is not confined to those who share a particular philosophy of life.

Equally, there may be very different motives for wishing to preserve, say, a forest or an animal species. Long-term prudential considerations can provide reasons for holding back even within a general philosophy of exploitation. An attempt to recognize and respect divine potential might take various forms. It might include, for instance, respect for the evolutionary process as the means whereby in practice most of the potential within the living matter of the universe has so far been released. To let a forest be, or to protect a species, is to acknowledge that they still have within them a greater potential for life, growth, and development, and that their being may therefore form part of the larger purposes of God in using evolution as a means of creation.

Alternatively there might be a more direct respect due to them for what they can reveal of God in being themselves. This is a difficult idea to carry through into practical programs. To let everything be, to respect its right to be itself, and to allow it to develop in its own way, would, if carried to extremes, make human life impossible and negate our own creativeness. Forests also have the potential to become fuel or furniture or agricultural land, and some of the greatest human achievements have resulted from seeing a potential in things that was decidedly not a consequence of letting them be.

Human beings have interfered decisively and irreversibly in many kinds of animal breeding, often bringing out latent potentials that have been hugely to our benefit. We now stand on the threshold of wielding far greater genetic powers, with incalculable consequences for the

future. This need not be mere exploitation, though with such powers available the dividing line between drawing out potential and arrogantly trying to play God may be a narrow one.

The key religious insight would seem to be that, whether things are let be or whether they are developed by human ingenuity for human purposes, they belong to God and not to ourselves. There is a respect due to them, an awareness of human limitations, a fine balance to be struck between penitence for what we have done to God's world in the past and hopeful creativeness for the future.

Sacramentally such an attitude would seem appropriate toward inanimate things, at least toward things of a certain complexity, as well as toward living creatures. A flowing stream, a clear sea teeming with life, a mountain landscape, surely deserve respect and care despite the large subjective element that enters into our appreciation of them. They can be treated in specific ways that still further reveal their potential. The great eighteenth-century creator of English landscapes, Capability Brown, earned his nickname for his skill, not in imposing his will on a recalcitrant nature, but in drawing out its aesthetic capabilities. A sculptor carving a particular stone or lump of wood may describe this work in similar ways; the finished object is somehow seen as being already there in the natural formation of the raw material, waiting only to be revealed. An engineer may see a valley as waiting to be dammed, a chasm as waiting to be bridged, an ugly and unhealthy swamp as potentially a place of beauty and usefulness. Such actions can in their own way become secular sacraments, an enhancement, a liberation of what is already there, a

transformation that does not violate a thing's essential nature.

I fully admit that such a way of speaking creates acute difficulties for those who are more used to seeing the universe as a torrent of change. "Essential natures" do not have much place in evolution. Clearly, by itself the recognition of potential is not enough. But sacramentalism is also about God's work complementing and giving substance to ours in a world still in process of creation.

The Need for Cooperation

The offertory prayer speaks of bread "which earth had given and human hands have made." Cooperation with natural processes, working with the grain of nature rather than against it, is now part of the conventional wisdom among conservationalists. Can the sacramental context add anything significant to this already familiar idea?

The eucharist is a complex act of giving and receiving in which the worshipers as well as God are both givers and receivers. At its highest it is a mutual exchange of love. But all this is set within the context of what God has already done. Despite the mutuality, therefore, the key word is *response*. In the exchange of love "we love because he first loved us" (I Jn. 4:19). Sacramental action is thus essentially a matter of cooperation rather than co-creation. As human beings we share a role with God in drawing out the divine potential of the world, but only because God has already himself taken the decisive steps.

The theme of cooperation receives further emphasis in the communion, which forms the climax of the whole. There can be no true giving and receiving with God unless

others form a part of it. As those who are themselves loved by God, worshipers caught up in this action are commanded and enabled to love their fellow human beings. And this communion with others spreads still further to embrace "angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." The microcosm of love and mutuality in response to the love of God experienced by those engaged in sacramental worship ultimately has to include the macrocosm.

But how far should this mutuality spread? Should it for instance include battery hens? There is an evolutionary case for including battery hens in some kind of relationship with human beings as very distant cousins, and this common membership of the community of life constitutes some kind of moral claim, albeit not a very strong one. If the sense of community goes further than this, if it is possible to hold that at a very rudimentary level there can and should be a cooperative relationship between human beings and hens, the moral claim is strengthened. If, to put the point more strongly, God gives hens a being of their own and values them prior to their usefulness as a cheap source of food, then the hen's point of view as a partner in this larger communion begins to assume some importance.

Admittedly it is not easy to know what a hen's point of view is, but in the case of battery hens there would seem to be a fairly simple test. In a battery the human element in the relationship with hens so dominates the conditions of life that the possibility of co-operation virtually disappears altogether. The hen is reduced as far as possible to machine-like operation.

Animal husbandry at its best has always contained an element of cooperation.

Even when the relationship ends in death it can be marked by respect for the life taken. The rituals surrounding animal sacrifice in cultures where sacrifice was the almost inevitable preliminary to eating meat witness to the seriousness of taking life, unpleasant though some of the rituals were. Here again the theme of communion with the life sacrificed can perhaps help modern Westernized consciousness develop a different feel for the products of industrialized scientific agriculture. Organic farming, for instance, may not fulfill the quasi-scientific claims for it, but may have moral and spiritual benefits for societies that see the need to develop a more sensitive relationship with the natural world.

The limits of cooperation become all too evident, however, when there is a mosquito in the bedroom. Letting things be themselves, discerning their point of view, looking for the divine potentiality in what is lowly, cannot become a recipe for the passive acceptance of whatever befalls us. Our human place in God's purposes is to cooperate with him in the process of creative change. Sacramental thinking points to a world which has to be redeemed before it can truly reveal the face of God. There is an inescapable element of struggle, discrimination, suffering, and tragedy in the process, and any theological approach to ecological issues that belittles or ignores these is hopelessly unrealistic. Hence, my third and final heading.

Transformation by Redemption

The sacraments are sacraments of Christ's death and resurrection. Suffering and the transformation of suffering belong to their very essence. This is plain from the New Testament account of their origins.

Sacramental theology has no excuse, therefore, for underrating the extent to which the divine potential of the world is denied, frustrated, distorted, defaced, and ignored. Nor need it shrink from accepting that the very means of creation through evolution entails conflict and suffering. Sacramental awareness is not at all the same as sentimentality. The perceptions of divine glory in a world capable of bearing God's image have to be matched by the belief that God bears the weight and suffering of his own creation on the cross.

All this is basic Christianity. To interpret the cross in the light of the sacraments can help to strengthen the bridge between the redemption of human sin and suffering and the redemption of the rest of creation. St. Paul's language about creation "groaning and travailing" (Rom 8:22) and "waiting for the redemption of the sons of God" (Rom 8:23) is another way of expressing the same link.

To put it in sacramental terms has an advantage in that it can suggest a means by which the link is actually operative. The sacraments entail human cooperation with divine initiative, a cooperation which is essentially priestly. This is so whether we think in terms of the priesthood of all believers or the representative priesthood of individuals within the body of the church. The point is that there is a human role whereby, under the grace of God and in the midst of an ambivalent and partially evil world, ordinary things can be offered, consecrated, broken, and transformed as a means of anticipating heaven on earth. The priestly role of all human beings toward the world of nature entails a similar offering through prayer and through the recognition that all belongs to God already, a similar transformation by the release of new potential and by the

discovery that even in the world of nature there can be glimpses of heaven on earth.

Implicit in this priestly role is the dual character of human life as belonging to the world of nature yet transcending it. The priest is a mediator, and our common human priesthood as cooperators with God in his creation entails coming to terms both with our createdness and with our God-relatedness. There are other ways of expressing this within Christian theology. The description of human beings as both "beasts and angels" is perhaps the most famous. But the link between sacramental theology and priesthood makes the idea of mediation particularly apposite.

As ourselves part of the process that has to be offered and transformed there is no room for arrogance or for the exploitative mentality which assumes that the created world is ours. But as those who also stand on the godward side of the process, and who dare to describe ourselves as "made in the image of God," we also have a responsibility not simply to accept the world as it is but see and pursue its possibilities for revealing more fully the glory of God. All our environmental thinking has to take place between these two poles. And the value of a sacramental approach to it lies in the richness and diversity of images, rooted in common Christian experience, such a theology can provide.

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Ecology and the Church: Theology and Action

DIANE E. SHERWOOD*

As the destruction wrought by pollution and human disregard for nature increases, churches are beginning to explore what their role is in protecting the environment. Though some are already addressing environmental issues, they will need to adopt a more urgent theological stance and course of action if we are to avoid the prognosis offered by M.K. Tolba, director of the United Nations Environmental Program: "We face by the turn of the century an environmental catastrophe as complete, as irreversible, as any nuclear holocaust" if present trends continue.

Church leaders worldwide are spurring their congregations on to ecological action, and the resulting enthusiastic

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*This article appeared in *The Christian Century,* May 13, 1987, pp. 472-474.

support is fast approaching the dimensions of the 1960s civil rights movement in America. But this ministry needs a theological foundation, biblical support for which may not be quite as obvious as support for some other issues. As Quaker writer and environmentalist Marshall Massey asks, how do we reconcile wilderness protection with Jesus' assertion that "my Kingdom is not of this world"? An increasing number of religious thinkers are rising to this challenge.

For example, Philip N. Joranson of the United Church of Christ justifies environmentalism with creation centered theology. A forester, evolutionist and geneticist, Joranson, along with Ken Burigan, edited the book Cry of the Environment: Rebuilding the Christian Creation Tradition (Bear, 1985), a significant religious and ethical resource for dealing with environmental issues. Contributors to the book include Bernhard Anderson of Princeton Theological Seminary, Conrad Bonifazi of Humboldt State University, Ralph Wendell Burhoe of Meadville/Lombard Theological School, and G. Ledyard Stebbins of the University of California at Davis. Joranson has studied genetics, process philosophy, Teilhard de Chardin's theology, Zen and Shinto. In 1979 he and colleagues from the Graduate Theological Union Center for Ethics and Social Policy, and the University of California at Berkeley, developed a course in creation centered theology.

Cry of the Environment challenges our present environmental policies with a visibility and appropriate action. Although the dominant Christian tradition has often regarded the nonhuman creation with disinterest, if not outright hostility, this tradition does contain some vital,

constructive elements, which Joranson and Butigan attempt to retrieve and transform. Their book celebrates the cosmos, develops a spirituality of care and collaboration between nature and humanity, and outlines harmonious and reverential social policy and action.

Theologian Nelson Reppert summarizes the tenets of creation-centered theology. Creation, he says, is the primary revelation of the Creator, the primary scripture and the primary locus of divine-human communion. In this scheme, salvation, characterized by both deliverance and blessing, is the process of imaging wholeness and unity (imago Dei). Jesus' incarnation is the archetype of the divine presence and agency dwelling in the midst of all reality. The continuing creation, with emphasis on both its dependence upon God and humanity's responsibility as cocreators in God's image, is moving toward eternal fulfillment.

Speaking from the Roman Catholic tradition, Matthew Fox, O.P., director for the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality at Holy Names College in Oakland, California, has contributed much to creation-centered theology. He established the Bear Publishing Company to distribute books on environment and religion, including his work Original Blessing (1983). In his popular creation spirituality workshops, he teaches that the environment is a divine womb, holy and worthy of reverence and respect. He honors the natural world as a most profound expression of the divine. In Fox's theology, salvation is not an individual matter, but a healing of God's people and the cosmos. Fox would replace fall/redemption theology with this concept, because, he writes, it presents "new possibilities between spirituality and science that would shape the paradigms for culture,

its institutions, and its people. These paradigms would be powerful in their capacity to transform" (Original Blessing, pp. 11, 12).

The Quaker tradition also points toward the towering spiritual dimension of the human relationship to the environment. In his book The Defense of the Peaceable Kingdom (Religious Society of Friends, 1985), Marshall Massey refers to John Woolman's approach of testing against the Light every commonly accepted idea and custom. We need to apply this scrutiny to the social conditioning behind environmental abuse, he contends. To support environmentalism Massey uses various New Testament themes, including the nurturing of the helpless, respect for the interrelatedness of life, and stewardship.

While all current eco-theology encourages action, the EcoJustice Working Group of the National Council of Churches has focused on it. Coined in 1972 by a Baptist planning group, the term "ecoJustice" promotes the protection of a healthy environment and justice for all people. These two concerns are neither arbitrary nor separable; rather, the economic and the ecological are two facets of the same concern for the earth and its creatures. At the group's consultation last December keynote speaker William A. Gibson said that "theologies of creation must not neglect the liberation of people. Creation includes humanity. Nature and the poor are both victims of oppression. They will be liberated together or not at all. The term ecojustice is not to be understood as in any sense turning away from concern for justice in the social order but rather as combining justice for people with justice to the rest of creation."

The consultation sought to forge working partnerships between church groups and major environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. The EcoJustice group wanted to affirm its common cause with secular activists while raising their awareness of related social justice concerns. For instance, the EcoJustice group supported the environmental groups' proposed legislation on acid rain (the NCC itself also supported that legislation, which has nor been passed), but also urged finding a solution that would take into account the coal miners who would be hurt by tougher anti pollution laws.

Most ecologists welcome the EcoJustice group's perspective. David Baker, director of Friends of the Earth, urges: "The churches need to tell environmentalists that ecological issues are social justice issues at heart. We need to talk about right and wrong. I am getting very tired of arguing that it is in the 'self-interest' of people to work for a cleaner and safer environment."

Many churches have made some statement or encouraged action on environmental issues. According to William A. Gibson, strongest thus far in its institutional stance on environmental issues is the United Methodist Church, which addresses ecology concerns primarily trough its Department of Environmental Justice. The United Methodist bishops' strong statement on nuclear war, "In Defense of Creation," is being adapted by MacGregor Smith, director of the Institute for Environmental Ethics in Miami, Florida, for teaching and action on environmental questions. Presbyterian and Episcopal laypeople are urging their denominations' administrators to make environmental concerns a greater priority. And in the Catholic Church, the American

bishops' pastoral letter on the economy mentioned the need to care for the environment. This statement echoed the document "Strangers and Guests," prepared in 1980 by 72 bishops in mid-western dioceses. The bishops used the biblical image of human beings as strangers and guests on the earth to emphasize our responsibilities to the biosphere.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CHD) is contributing funds to many conservation efforts around the country. Among these are the Missoula (Montana) People's Action, a multi issue community organization particularly concerned about water poisoning in the Missoula area; the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes (headquartered in Arlington, Virginia); the Vermonters Toxic Education Project, which helps local groups clean up toxic sites around the state; and the Kentucky group, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, which fights the environmental destruction caused by openpit mining.

Jews, also, are active in the environmental movement. For example, the World Jewish Congress has been working with the worldwide Fund for Nature to consider a joint project. Individual Jews are involved in virtually every major environmental group, and Israel has a very active environmental organization, the Israeli Group for the Preservation of the Environment.

Christians are confronting ecological concerns in interdenominational organizations as well. Vincent Rossi, director of the Holy Order of MANS (Eastern Orthodox Church), formed the Eleventh Commandment Fellowship in 1979 to integrate spirituality into concern for the environment. "The eleventh commandment," says Rossi, is:

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; thou shalt not despoil the earth, nor destroy the life thereon." Chapters in over 20 cities strengthen the Fellowship's influence. Members are encouraged to follow a seven point program which promotes a personal and public environmental ethic.

The recently organized North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (NACCE) is attempting to interest as many churches as possible in ecology. Its upcoming conference in August at North Webster, Indiana, an ecumenical event involving at least two dozen denominations will focus on an "Implementation Document" that can be adapted by any church to reflect its theological and local situations. Upon completion the document will be circulated to as many individual congregations as possible. NACCE is also developing a hemispheric corps of field representatives and planning a conference to address major ecological questions from a religious perspective.

Despite many churches' burgeoning interest in environmentalism, ecological activists both inside and outside church circles express dismay that Christians, confronted by impending environmental disaster, are not doing more to shift from a historical "sin and salvation" focus to an ecological one. For example, some have suggested that Pope John Paul II missed an opportunity to speak out on behalf of threatened tropical rainforests when he visited Brazil last year.

But Karen Bloomquist, assistant professor of church and society at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, points out that Christianity has a strong hierarchical tradition

which has "legitimized and fostered domination over people and nature." This "anti egalitarian, patriarchal, nature dominating theology" set up a hierarchy with God at the top, followed by men, women, children, animals and plants in that order, says Bloomquist.

"The undeveloped key to the environmental crisis," writes Fred Krueger, national director of the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology in San Francisco, "is to tap the power inherent in the churches. No other body has the potential to fire the conscience into renewed activity on behalf of the earth.....As a people, we've been commissioned 'to replenish the earth' (Gen. 1:28). What other justification or incentive do we need to begin?"

Ethics and the Environment: Towards Oneness in Life

SR. MARJORIE KEENAN, RSHM*

Preliminary Considerations

The title that I have chosen for these considerations, *Towards Oneness in Life,* is an attempt to give expression to my growing conviction that the present ecological crisis represents a privileged moment for each one of us to integrate, in a new and perhaps fuller way, our faith and our social attitudes and behavior. That is to say, a greater awareness of the theological and ethical exigencies regarding the environment can, I believe, lead us to ongoing

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conversion (metanoia), to closer union with God and with our brothers and sisters. This, in turn, can result in very concrete decisions concerning the protection of the environment.

I should also like to think that, in the ever-growing desire for unity, a theologically sound and ethically coherent approach to the environmental question could open up new and mutually enriching ways for Christians to collaborate in carrying out God's plan for creation, for the good of all of humanity.

At the same time, the environmental question can leave no one indifferent. It affects every individual on this planet as well as the good of future generations. Dedication to the promotion of a sound ethics of the environment will be a considerable contribution to building up the one human family willed by God. Ethical concern for the environment is not limited to the Christian community; far from it.

Finally, the environmental question is highly technical and multi-faceted; it has economic, social, political, legal and even military consequences. A well thought out ethics of the environment can, therefore, open the door to an effective dialogue with those forces that are shaping society today.

I shall begin by looking at the foundations of such an ethics from a Catholic point of view. In order to do so, I must first go back over its scriptural roots before examining some of the principles drawn from the Catholic social teaching or doctrine of the Church (Part One). I shall then take up one manifestation of the ecological crisis and look at it in the light of some of these principles before briefly considering the social mission of the Church in this regard (Part Two).

PART ONE:
ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

In his World Day of Peace Message for 1990, Peace with God, Peace with All of Creation,[1] Pope John Paul II stated that we must go to the very heart of the present ecological degradation and address the profound moral crisis of which the destruction of the environment is but one troubling aspect.[2] Ultimately, the ecological problems so evident today such as decertification, resource depletion, deforestation, air, land and sea pollution – are not in the first place environmental, nor can the solution to them be found in the technological or economic fields alone. They are rather profoundly theological and moral.

Prescinding from all philosophical discussions in this regard, I should like to postulate that it is impossible to separate religious belief – or lack of – and ethical considerations in the environmental field because of their intimate relationship to our world view. When there is apparent dissonance between our religious belief and our behavior, we must, in the first place, examine our fidelity

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[1] This is often cited as the first papal text entirely devoted to the environment. Yet, as early as 1972, Pope Paul VI sent a significant Message to the United Nations Conference on the Environment. He also made several other notable references to the environment. By 1990, however, awareness of the environmental question had become so widespread that the message of World Day of Peace was more widely heard. It is also interesting to note that one of the earliest publications of the then Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace was also dedicated to the environmental problem. Issued in 1973 as part of a series of commentaries on the document Justice in the World of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, the study, entitled A New Creation? Reflections on the Environmental Issue, was authored by Barbara Ward.

[2] Cf. World Day of Peace Message, 1990, No. 5.

to God's revealed word, transmitted to us in and through the Church. Ethics, taken in this sense, becomes a living out in human history, and in very concrete situations, of this revelation.

For this reason, I should like to begin by examining very briefly some of the essential scriptural bases that underlie equally fundamental ethical principles and criteria that apply to the promotion of a sound environment. It is patently evident that, in neither case, are these abstract considerations. The practical applications are immediate.

A Scriptural Approach[3]

The creation accounts in Genesis are of particular importance for our subject.[4] From them, we learn not only why we should care for the environment but also with what attitude we should do so. Let me therefore recall some of the extraordinary truths revealed in these first chapters of the Bible. They are so familiar that it is difficult to capture all their force and vitality, but let us try to reflect, to meditate, on them as if we were savoring them for the first time.

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[3] Much exegetical and hermeneutic work remains to be done in this regard. There are also vast differences between an ancient Near East cultural context and that of a scientific and technological society which color the understanding of texts. The purpose of the following considerations is therefore very limited: to heighten awareness of scriptural references that relate to the place of the human person within creation and the responsibility to care for the rest of creation. They could be considerably expanded, especially as regards the New Testament. The Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible is used throughout.

[4] Genesis 1-2. There are also other creation accounts that parallel those of Genesis. Cf. Ps 104, Prov 8, 22-31, Sir 16, 26-17; 14.

Listen to the first words of the Bible, to God's own self-revelation: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth;"[5] before there had been only void. Then, in a growing crescendo, God created light, water, dry land, plants, fish, animals. Each time, he "saw that it was good." This phrase is repeated six times.[6] Creation is good; it could not be otherwise, since it is a free act of God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."[7] How easy it is to pass over these words without realizing their full import: the human person is made in the image and likeness of God. The respect due to this divine image in ourselves and in others, consciously lived, colors all our relationships, all our actions.

But the account continues: "God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good."[8] The creation of the human person had completed God's work. Each thing is good in itself; everything taken as a whole is very good.

Already, we can draw some conclusions from these accounts, so rich in their imagery and rhythm. First of all, creation belongs to God, all of it. Secondly, creation is a work of harmony and beauty which forms a whole in its diversity. There is, in fact, an existential bond among

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[5] Gen 1, 1.

[6] Gen 1, 4; 10; 12; 1 8; 21; 25.

[7] Gen 1, 26. Cf. Sir 17, 3.

[8] Gen 1, 31.

everything that exists from the very fact of its having been created by God. One creature stands out however: the human person. Created in the image and likeness of the Creator and utterly dependent on him, this person exists in relationship: male and female he created them. No individual is an end in self, still less an object to be exploited by others.

Returning to Genesis, we learn that the human person, alone of all creation, is given a specific responsibility for the rest of the earth. It is expressed in different ways: "to have dominion over every living thing," to "subdue" the earth,[9] or, according to the second creation account, "to till it and keep it."[10] God has actually entrusted the earth to us; we are to make it productive, fruitful.[11] We do so however as God's stewards, not as masters in our own right. In fact, the first mention of this "dominion" is in the account of our creation in God's image.

Solomon tells us precisely how this trust is to be exercised:

> God of my fathers and Lord of mercy,
> who has made all things by your word,
> and by your wisdom has formed man,
> to have dominion over the creatures you have made,
> and rule the world in holiness and righteousness...
> give me the wisdom that sits by thy throne...[12]

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[9] Gen 1, 26 and 28. Cf. Ps 8, 6. Wis 9, 2, Sir 17, 2; 5.

[10] Gen 2, 15. Cf. Ps 104, 14, Ps 115, 16.

[11] It is interesting to reflect on these concepts in relation to Mt 25, 14-30, the parable of the talents.

[12] Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, 9, 14.

Our "dominion" is to be inspired by God's gift of wisdom; we are to rule with justice.

As the creation accounts continue, the depth of the relationship between human activity and the rest of creation becomes still clearer. Adam and Eve made a choice not to live according to God's plan. Not only were they were barred from the Garden, the very earth revolted at their sin. And God said to Adam: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life."[13]

This first sin finds terrible confirmation in a fratricide: Cain's killing of his brother, Abel. And Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground which had opened its mouth to receive it. Again the earth revolts at human sin. "And now you are cursed from the ground. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength...."[14]

It is interesting to note the parallel between the creation accounts and God's blessing of Noah and his sons after the flood. Human responsibility for all of creation is once again stressed:

> Into your hand are delivered [every animal of the earth, every bird of the air, everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the Sea] ... I give you everything...[15]

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[13] Gen 3, 17.

[14] Gen 4, 11-12. Cf. Is 24, 5-7.

[15] Gen 9, 2-7 passim. The order of the verses has been modified in order to shorten the quotation.

God's covenant, however, is not established with Noah and his sons alone but also with every living thing:

> As for me, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, and the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you... This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth... I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh...[16]

All that God has created is ordained towards him. Think of the many psalms in which mountains, waves, animals praise the Lord.[17]

In the New Testament, this same emphasis on the utter dependence of everything on God and the close interrelationship between the human person and the earth is maintained. The sublime dignity of the human person does not negate his being part of the whole of creation.

Sin had brought division into the world, and continues, through the ages, to trouble the order of creation. God, however, did not cease to cherish the work of his

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[16] Gen 9, 9-17 passim. Cf. Hos 2, 18.

[17] Cf. among others Ps 96, 97, 98, 145, 148, 150. At times it is at the bidding of the human person that they do so, and because the Lord is coming to judge or reign.

hands. In fact, he so loved the world that he sent his own Son to redeem it. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul speaks to us in terms that echo those of Genesis:

> [Christ Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.[18]

The redemptive act of Jesus extends to all of creation: such is the plan of God. We find the same thought expressed still more clearly in the well-known passage of the letter to the Romans:

> Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God... in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.[19]

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[18] Col, 15-20 passim. Cf. Eph 1, 10.

[19] Rm 8, 19-23.

The liberation of all of creation cannot be separated from the reconciliation of the human person with God. Our responsibility for the good of the earth and all that dwells in it is indeed great.

But what about the end times: those of the "new heaven and the new earth?"[20] Revelation speaks of the Holy City, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.[21] Could there be a more striking image when we consider our world of today? We have moved through history from the Garden to the City, the epitome of human activity. We are already preparing the end times in an increasingly urban milieu. We cannot forget, however, that the new Jerusalem comes from God.

Let me summarize the principal points of this brief scriptural reflection:

- ☑ All of creation is fundamentally good.
- ☑ God's plan for creation is one of harmony and order. Creation forms a whole, a cosmos.
- ☑ Within creation, the human person enjoys a consummate dignity. Inherent to this dignity is that of exercising a wise and just stewardship over the rest of creation.
- ☑ Sin brought division into the entire world, but not only within and between human persons. The consequences of sin also affect the earth.
- ☑ In a mysterious way, Christ's redemptive mission extends to all of creation.

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[20] Rev 21, 1. 2 Peter 3, 13 uses similar words. Cf. Is 65, 17.

[21] Rev 21, 2.

An Approach from the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church

The social teaching or doctrine of the Catholic Church is an application of theology, and especially of moral theology, to the questions raised by human societies. While its sources are in revelation and the tradition of the Church from the earliest times, as an organized body of teaching, it dates from 1891, with the promulgation of *Rerum Novarum,* Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on the condition of the worker. This social teaching is an integral part of the Catholic heritage. Just recently, however, Pope John Paul II raised the question as to how many Catholics really know and put into practice its principles.[22]

While, by their very nature, these principles remain constant, their application has considerably developed as society evolves, facing us with new challenges. From the time of the Second Vatican Council, concern for the environment has assumed an increasingly important place within this teaching. As we look very briefly at some of its principles, we cannot fail to note the biblical resonances in them.

One of the primary principles that governs our approach to environmental questions is that there is an order in the universe which must be respected. This principle not only sets limits to human activity, it also directs it towards a careful and reverent use of the earth. When the human person or human societies ignore or consciously violate this order, an imbalance is provoked that has inevitable consequences in several fields. Let us

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[22] Apostolic Letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente, November 1994, No. 36.

think simply of uncontrolled industrialization and the resultant pollution of air, land and water.

A second principle is no less essential: the human person occupies a distinctive place within creation. There is a strong tendency today to deny this centrality of the human person, to place human beings on the same level as animals and fishes. The reasons for this are complex. One pretext is that an anthropocentric approach to the environment has resulted in its destruction. This argument ignores, among other, the relationship of the human person to God. It can also lead to a dangerous negation of human responsibility. Without a doubt, human persons and, indeed, entire societies, have abused of the environment with impunity. We all see the result. Without a doubt, the human person lives in close relationship to his or her environment and is part of it. Without a doubt, we must care for the rest of creation. But, it is by heightening the centrality of the human person, not by denying it, by stressing the responsibility of the human person for creation, not by denying it, that we shall be able to promote and preserve a sound environment for all.

Another ethical principle with immediate applications to the environment is that of the inalienable dignity of the human person. The promotion of this dignity is "the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic, industrial or scientific development."[23] Inordinate depletion of resources without thinking of the needs of others, reckless land use, exploitative industrial practices and so forth are contrary to this principle.

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[23] John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, 1990, No. 7.

Today, there is another rather widespread anthropological error that directly affects the relationship between the human person and the environment. The modern person, fascinated by the capability of the human mind, can set him or herself up in the place of God.[24] The person effectively becomes the center of a universe built in his or her own image. All that is possible is permissible. At other times, everything is judged in relation to the individual whose needs must be met at all costs. These needs are often artificially created, and, in the thirst to satisfy them, the person uses and abuses the goods of this world without any thought for others and still less for future generations. Entire societies, built on an economic system that favors profit almost as an end in itself, can suffer from this anthropological error that saps the notion of the common good, the dignity of all.

On the contrary, the goods of the earth, including those produced by human activity, are ultimately destined for the benefit of all, not of the few. In this regard, Pope Paul VI did not hesitate to say that "all other rights whatsoever, including those of property and of free commerce, are to be subordinated to this principle."[25] Consequently, all peoples, all countries, must have access to those goods – natural, technological, intellectual and spiritual – that assure their integral development, that is a development that promotes the good of the whole person and of the entire human community.[26] A development that is oriented

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[24] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus, 1991, No. 37.

[25] Encyclical Populorum Progressio, 1967, No. 22.

[26] Ibid, No. 14.

towards the true good of the human person – and particularly of the poorest, the preferred of God – will also care for the environment, because to destroy it would precisely harm the human person and also damage God's creation entrusted to human care. An all-consuming desire for profit and a thirst for power run directly counter to this caring attitude.

We began with an affirmation concerning creation. I should like to close this section with an expression of our belief in the unity of the human family: created by God in wonderful diversity, called in Christ to overcome all distinctions that divide.[27] The ethical principle springs from the greatest of all the Commandments, pronounced by Jesus, echoing the words of the Old Testament: "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." "The second," continues Jesus, "is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself."[28]

In his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,* Pope John Paul II, considering a divided and fragmented world, pointed out the urgent necessity of solidarity. This moral virtue, he says "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and afar. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."[29]

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[27] Cf. Gal 3, 28 and Rom 10, 12.

[28] Mk 12, 29-31. Cf. Deut 6, 4 and Lev 19, 18.

[29] Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 1987, No. 38.

I do not have to elaborate on this in relation to the environment.

As I did at the end of our brief reflection on Scripture, let me close by summarizing the fundamental principles of the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that I have just presented as they relate to the environment:

- ☑ respect for the order in the universe;
- ☑ the distinctive place of the human person within creation;
- ☑ the inalienable dignity of the human person;
- ☑ the universal destination of created goods;
- ☑ our obligation to commit ourselves to the good of all and of each individual.

Taken as a whole, these principles form a consistent ethical framework against which to measure human intervention in the environment, worthy of care in its own right. In the second session, I should like to look more closely at their application to one specific problem, that of waste.

PART TWO: IN SEARCH OF A SOLUTION

I should like to begin by citing the words of Pope Paul VI to the 1970 Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization. They both sum up the previous reflect ions, which were general in nature, and open the way to an exploration of an ethical approach the concrete problems we face today:

> ...everything is bound up together. You must be attentive to the great consequences which follow on every intervention of man in the balance of nature, whose harmonious richness has been placed at his disposal in accordance with the living design of the Creator. (Cf., for example, Ps 64: 10-14)...
>
> [The] problems surely are familiar to you. We have wished to evoke them briefly before you only in order to underline better the urgent need of a radical change in the conduct of humanity if it wishes to assure its survival... The hour has now come for [man] to dominate his domination [of the earth]; this essential undertaking requires no less courage... than the conquest of nature itself.[30]

Responsibility: A Key Concept

The human person, alone among all the creatures on this earth, is morally responsible for his or her acts which must be oriented towards the good: that of self, of others and of the very earth and all that is in and on it. These three form an inseparable whole. This assertion is the keystone of a sound ethics of the environment over and against one based on sentiment, on a vague nostalgia for a nonexistent "paradise lost" or on a pseudo-religious exaltation of nature.

The concept of responsibility can also be translated into the language of identifiable rights and duties. These, in turn, can, and often do, find expression in juridical instruments that regulate relationships between and among

[30] 15th Session of the Conference of FAO, 16 November 1970, 3-4 passim.

peoples and groups, as well as between and among States, regarding a given question. structures are often set in place that assure the observance of such defined rights and duties. That is, the concept of responsibility concerns not only individual behavior but also relates to entire societies and to the international community as well.

As regards the environment, the fundamental right is that of individuals and peoples to a safe environment. Given the transboundary nature of environmental and ecological problems, our duties are universal, extending to all peoples and to all regions. Equity demands, however, that the responsibilities be differentiated and complementary according to the needs and abilities of each. In other words, the weaker peoples or states have a special claim on the solidarity of others.

Responsibility ordained towards the good of all is not, however, merely a spatial notion; it is also temporal. Today, we are the beneficiaries of the wonderful fruits of the human mind that have helped so many to live a better life. We are, however, also both the protagonists and victims of uncontrolled development. Thoughtless exploitation now endangers future life on this earth: plant, and animal as well as human. We must take into account the future good of the earth, that of future generations.

It would be possible to approach the question of our ethical responsibility as regards the environment from many starting points. I have chosen to dwell on just one aspect: that of waste. First of all, it is a familiar concept. We are all aware of what it is, and we know equally well that we can all do something, however small, about it. But waste has another connotation. It is a also a by-product

of a capitalistic, consumer-oriented society and of certain technologies that have been developed without concern for their long term consequences.

As we reflect together, I should also like you to keep in mind another question:

> that of the need to determine the proper levels at which a given environmental question could or should be addressed by the Church. Some aspects of care for the environment are proper to its very mission, while others are deeply rooted in Christian tradition, spirituality and prayer, that is, in Christian life as such. Still others more directly concern the organization of life in society: economics, politics and so forth. When it is both possible and opportune, the Church has a duty to speak to such problems, especially if human dignity or life is in danger. At other times, the laity, in their professional capacities, are the ones who are fully responsible for acting, precisely out of an ethical context to which the Church has the responsibility of forming them. Should we not make these distinctions, we could unconsciously or even consciously, falsify the role of the Church, reducing it to that of any other organization interested in environmental questions. This is a danger that we cannot ignore.

Waste as a Factor in a Consumer Society

It is certainly not necessary to dwell at any length on the striking inequalities that characterize today's world; we

are very much aware of them. They have penetrated into the very marrow of society's structures, setting up or reinforcing sharp divisions between North and South – and between that "North and South" that can be found within each country. That such inequalities remain, or are even increasing, despite this heightened awareness, is a moral scandal that cannot leave us indifferent. A relatively small number of people of plenty actually live in the midst of a world of want. Their societies are characterized precisely by an excessive demand on the earth's resources and by their disproportionate contribution to the degradation of the world's environment. Some of these people of plenty live on small islands of richness in the very midst of societies, of vast want. They are found on all continents.

Those in the world of want are often so poor that all their energies are focused on procuring the minimum necessary for survival. It is beyond their ability to make the necessary individual and societal choices that would protect the environment, even as regards proper land use and the avoidance of water pollution. They actually increase the degradation of an already damaged environment. They do not consciously choose to do so.

The people of plenty do not face such limitations to their ability to chose. On the contrary, their life style is marked by an over-abundance of possible choices that quickly become needs, artificially created and fostered by commercial interests or by the mass media. A generalized pattern of over-consumption affects the life of individuals, of families, and of entire societies. The concomitant waste actually has become a problem in its own right: what do to with it, where to dispose of it.

A society oriented towards meeting artificial needs ultimately saps the moral fiber of its members, and especially of its youth.[31] It inevitably results in the person consuming not only the resources of the earth but also his or her own very life in an excessive and disordered way.[32] There is, in fact, an intimate link between a materialistic, consumption-driven society and environmental pollution and degradation.

The Christian ethos is in sharp contrast to this: it is one of simplicity, of sharing, of assuring that all have enough to meet their basic needs, including their Spiritual and cultural ones. Attention is focused on the quality of life, not on the accumulation of goods.

We have all experienced an often momentary compassion, or even moral outrage, before the spectacle of people in dire want. We have contributed to helping to alleviate crisis situations. This is clearly not enough. We must, in fact, develop that "firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good... because we are all really responsible for all" of which I spoke earlier.[33] That is we must live in a solidarity that entails a modification of individual and societal behavior and a readiness to assure that the superabundance of waste created in some regions ceases to weigh upon those who have nothing they can afford to waste.

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[31] Cf. Paul VI, Message to UN Session on Raw Materials and Development, 4 April 1974.

[32] John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, No. 37.

[33] Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, No. 38.

While the problems are vast and require structural change, we still remain responsible for doing what we can to assure that all have the opportunity to live in the dignity that is their due. This can entail challenging, among other, production and distribution patterns in a concerted effort to assure greater justice, more care for the environment, greater respect for the order that exists in God's creation.

Despite the need for collective responses, individual attitudes and behavior are immensely important. In democratic societies, public opinion can eventually effect societal change. We have seen this in such simple things as the increasing use of biodegradable packaging and the recycling of paper, tins and bottles. Small things, perhaps, but important in themselves and for their educational value as regards the effects of an over-consumption that actually produces waste.

Hazards and Wastes: By-Product of Technological Advance

We have witnessed extraordinary advances in technology during this past century, with changes taking place at an ever-accelerating rate. While many of them are highly positive, others actually put life at risk and place a heavy mortgage on the future well-being of peoples and the environment. I shall take just two examples: chemical hazards due to the use of synthetic pesticides and radioactive waste.

Thanks to the development of modern synthetic chemical pesticides, vast strides were made in the control of disease-bearing and crop consuming insects. We are now faced, however, with the consequences of their over-

abundant use which dramatically increases the danger of pollution. The very insects that were controlled by certain pesticides have become resistant to them, leading to an increasing use of an ever-wider variety of these pesticides. Not only are diseases thought conquered reappearing, modern medicine is unable to control them with what were formerly highly effective remedies. Sprayed food is now found to be a possible health hazard. The run-off from treated fields is polluting water sources and entering the food cycle far away from the fields where they were used.

The very production of some of these chemicals presents health risks. In the industrialized world, rigid safety standards have been developed to protect workers and the environment to the degree possible – human error always remains a factor, as we know so well. In the developing world, however, such standards are often lacking, as is the expertise for dealing with either imported chemical substances or with highly polluting industries no longer welcome in the developed world and transferred to countries where safety standards are lower or non-existent. To export dangerous substances and to transfer polluting industries are clearly serious abuses and, in the words of Pope John Paul II, it is "an offense against human solidarity when industrial enterprises in the richer countries profit from the economic and legislative weaknesses of poorer countries to locate production plants or accumulate waste which will have a degrading effect on the environment and on people's health."[34]

[34] Address to a working group of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on chemical hazards in developing countries, 21 October 1993.

This is not a case of denying developing countries their right to industrial development. This would be contrary to the moral principle of the universal destination of the goods of this earth. On the contrary, it means taking the necessary steps to assure that industry is not being transferred for the self-interested motive of bending to public pressure to remove a dangerous industry from a certain region by simply transferring it elsewhere where such pressure does not exist. Such transfers are no less illegitimate if the motive is an unwillingness to implement often costly safety standards. The transferring industry or Government must be willing to collaborate effectively with the receiving country or region to assure that adequate controls are established and maintained. This is a concrete expression of solidarity. "It would be difficult to overstate the weight of the moral duty incumbent on developed countries to assist the developing countries in their efforts to solve their chemical pollution and health hazard problems."[35]

In speaking of chemical hazards, I have used the example mainly of the duties of the industrialized countries and the concomitant rights of developing countries without mentioning those countries whose economies are in transition. This is not because they are free of problems. A totalitarian system oriented towards production showed, over the years, very little concern either for the safety of workers or for that of the product being produced. Several regions of Eastern Europe are suffering from severe environmental damage. Their aging and polluting industry is also slowing down their transition process.

[35] Ibid.

While there are some efforts to control the hazards of modern industry, much remains to be done. The international community needs to continue to develop the necessary global agreements regarding the production, exportation and handling of hazardous substances. It is interesting to note that such agreements often are accompanied by ethical codes that set standards but are devoid of sanctions. Recently, agreements have been reached forbidding the dumping of hazardous wastes in Africa. These and other similar efforts need to be encouraged on both a national and international level. The good of future generations and of life itself can be at stake.

Let me simply mention one more question: that of radioactive wastes: a by-product of nuclear energy, of the dismantling of nuclear weapons and, to a lesser degree, of nuclear medicine. The management, transportation and stockpiling of nuclear wastes presents very serious problems: human health hazards as well as a possible facilitation of nuclear proliferation and terrorism. There is also the long-term danger of severe environmental and health hazards if such wastes are improperly stockpiled. Because of their long life, there are still many unknowns in this field. The nuclear community, both military and civil, is well aware of the problems. I believe that the ethical implications are obvious.

The nuclear waste problem is an example of an incomplete vision of technological advances: the seeking of immediate advantages, even with good intentions, without an adequate consideration of the long-term consequences.

An Education to Environmental Ethics

The Church has a fundamental role to play as regards the conservation of God's creation and the promotion of a sound environment, in the first place as regards its theological reflection in this field. I believe that there are possibilities for an on-going exchange of theological studies among the churches, leading to agreement in certain essential fields, among which is the place of the human person in creation. Careful, solid, and, perhaps, patient work is needed in this field, because of its extreme importance in the life of the Church.

The Church also has an important mission of education of the faithful regarding the ethical or moral implications of the way we live in relation to the other members of the human family and to the rest of creation. The 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church has taken some steps in this regard. It is significant that many of the teachings that touch upon the environment are found in the chapters on the first article of the Creed and under all three sections devoted to the persons of the Holy Trinity. A coherent presentation of this subject as an integral part of catechesis is still lacking, however.

We must not overlook the fundamental role of parents in the education of their children to respect both others and the environment, to sacrifice themselves for the good of others, to care for the environment as God's gift to all. It is also in the family that a child can develop a sense of beauty, can learn to contemplate the wonders of God's creation and recognize the need to restore it when damaged, to preserve it when whole, to respect its rhythms.

There are many other questions that could be explored. Several of them go far beyond the question of the environment and ethics but are not unrelated to education and environmental ethics: the liturgical life of the Church and the environment, the importance of the aesthetic value in human planning, respect for the limits of human interference in God's creation.

All of us, each of us, needs to learn, day after day, to approach the environment with respect, to be aware of what human activity can and does do to harm it. We need to draw upon all the richness of our faith, to turn in prayer to God for light and help, to build solid ethical convictions to guide our actions. As we do so, the mystery of God's plan for his creation will continue to unfold. The new Jerusalem that we are slowly constructing is God's, not ours.

Climate Change and the Unraveling of Creation

BILL MCKIBBEN*

Ten years ago I wrote a book called *The End of Nature,* which was the first book for a general audience about the question of global warming. At the time, climate change was a hypothesis. By burning fossil fuels and thereby emitting great quantities of carbon dioxide, human beings would trap heat near the planet's surface, changing its weather. A strong hypothesis, but a hypothesis nonetheless. The appropriate response to that hypothesis was more study, general concern, and the beginning of modest action in the event that the hypothesis was correct. I was, on the one hand, extremely scared by the research

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I'd done; on the other hand, I was confident that, at the very least, a serious discussion was under way.

Ten years have passed since global warming first appeared in the general consciousness. And in that time science has done its job, which is to turn hypothesis into either truth or falsehood. In this case, the vast – the overwhelming – scientific consensus is that global warming is real, dangerous and immediate. The International Panel on Climate Change, a body of the world's foremost climatologists convened by the UN, has concluded that we will raise the planet's average temperature four or five degrees in the next century.

What's more, those ten years have seen the world begin to change in the most fundamental ways. This decade has had seven of the ten warmest years on record. Last year, by a very large margin, set new records for heat. And when you change the climate, you change everything else. Warm air holds more water vapor than cold air: hence you have more evaporation and more precipitation. That is to say, more drought and more flooding. Which is just what we have seen this decade: last year alone, for example, 300 million human beings (about one in 20) had to leave their homes for a week, a month or forever as the result of some "natural" disaster. This is by far the highest number on record.

The total property damage from such events topped $96 billion, beating the old record – set in 1996 – of $60 billion. Hurricanes are becoming more powerful and more common; the ranges of plants and animals are shifting north, often into oblivion; disease-bearing insects are spreading to new places; agriculture is becoming ever

riskier. Think of the speed with which this is happening. Spring now comes a week earlier across the northern hemisphere than it did 30 years ago. This is an unbelievably large change for such a basic physical phenomena. And all this with about one degree of global average temperature rise – a fourth or a fifth of what we can expect in the lifetimes of many of us.

Or, to use a different phraseology:

In the beginning there was a lush and green earth, and it swarmed with so many creatures that no one could start to count them. It was filled with the drama and delight of the whale and the coyote and the swarming bee, of the monarch butterfly and the human child and the towering white pine. Then people said: we will burn coal, vast quantities of it. And as the temperature rose, the waters began to bleach the coral reefs, wiping them out by the score and the hundred and the thousand.

And then people said: we will burn oil, vast quantities of it. And the temperature rose, and with it both the level of the sea and the chance of deluge. And so, for instance, the people and the animals of the Brahmaputra Delta in Bangladesh found their area submerged under three and four feet of water for months on end – poor people pushed even farther out on the margin.

And then the people said: we will drive cars everywhere we go – the bigger the better. And as more energy was trapped near the earth's surface, the great forests of the planet began to dwindle, stressed by the heat that left them rooted in what had become the wrong place. And the permafrost of the tundra began to melt, and the great glaciers of ice and rock.

We are engaged in the swift and systematic decreation of the planet we were born onto. And does God look at our actions and pronounce them good? I doubt it. Forget the sterile debates about whether we were given dominion over his planet. Grant that we were. The question is, what have we done with that dominion? In the past 30 years we have ever more rapidly destroyed its inventory of life: whole chains of DNA are wiped out each day as tropical forests fall, chains of created life that will never be appreciated even by a lonely taxonomist in some university. We are wiping out whole ecosystems – coral reefs, the cloud forests of the Andes. In 40 years, Glacier National Park will have no glaciers. Even the seasons have been altered by our species in one generation.

Different eras produce different questions of moral transcendence, questions so urgent that they must be answered then and there. The first part of the 19th century saw the question of slavery, long a routine part of human history, become an issue of such transcendent importance that it ignited a horrible war. That fight was mandatory; to duck it was to choose sides.

The middle of the 20th century saw the rise of Hitler. Our parents and grandparents did not ask for him to come, but come he did, and there was no choice but to vanquish him. It was a struggle of moral transcendence – exactly how transcendent we discovered in its aftermath, with the liberation of Dachau and Auschwitz.

In this nation, in the years after the war, the civil rights movement confronted us with the same kinds of inescapable moral questions, demanding the same kinds of engaged answers. It is a struggle that continues to this

day, as more and more oppressed people demand their liberation.

I suggest that in our time the morally transcendent question is whether we will stop this decreation before it goes further; whether we will take the steps – and some – of them will be difficult steps – to preserve God's creation in as intact and integral a form as is still possible. Or whether we will watch as it unravels – which is what we are doing so far.

You will notice, though, that the environmental question is different from the other morally urgent questions I have described in that it does not center on the relationship between peoples but between people and nature. Is it nonetheless a theological question, a question for people of faith and of the Bible? It is, I think, and our tradition is full of resources to help us understand that. We've focused for millennia on the relationship between peoples, and between people and God. But this third relationship – between people and the natural world, and thus indirectly with God and with other people – has suddenly emerged as an emergency.

For me, its theological meaning can be summed up as follows: One species is now beginning to control everything around us. The only "acts of God" left are earthquakes and volcanoes; those are still "natural disasters," but everything else is at least in part our handiwork. And that results in, and will increasingly bring, very different-feeling world.

Let's turn for a moment to the Book of Job, which will be to the emerging environmental theology what Exodus was to the theology of liberation. God's speeches

from the whirlwind represent the first nature writing and probably the best. Since it was written, Job has troubled the rabbis and the theologians because it is unlike anything else in the Bible. To me, it seems like a time-capsule message, hidden in our tradition for this moment in time, designed to show us precisely the outlines of our current folly.

Job was not a patient man. When he was plagued by troubles, he demanded an interview with God. And he got it. In fact, he got by far God's longest speech. And what was it? A gorgeous and sarcastic tour of the physical universe, designed to show Job that man was one small part of a very large picture. (The translation is from *The Book of Job,* by Stephen Mitchell.)

Where were you when I planned the earth?
Tell me, if you are so wise.
What were its pillars built on?
Who laid down its cornerstone,
while the morning stars burst out singing
and the angels shouted for joy!
Were you there when I stopped the waters,
as they issued gushing from the womb?
When I wrapped the ocean in clouds
and swaddled the sea in shadows?
When I closed it in with barriers
and set its boundaries, saying,
Here you may come, but no farther;
here shall your proud waves break.
Have you seen where the snow is stored
or visited the storehouse of hail.
Where is the west wind released and

the east wind sent down to earth.
Who cuts a path for the thunderstorm and
carves a road for the rain,
to water the desolate wasteland
the land where no man lives to make
the wilderness blossom and cover the desert with grass.
Who gathers up the storm clouds,
slits them and pours them out turning dust to mud
and soaking the cracked clay?

Always before this logic was insurmountable. Job pretty much said, Can I sit down now? ...sorry I bothered you. But no longer. Who sets the boundaries for the oceans? Increasingly, we do. The best estimate is that the sea will rise about three feet in the next century. And even a one-foot increase is enough to bring the sea in 90 feet across most American beaches. Who determines when it rains, and how much? Increasingly we do. The most recent studies show that extreme precipitation events – rainfalls greater than two inches in 24 hours – have increased percent across this hemisphere. As Thomas Karl of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said, "When we look out the window now, some of the weather we see is caused by us. In 50 years, a lot more of it will be caused by us." No need for us to endure God's sarcasm: Rain r Us, Snow r Us, Warmth r Us. We have unhinged the most visible reminders that we are creatures of God. Some of that is by design – the spread of genetic engineering with barely a thought for its meaning should give us great pause. But most of it is by accident, with our disruption of planet's climate and hence its fauna, its flora, its hydrology.

If you do not think that will represent a severe challenge to our understanding of what it means to be children of God, I invite you to go through the hymnal, crossing out the songs and stanzas that witness to God's power through thunder, wind, sparrow, whale, sunlight, springtime. There are, of course, other evidences of God's love around us, principally the unselfish love of humans for other humans. But perhaps this does not exist in such overabundance that we can afford to jettison the testimony of creation. If we create a world without wilderness – and that is precisely doing – then we lose a critical locus for the radical encounter with the divine. The Jews needed the wilderness. Jesus needed the wilderness. We don't.

It is true, thank God, that as some sense of our troubles has begun to spread, people have begun to respond. There have been books. Theologians and physicists have collaborated on new cosmologies and conferences by the hundreds and the thousands. We have worked hard on the personal, on helping start a change in consciousness that will lead, someday, to less consumption. (See my "Who stole Christmas?," December 2, 1998.) Although our efforts are nowhere near enough, they will eventually pay off; it is hard to imagine that a hundred years from now we will still be entertaining ourselves with manic and often joyless consumption.

But we do not have until "eventually" to deal with climate change. We have the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years to make the basic decisions. A coal-fired power plant built next year will spew carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for at least four decades; once it is built, the cost of its construction alone will guarantee that it will be used, that its output will not be replaced with solar-or wind-

generated energy. We have already wasted a decade. In 1990, President Bush at Rio promised that in the year 2000 we would release no more CO_2 into the atmosphere than we did in 1990; it was a pledge that President Clinton repeated on taking office – a modest but prudent promise, given the level of uncertainty that then marked the science. But even as the science has grown unimpeachably solid, the political response has grown less vigorous. Clinton and Gore did next to nothing – as our economy boomed, so did our use of fossil fuels, so that next year we will release nearly 15 percent more CO_2 than we did a decade ago.

The time has come to take those cosmologies and conferences, those books and speeches, and start the work of translating them into politics. Just as at some moment the rhetoric and passion and sheer truth of the civil rights movement had to be translated into the Voting Rights Act, so we must now figure out how to force real and quick change. The solutions are not impossible to.

The solutions are not impossible to find. In fact, everyone knows what they are. We need to end the subsidies for, and increase the taxes on, fossil fuels so that their price will rise and alternative clean technologies will become competitive. And we need to spread those clean technologies abroad, with a giant program of international aid and cooperation, so that the developing nations do not follow our energy path. And we must do it fast, for every year that we can speed the process will allow us to lower the final zenith of CO_2 in the atmosphere, allow us to prevent some damage, allow us to hasten the time when humanity again can become just one player in a created world.

As a first step, we must make Congress consider the Kyoto treaty, which calls for a 5 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2010. It's not a great treaty – in fact, since scientists say we need to cut emissions by 80 percent immediately, it's barely a start. And at the moment, the Senate, dominated by entrenched corporate forces, would defeat it. But that is OK – voting rights did not pass the first time either, and it took several iterations of the act to make it strong enough. At least we would have started.

How to do it? The powers in opposition are strong, but they are not omnipotent. Sooner or later the coal lobby will be beaten; the job is to do it sooner. We need teach-ins and sit-ins, letter-writing campaigns and political campaigns, loud speeches, anger, humor, desperate work.

And we need the church. In some of the struggles I've described, the church has led the way – abolition and the civil rights movement were both inextricably linked to the church. In the case of the environment, the church's leadership is absolutely mandatory. There is no other force left in our society that is able to say: Some things are more important than endless economic growth. Some goals are more important than endless accumulation.

Our story begins with the account of creation. Since we happen to be alive in the two- or three-decade period of decreation, we have to do all that we can, whatever the cost, to defend God's work. Forget about teaching creation in the schools; in our time the task is to preserve creation on the planet. Creation is not an artifact of history. It is all around us, and it is being destroyed. Saving it is our task.

Animals and the Love of God

WILLIAM GREENWAY

Many of us feel a little silly if we react strongly to the death of a pet or the plight of an animal. "Well, it was just a cat," we say, embarrassed by our grief. Where does this attitude come from? It's certainly not biblical. Our modern view of animals can be traced primarily to such Enlightenment philosophers as René Descartes, who argued that animals are biological machines unable to feel pain or experience emotion and unimportant except as they affect the lives of human beings. In the Bible, by contrast, value and redemption extend not only to humans but to all animals.

In Genesis 1:1-2:4, God first creates the heavens and the earth, then the plants, fishes, birds and all the other

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animals – and God repeatedly declares that this creation is good. Finally, God creates male and female human beings in God's image and gives them dominion over the earth. They are to fill and subdue it.

We are all familiar with these parts of the creation story, but we often overlook what God then says to the man and woman: "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." The passage concludes, and indeed, it was very good."

The message is startlingly clear: we were given plants and fruits for food, and so were all the other animals who have "the breath of life" in them. Not only are all the creatures of the earth proclaimed to be pleasing to God, but neither animals nor we are given other animals to eat. The beginning of Genesis depicts a harmonious creation where none kills to live.

This first creation account, known as the Priestly, or "P" account, was written during the Babylonian captivity. As the people of Israel worried that the Babylonian gods might be superior to their God, this narrative boldly asserts that despite all appearances the God of Israel is lord of all. Amazing though that declaration is, even more amazing is the people's assertion not only that their present suffering is not what God intended, but that suffering is not God's intention for any of the rest of creation, human or animal.

The writers of these words were not romantic idealists unfamiliar with nature's harsh realities. They were people who struggled to survive in what we would consider a desolate wilderness. They fought lion and viper. They knew that suffering suffuses nature, just as they knew the harsh realities of defeat and captivity. Yet they were convinced that none of this was God's original intention. With the audacity of faith, they declared the present order to be fallen, and articulated a beautiful vision of a harmonious and happy creation.

This vision is the context in which we should read the P strand of the flood account, in which God tells Noah that people now have God's permission to eat other animals: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything (Gen. 9:3). This accommodation within a fallen order does not negate the previous vision. The next verse explicitly instructs people not to eat the animal's life – that is, its blood. And God's covenant with Noah is also and explicitly with "every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth" (Gen. 8:9-10).

Not only did the Israelites claim that the world we know is not the world that God intended, but they also expressed their hope in a messianic age in which God's original intention would be realized. They proclaimed an eschatological vision of a creation that has realized perfect harmony. Isaiah 11, the classic text, begins by describing an end to the political injustices afflicting the Israelites, but extends the vision beyond human concerns:

> The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand in the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The commentaries on these texts almost exclusively emphasize how glorious it is to be human. They stress the hierarchy within creation. Repeatedly they remind humans that only they are created in God's image, that only they have been given dominion and told to subdue the earth, that only they are directly addressed by God, and that only they have speech and the right to name all other creatures. But amidst all the exegetical energy bent on glorifying humanity, a pivotal theological teaching is neglected: that all life is sacred, and that we are to love all creatures.

The hierarchy on which the exegetes focus is indeed present in these texts. Humans are elevated over the rest of creation by being formed in the image of God. But the primary hierarchical division in Genesis is not between us and the rest of creation; it is between God and creation. True dominion lies not in us, but in God. If we are rightly to understand how to exercise our dominion, we must strive to imitate and understand God's dominion.

This realization returns us to a classical theological confession: that first and foremost God's creative act testifies to the love of God, to the willingness of God to make and bless that which is other than God. Indeed, God so loves all that God has made, even in its fallen state, that God acts in love for us and all the world through Jesus Christ.

If God exercises God's dominion over creation through love, can we reflect God's image in our dominion? If God graciously reaches out to us, how should we treat animals – even insects? We are tempted to turn the unmerited gift of our creation in the image of God into a claim of greatness, into a reason not to love those who are not our equals. We often resemble the man in the parable of the unmerciful servant, who owed a king a great debt, was forgiven it, and then did not extend the same grace to those beneath him.

That we pervert the image of God in ourselves when we do not love that which is beneath us is the critical spiritual insight of St. Francis of Assisi and of Albert Schweitzer. Schweitzer argues that one is holy only if one assists all life as one is able, and if one refrains from afflicting injury upon anything that lives. One does not ask in what way this or that form of life merits or does not merit sympathy as something valuable... Life as such is holy.... When working by candlelight on a summer night, one would rather keep the windows closed and breath stuffy air than see insect after insect fall on the table with wings that are singed. If one walks along the street after rain and notices an earthworm which has lost its way

... one carries it from the death-dealing stones to the grass. If one comes upon an insect that has fallen into a puddle, one takes time to extend a leaf or a reed to save it. One is not afraid of being smiled at as a sentimentalist.

Karl Barth, citing these words, observed that "those who can only smile at this point are themselves subjects for tears." Barth goes on to argue that if we are to obey God, the killing of animals is only possible as a deeply reverential act of repentance; it is permissible only "as we glance backward to creation and forward to the consummation as the boundaries of the sphere in which alone there can be any question of its necessity."

Like Barth, Schweitzer was a realist. He regularly killed insects, viruses and other animals in order to protect patients at his hospital in Africa. In a fallen world, one does sacrifice other animals' lives when protecting human life demands it. But Schweitzer undertook such actions with a heavy heart, as a lamentable necessity in a fallen world. He never considered it his uncontested right as a superior creature.

Most people deny the sacredness of animal life not out of pride but because it is too painful to acknowledge. There is simply too much animal suffering, and we too often find it necessary to hurt animals. It is far easier simply to turn away from the problem. Consequently, we seldom talk about or even allow ourselves to be conscious of our conflicted feelings. We live with animals, name, feed and play with them and value their companionship. We wonder at their beauty and grieve when they die. And we also eat, wear and experiment on them.

My convictions turned me into a vegetarian several years ago. But as I write this, I'm wearing a belt and shoes made of cowhide. When I walk to my office I see the gleaming smokestacks atop the University of Texas animal research facility, and I depend on drugs developed through excruciating animal testing. There seems to be no way out. And it's hard enough to cope with human suffering without worrying about the suffering of other animals. When we see the consumptive, destructive ways of nature and realize our own inevitable participation in the carnage, it's easiest to say, "They're just animals," or "That's just the way it is."

But the Bible asks us to have the courage displayed by the people of Israel – the courage of people who know full well what it means to be carnivores and yet who dream of a day – past and future – when lions will eat hay. To repress our sympathy for animals leads to an all the more destructive disrespect for them and for all of creation.

Schweitzer knew that allowing ourselves to love all creatures would not suddenly deliver us into an easy and carefree life. For the person who loves and shows concern for all creatures, life will "become harder ... in every respect than it would be if [one] lived for [oneself], but at the same time it will be richer, more beautiful and happier. It will become, instead of mere living, a real experience of life."

HISTORICAL SECTION

Centenary of the Death of Don Joaquín Tuason (1842-1908)

Filipino religious writer during the Spanish Period

DR. LUCIANO P.R. SANTIAGO

A celebrated lay religious author from Pasig was Don Joaquín Tuason y Enríquez (1842-1908). He was in fact the most prolific Filipino writer, whether religious or secular, during the Spanish Period and most probably to date. Judging from the vast number, range, quality and popularity of his works, he, more than any other author, helped spread the Good News and teachings of the Catholic Church among the Tagalogs, the most influential ethnic group in the Philippines during the Colonial Epoch. The second most prolific Filipino author was a secular priest, Padre Don Anselmo Avancena (1809-82) who wrote in his native Hiligaynon. He was the vicar general of the diocese of Jaro, Iloilo. Next year, we shall also commemorate the bicentennial of his birth.

On the feast of San Joaquín, the grandfather of Jesus, Don Joaquín Tuason was born in nearby Pateros on August

16, 1842. His parents were Don Pedro Tuason and Dona Hilaria Enríquez, Chinese mestizo entrepreneurs of the town. ("Tua-son" in Fujianese means "oldest grandson." Fujian (formerly called Fukien) province is the origin of most Chinese who migrated to the Philippines.) He studied at the newly-opened Jesuit school Ateneo Municipal (1859) but did not finish his studies due to frail health. (He had a younger brother, Padre José Tuason a secular priest who was not able to do parish work for long also because of a chronic ailment.) Joaquín's stint at the Ateneo, however, exposed him to the Jesuits who recognized his versatile talent for writing both prose and poetry as well as for translation and thus, encouraged him to translate Spanish religious works into Tagalog. He also developed friendships with the Dominicans and the Augustinians as well as Filipino and Spanish printers who owned or directed well-established printing presses in Manila which published his many works. He was a frequent traveler to Manila via the Pasig River.

In around 1870, he married Dona Gregoria Javier, the only child of Don Salvador Xavier (gobernadorcillo of Pasig 1853 and 1863) and Dona Alejandra Miguel, also a well-to-do Chinese mestizo couple. He then transferred residence to his wife's town in a *bahay na bato* in a corner lot across the town square (now Plaza Rizal) that faced the parish church. To the right of his house, across Calle Bacood (now P. Burgos Street), was the *Tribunal de Mestizos* to which his family belonged. (The Tribunal edifice later became the Municipal Hall of Pasig in the first half of the 20th century.) Since his wife's male forbears and relatives on both sides often served as the mayor for the *Gremio de Mestizos*, he was expected to take his turn

sometime as the town executive. But he begged off from the nomination apparently because it would get in the way of his avid writing and reading activities. It was his wife who competently managed the family rice lands and businesses including a wine shop in Kapasigan, an enterprise he had inherited from his father. His family experiences with the shop customers provided him with the topic for a verse narrative *Ang Maraual na Pamumuhay ni Bertong Lasing at ni Quicong Manunugal, Larauang Mistula nang Caraniuang Nangyayari sa mañga Totoong nagugumon sa Dalauang Viciong Ito* (1878).

At the age of twenty-two, he had published his first work, *Manga Pag dalao sa Santísimo Sacramento* in 1865. It was reprinted two years later. In 1869, he published a missal, *Matuid na Landas na Patungo sa Langit* which became a "best seller," being reprinted several times up to 1949. The book took on a new significance in the 1960s when Vatican II ruled that the Holy Mass should be celebrated in the vernacular. His success with it early on probably encouraged him to write or translate several other religious books for the rest of his life. Thus, he found his "mission in life." His prose work *Ang Bagong Robinson* is considered a prototype of the Tagalog novel. He further contributed articles to religious publications such as *Patnubay nang Católico*, *Apostolado de la Prensa* and *Ang Anac ng Bayan*. He was a rare author who did not follow the stereotype of a "starving writer" during the Spanish Period. Among the landed gentry of Pasig and its suburbs, he had the most unique source of income as a full time religious writer. He apparently applied the combined income from his writings and his wife's business activities to the expansion of their inherited land holdings.

To accommodate the annual rice harvests, he built a *bangán* (rice granary) made of stone and limestone with a sloping iron roof attached to the left side of his house. It had a front door for the *cargadores* to bring in the sacks of rice and a side door leading to the first floor of his house for access by family members. His only known form of relaxation was bird hunting.

He died of a heart ailment ("mitral insufficiency") on September 26 1908 at the age of 66. His intense writing and reading endeavors apparently engendered in him an internal transformation endowing him with spiritual knowledge and inner peace that prolonged his life. This was an era when most Filipinos died in their 40s and 50s or even earlier. As a loyal and indefatigable son of the church, he was blessed with the opportunity to receive its Last Rites and Sacraments as he had counseled his readers in a book he published a decade earlier *Paghahanda sa Camatayan* (1896). The record of his burial at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery is still extant: "En 27 de Septiembre de 1908, fué sepultado D. Joaquín Tuazon, mestizo sangley, casado con D.a Gregoria Javier, de la Plaza de la Paz de este pueblo. Falleció ayer a consecuencia de insuficiencia mitral a la edad de 66 anos. Recibió los Santos Sacramentos de la Confesión y Comunión. Fué su entierro cantado. Padre Patricio Calderón (firmado)."

After about five years, his remains were transferred to the church under the tiled floor of the Chapel of Most Holy Rosary to the right of the transept. His tombstone used to face the medial half of the chapel's front door. The site underwent several renovations since the 1970s and his *lápida* was covered over by new flooring. Despite his fame and accomplishments in the previous century,

he was by then a completely forgotten man. The chapel is now dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Trinity when the church was transformed as the cathedral of the new Diocese of Pasig (2003). In commemoration of Tuason's death centenary this year, the Diocesan Commission for the Conservation of Church Heritage plans to install a commemorative plaque on his burial site.

Tres Marías

Ten children were born to the Tuason couple but only three daughters reached maturity: María Dominga, María Margarita and María Asunción. All three became Dominican tertiaries, remained in the state of single blessedness and kept their home like a mini-beaterio frozen in the 19th century. Their lives were focused more on the next world than on the present. Like their father, they practiced Christian charity and extended a helping hand to the poor in general and needy friends and relatives. They had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (to which their father wrote a popular novena in 1884 that was reprinted several times) and the Immaculate Heart of Mary as well as the Most Holy Rosary. Since they owned these holy images (apparently sculptured by Don Máximo Vicente), they unobtrusively directed their annual feasts and processions in the parish and arranged for the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in private homes. Dominga had a strong personality and looked after the protection and security of their home. Like their father, Margarita was the intellectual type who was called "Maestra Margarita" because she had a teacher's diploma from the Colegio de Sta. Rosa. Besides Tagalog, she spoke Spanish, French and English. She took care of the re-printings of her father's works after his death.

Asunción was a sensitive soul who had a quiet "nervous breakdown" in middle life. One by one, they died according to their birth order. Before they died, they forgave their debtors figuratively and literally who visited them with this request. When Asunción, the last of her line, passed away, the family estate was divided among distant relatives, descendants of their second cousin, Sabina Javier.

Note: This biography is as much a tribute to the subject as to his main biographer, Dr. E. Arsenio Manuel (1909-2003), UP professor of anthropology, who was the only scholar who took the time to do serious research on and publish a major biography of Don Joaquín Tuason in 1955 as well as of other great but forgotten Filipinos. (See *Dictionary of Philippine Biography.* 4 volumes.) The present biography is based on Manuel's work with some additions from this writer's own researches through the years in Pasig where his ancestors were the town mates and family friends of the biographee and his daughters. As a child, this budding historian had the rare opportunity of meeting, observing and occasionally roaming in the house of the Tuason daughters in their old age since they lived on the same street as our family.

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A Contribution of the Delegation of the Holy See on the Occasion of the Third World Water Forum
(Kyoto, 16th-23rd March 2003)

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

PRESENTATION BY H.E. MSGR. RENATO R. MARTINO

On this World Water Day, I have the pleasure of presenting WATER, AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT FOR LIFE: a Note prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace as a contribution of the Holy See to the Third World Water Forum, now taking place in Kyoto, Japan. Even the title of the Note reflects the concern of the Holy See, as well as its ethical and religious understanding of the many complex water-related problems. Water is a good that must serve for the development of the whole person and of every person.

After the first section, in which some of the fundamental moral principles related to the question of water are laid out, the Note deals with the key problems which

governments and the international community have to face today at the social, economic, political and environmental level. In the final section, after having acknowledged the importance water holds within religious traditions, the Note considers in some detail the right to water because of the growing importance that the efforts towards its full recognition is assuming in the public debate.

After the Third World Water Forum, and in the light of its conclusions, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace will deal with the topic of water in a more developed and detailed document. The topic is closely related to the message of the Social Doctrine of the Church concerning human promotion and is also an extremely urgent problem in today's world.

Vatican City, 22 March 2003

Archbishop Renato R. Martino
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

NOTE: WATER, AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT FOR LIFE

Introduction

Water is an essential element for life. Many people must confront daily the situation of an inadequate supply of safe water and the very serious resulting consequences. The intention of this paper is to present some of the human, social, economic, ethical and religious factors surrounding the issue of water.

The Holy See offers these reflections on some of the key issues in the agenda of the 3rd World Water Forum (Kyoto, 16th-23rd March 2003), in order to contribute its voice to the call for action to correct the dramatic situation

concerning water. The *human being* is the centre of the concern expressed in this paper and the focus of its considerations.

The management of water and sanitation must address the needs of all, and particularly of persons living in poverty. Inadequate access to safe drinking water affects the well being of over one billion persons and more than twice that number have no adequate sanitation. This all too often is the cause of disease, unnecessary suffering, conflicts, poverty and even death. This situation is characterized by countless unacceptable injustices.

I. A FAR-REACHING QUESTION

Water plays a central and critical role in all aspects of life – in the national environment, in our economies, in food security, in production, in politics. Water has indeed a special significance for the great religions.

The inadequacy in the supply and access to water has only recently taken centre stage in global reflection as a serious and threatening phenomenon. Communities and individuals can exist even for substantial periods without many essential goods. The human being, however, can survive only a few days without clean, safe drinking water.

Many people living in poverty, particularly in the developing countries, daily face enormous hardship because water supplies are neither sufficient nor safe. Women bear a disproportionate hardship. For water users living in poverty this is rapidly becoming an issue crucial for life and, in the broad sense of the concept, *a right to life issue.*

Water is a major factor in each of the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and envi-

ronmental. In this framework, it is understood that water must meet the needs of the present population and those of future generations of all societies. This is not solely in the economic realm but in the sphere of integral human development. Water policy, to be sustainable, must promote the good of every person and of the whole person.

Water has a central place in the practices and beliefs of many religions of the world. This significance manifests itself differently in various religions and beliefs. Yet two particular qualities of water underlie its central place in religions: water is a primary building block of life, a creative force; water cleanses by washing away impurities, purifying objects for ritual use as well as making a person clean, externally and spiritually, ready to come into the presence of the focus of worship.

II. THE WATER ISSUE: SOME ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The principle water difficulty today is not one of absolute scarcity, but rather of distribution[1] and resources. Access and deprivation underlie most water decisions. Hence linkages between water policy and ethics increasingly emerge throughout the world.

Respect for life and the dignity of the human person must be the ultimate guiding norm for all development policy, including environmental policy.[2] While never over-

[1] Selborne, Lord, *The Ethics of Freshwater Use: A Survey,* COMSET Sub-Commission on the Ethics of Fresh Water, p. 5.

[2] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Message for the Celebration of World Day of Peace, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation,* 1 January 1990, §7.

looking the need to protect our eco-systems, it is the critical or basic needs of humanity that must be operative in an appropriate prioritization of water access. Powerful international interests, public and private, must adapt their agendas to serve human needs rather than dominate them.

The human person must be the central point of convergence of all issues pertaining to development, the environment and water. The *centrality of the human person* must thus be foremost in any consideration of the issues of water. The first priority of every country and the international community for sustainable water policy should be to provide access to safe water to those who are deprived of such access at present.

The earth and all that it contains are for the use of every human being and all peoples.[3] This principle of the *universal destination of the goods of creation* confirms that people and countries, including future generations, have the right to fundamental access to those goods which are necessary for their development. Water is such a common good of humankind. This is the basis for cooperation toward a water policy that gives priority to persons living in poverty and those living in areas endowed with fewer resources.[4] The few, with the means to control, cannot destroy or exhaust this resource, which is destined for the use of all.

People must become the "active subjects" of safe water policies. It is their creativity and capacity for innovation that makes people the driving force toward finding new

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[3] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, § 69.

[4] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, §45.

solutions. It is the human being who has the ability to perceive the needs of others and satisfy them.[5] Water management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels. Both men and women should be involved and have equal voice in managing water resources and sharing of the benefits that come from sustainable water use.

In a globalized world the water concerns of the poor become the concerns of all in a prospective of *solidarity.* This solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, to the good of all and of each individual. It presupposes the effort for a more just social order[6] and requires a preferential attention to the situation of the poor. The same duty of solidarity that rests on individuals exists also for nations: advanced nations have a very heavy obligation to help the developing people.[7]

The principle of *subsidiarity* acknowledges that decisions and management responsibilities pertaining to water should take place at the lowest appropriate level. While the water issue is global in scope, it is at the local level where decisive action can best be taken. The engagement of communities at the grassroots level is key to the success of water programs.

III. WATER: A SOCIAL GOOD

While vital to humanity, water has a strong social content. It is highly charged with symbolism and is one

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[5] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus,* §32.

[6] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis,* §38-40 and Second Vatican Ecumenical Council *Gaudium et spes,* §100.

[7] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et spes,* §86.

of the essentials of life. Among the important social characters of water is its role in human nourishment, health and sanitation as well as peace and conflict avoidance.

Water for Food and Rural Development

Agriculture represents a key sector in the economies of developing countries and cannot be sustained without sufficient water. In most of these countries agricultural activities are a major source of livelihood and an essential dimension of local social cohesion and culture. This activity is carried on by small farmers in rural areas, very often with huge constraints. However, it must be remembered that, in the end, the dominant use of water around the world will continue to be water for food security.

People living in rural areas, many times in poverty, can be driven by necessity to exploit beyond sustainable limits the little land they have at their disposal.[8] Special training aimed at teaching them how to harmonize the cultivation of land with respect for water and other environmental needs should be encouraged. Where possible, cooperative efforts of water management and use should be encouraged.

Participation suffers when large portions of a population lack skills and knowledge to engage in the issue before them. It should not be overlooked, however, that often those lacking formal education possess traditional forms of knowledge that can be vital and decisive in addressing and solving the question of water.

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[8] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Peace 1999 *Respect for Human Rights the Secret of True Peace,* §10.

The special knowledge of indigenous people should be esteemed.

In the context of rural development, a shift is needed, however, in the emphasis from the traditional irrigation to other means that focus on the needs of the poor and their food insecurity. The challenges are to develop water-saving technologies and to structure incentives to encourage development.

Lands that have been damaged by waterlogging and salinization must be reclaimed through drainage programs. New irrigation development needs to be carried out with proper environmental impact assessment. Policies must be encouraged that develop sustainable irrigation and harness the wider potential of rainfed farming, incorporating water management for gardens and foods from common property resources.

Safe Drinking Water, Health and Sanitation

Three crucial concerns are present in the relationship between water and health: managing quantity constraints faced by water-poor countries and their impact on human activities; the maintenance of water quality in the face of growing demand; and the direct link between health and water as pertains to diseases.

Management of water quantity can be carried out by revising the allocation of water to different users. Better maintenance and repair of existing water systems can often significantly increase the water supply. Water conservation methods such as rainwater harvesting, fog condensation and underground dams should be studied for use where appropriate along with stabilization ponds for wastewater

and treatment technology for the use of wastewater for irrigation.

Water shortages can be substantially overcome through further development and use of treated urban wastewater for use in agriculture. This has considerable potential and if carefully managed carries only very limited risks and associated difficulties.

The problem of maintaining and improving *water quality* is especially acute in the more urbanized areas, predominantly in developing countries. This is most often hampered by a failure to enforce pollution controls at the main point source and the inadequacy of sanitation systems and of garbage collection and disposal.

Most of the *diseases* that contaminate water come from animal or human waste and are communicable. These diseases have health effects that are heavily concentrated in the developing world, and within that context particularly among poor urban populations. Wastewater is often the medium through which these can affect humans.

Whether it relates to quantity, quality or disease, the trend away from centralized government agencies and towards empowering local governments and local communities to manage water supplies must be emphasized. This necessitates building community capacities, especially in the area of personnel, and the allocation of resources to the local level.

Peace and/or Conflict

Growing pressure due to increasing demand for water can be a source of conflict. When water is scarce, competition for limited supplies has lead nations to see water

as a matter of national or regional security. History provides ample evidence of competition and disputes over shared fresh water resources.

Identifying potential trouble areas does little good if there are no effective and recognized mechanisms for mitigating tensions. Existing international water law may be unable to handle the strains of ongoing and future problems. But some mechanisms for reducing the risks of such conflicts do in fact exist. These need renewed international support and should be applied more effectively and at an earlier stage of potential conflicts.

At the international level, conflicts tend to focus on shared river basins and transboundary waters, especially when combined with circumstances of low water availability. Tensions arise with increasing frequency over projects to dam or divert water by countries in a powerful position upstream from their neighbouring countries.

IV. WATER: AN ECONOMIC GOOD

Water has always been acknowledged for its role in production and thus in the economy. However, in recent years increased emphasis has been given to the economic value of water.

The Economics of Water

The economics of water is one of the most important aspects of water resource management that needs to be balanced with cultural and social concerns. The concept of treating water as an economic good is valid but the practice of doing so can be challenging.

The use of water for industry and energy are of great importance in terms of the amounts of water used, the cost of investments to provide the water and the economic significance of the resultant production. Every water policy must address the underlying economic issues.

The aim of treating water as an economic good should be to accord water its proper economic value and enable the water economy of the country to be integrated with the broader national economy. Policies relating to the economics of water should ensure optimum efficiency and the most beneficial use while meeting the required objects of social development and environmental sustainability. There are increasing instances, however, of the commercialisation of water and water services.

The most delicate and sensitive point in the consideration of water as an economic good is to ensure that a balance is maintained between ensuring that water for basic human needs is available to the poor and that, where it is used for production or other beneficial use, it is properly and appropriately valued.

Water and Energy

Hydroelectric power is an important source of clean energy. It provides approximately twenty percent of total electricity production worldwide and brings notable economic and environmental benefits. For poor mountainous regions it offers one of the few avenues for economic growth via electricity exports. However, too often in the past such projects have been accompanied by devastating environmental costs.

Policy discussion in this area has been dominated by big dams to the neglect of issues such as small-scale hydropower and water use for cooling in thermal power plants. While most of this water re-enters the water system, the significant change in temperature and in some cases quality, has serious environmental and resource implications. Dams still remain today one the most contentious development issues for the water sector.

Private Sector Engagement and Privatization

Water by its very nature cannot be treated as a mere commodity among other commodities. Catholic social thought has always stressed that the defence and preservation of certain common goods, such as the natural and human environments, cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces, since they touch on fundamental human needs which escape market logic (cf. *Centesimus Annus,* 40).

Water has traditionally been a State responsibility in most countries and viewed as a public good. Governments worldwide, for diverse political and social considerations, may indeed often provide large subsidies to insulate water users from the true cost of water provision. Being at the service of its citizens, the State is the steward of the people's resources which it must administer with a view to the common good.

At the same time, in the interest of achieving more efficient sustainable water services, private sector involvement in water management is growing. It has however proved to be extremely difficult to establish the right balance of public-private partnerships and serious errors have been committed. At times individual enterprises attained almost monopoly powers over public goods.

A prerequisite for effective privatization is that it be set within a clear legislative framework which allows government to ensure that private interventions do in actual fact protect the public interest.

The debate today is not whether the private sector will be involved but how and to what extent it will be present as the actual provider of water services. In any formation of private sector involvement with the state, there must exist a general parity among the parties allowing for informed decisions and sound agreements. A core concern in private sector involvement in the water sector is to ensure that efforts to achieve a water service that is efficient and reliable do not cause undue negative effects for the poor and low income families.

V. WATER: AN ENVIRONMENTAL GOOD

The debate surrounding water has historically been largely confined to socio-economic issues. Today, in the context of sustainable management of water resources, the environmental aspect is coming to the forefront along with water's role in supporting ecosystem functioning and species.

This approach to water resources has focussed on sustainable use and on ensuring water utilization that is environmentally sound. A specific proposal to protect aquatic ecosystems and fresh water living resources has been put forward over the years reflecting the extreme threats that exist for many wetlands, rivers and lake ecosystems, deltas and other areas.

Systematic changes to policy approaches are now needed, moving away from a traditional supply-side technical

focus to one in which environmental issues are seen as integral to water policies and practices. Policy goals and priorities have in some cases to be re-ordered with frequent use of Environmental Impact Assessments as determinants of decisions on water investments. There is, however, a lack of adequate human resources in this sector. This calls for planning and investments in human resource development.

Environmentally Sound Sanitation

Conventional forms of centralised sanitation are coming under increasing criticism due to huge operating and maintenance costs but more importantly their high water consumption and the groundwater pollution that can result. Further these types of wastewater and sewage disposal systems usually deprive agriculture, and consequently food production, of valuable nutrients.

An alternative approach towards ecologically and environmentally sound sanitation is offered by a concept referred to as "ecological sanitation". This takes the principle of environmental sanitation further in that their focus is keeping the environment clean and safe and preventing pollution. It includes wastewater treatment and disposal and disease prevention activities. It is an approach premised on recycling principles with a key objective of promoting a new philosophy of dealing with what has been regarded as waste.

Disaster Mitigation and Risk Management

A people centred pro-poor policy on water management must address the question of water related hazards such as

floods, droughts, desertification, tropical storms, erosion and various kinds of pollution. Many so called natural disasters are in fact man made in their roots, due to inadequate attention to the environment and the consequences of human actions or indeed inaction. Once again, it is the poor who suffer most when they are exposed to such dangers. But everyone's security is at risk.

More can be done in the areas of monitoring and forecasting of extreme events especially through more efficient early warning system and technical cooperation between poor and more developed countries in devising planning strategies and setting up appropriate infrastructures. Climate variability and change are now recognized as being an essential dimension of such evaluation.

Efforts of humanitarian assistance in response to disasters relating to water must identify the faults which gave rise to such occurrences and ensure that they do not recur. Post disaster reconstruction is not a question of reconstructing the past, but of building for a safer and more ecologically sustainable future.

VI. OTHER ISSUES IMPACTING WATER SUPPLY

The water that exists today would be enough to meet human needs if it were equitably distributed throughout the world.[9] Since it is not, there arise situations of scarcity; some due to natural causes and others due to a range of human activities.

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[9] Price WaterHouse Coopers, *Water: A World Financial Issue,* March, 2001, p. 10.

Population

World population has continued to grow throughout history. While the human demand for fresh water has risen steadily, since 1940 the global water withdrawals have risen even faster than the rate of population growth.[10] It is correct to deduce that more people need more water. However, to attribute to population growth a disproportional role misrepresents the true picture. The principal cause in increased demand is not in itself the mere growth of population but the disproportionate and unsustainable use of water for production and consumption by populations in developed countries.

The ever growing concentration of a very high percentage of the world's population in large urban areas, especially in mega-cities, is going to propose new challenges for water and sanitation management, which will seriously impact the short-term and long-term local demand for water.

Politics

Water is a political issue. There is little today that cannot be achieved technically. What is needed is political effectiveness, political will and effective governance.

The political arena is where decisions of water utilisation will take place. The solution to water problems requires the interaction of many spheres and sectors. This

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[10] United Nations, Department for Policy Coordination an Sustainable Development, *Critical Trends: Global Change and Sustainable Development*, 1997, p. 45.

interaction must take account of the objectives of safe drinking water, sanitation and food security for all. Politics must ensure proper interaction, through setting correct priorities and the equitable allocation of resources, as well as through fostering interaction between institutions and the engagement and support of local communities, who are the most directly affected. Political will and effective follow through is required for successful action in the water sector. The long-term viability of a country's water supply infrastructure depends on leadership and vision of political leaders, at national and local levels and their capacity to get things done.

New legislation and institutional changes will be needed in many countries to form the framework within which the politics of water supply can be realized. A larger portion of the national budget may need to be directed to the water sector. Political leaders are crucial in generating genuine political support and vision in order to provide the motivation for such changes.

Often the institutional structure of the water sector at government level and the water portfolio is moved about between different ministries and many times is the result of political uncertainty and a lack of political responsibility.

The international political arena must be given its proper role in seeking and formulating global strategies to address water issues. The issue of water cuts across so many areas relating to sustainable development and poses considerable challenges to politics at the international level. Action-orientated responses to the challenges is what the people of the world await.

A Right to Water

A major achievement of recent history has been the ability to elaborate, within the framework of the United Nations, a network of international instruments formally identifying and proclaiming a broad spectrum of universally recognized human rights. Although access to water is a precondition to many of these rights, "clean drinking water" is explicitly mentioned only in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[11] It is however to be found in some regional human rights documents and national Constitutions.

Sufficient and safe drinking water is a precondition for the realization of other human rights. It is argued that water was so fundamental a resource that, just as a right to air was not identified, water was not explicitly mentioned at the time the fundamental human rights documents were drawn up but was understood as a given which the drafters implicitly included. Furthermore, several of the explicit rights protected by conventions and agreements, such as rights to food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services,[12] cannot be attained or guaranteed without also guaranteeing access to clean water.

There is a growing movement to formally adopt a human right to water. The dignity of the human person

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[11] In Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is explicitly mentioned that States Parties have the obligation to provide "clean drinking water" to implement the Right of the Child "to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health".

[12] Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 25.

mandates its acknowledgement, along with the sound and logical argumentation found in the concept of implicit inclusion. Water is an essential commodity for life. Without water life is threatened, with the result being death. The right to water is thus an inalienable right.

The challenge remains as to how such a right to water would be realized and enforced at the local, national and international levels. Just as, for example, the acknowledgement of the right to food has not eliminated hunger, the promotion of the right to water is a first step and needs careful implementation thought to arrive to the desired goal of access to safe drinking water for all. A right to adequate and safe drinking water should be interpreted in a manner fully consistent with human dignity and not in a narrow way, by mere reference to volumetric quantities and technologies or by viewing water primarily as an economic good.

Poverty

Poverty is the most important factor related to the sustainable provision of basic water and sanitation services. The unavailability of basic services is a primary measure of poverty and poverty is the primary obstacle in the effective provision of basis services. Water scarcity has more dramatic effects for the poor than for the wealthy. The cost of even minimal basic water services is so high that the poor may never be able to afford them.

Sustainable water policies will not be attained in areas which are impoverished in many other aspects. Poor services are a symptom of something fundamental. Authorities are unable to provide the institutional frame-

work and the infrastructures to regulate the sector. Development at the institutional level is needed whereby the priority of water is clearly identified. The authority and responsibility to enable services to operate efficiently must be provided. This will require structures for environmental and economic regulation.

The water services in many developing countries are however still plainly inadequate in providing safe water supplies. This situation is so dramatic that it will not be overcome without increased development assistance and focused private investment from abroad. Funds released through debt relief could well be utilized in improving water services. Country partnerships can provide a method of institutional building and reform whereby a long-term link can be formed between the water sector of a developed country and that of a developing country. International poverty reduction strategies should focus explicitly on the water needs of the poorest populations.

National and local financial support for the water sector must also increase. Where subsidies are necessary, and they will be necessary, they should carefully target poor and families living in poverty rather than being applied generally. Following consultation at the community level, policies on water and related public health and environmental sectors need to be revised and where lacking established. After such policy change there is need to create or revise the body of laws impacting water that will effectively obtain and allocate the necessary supply of it.

Poverty is about people and their ability to realize their God-given potential. The poor show extraordinary

creativity in seeking means of survival in the absence of adequate services. This creativity is a resource which should not be overlooked in working together to build up sustainable communities and avoid the creation of dependence.

Conclusion

Water is an essential element for life. Right throughout human history water has been looked on as something intertwined with humankind. Human beings live alongside water and are nourished by water. It is a source of beauty, wonder and relaxation and refreshment. Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power. It is no accident that people chose places associated with water for the holidays, in order to renew and regenerate themselves. Water has an aesthetic value.

In the Judeo-Christian Holy Book, God is presented as the source of living water beside which the just man can find life. Because the Bible was written in a part of the world where water is scarce, it is not surprising that water features significantly in the lives of the people. Due to the scarceness of water in the lands of the Scripture, rainfall and an abundance of water was seen as a sign of God's favour and goodness.

Water is a primary building block of life. Without water there is no life, yet water, despite its creative role, can destroy. The Bible opens precisely with the image of the divine spirit hovering over the water at the creation of the universe. In the accounts of creation contained in the first two chapters of the Bible, it is from the midst of the

waters that dry land is made to appear, while living reptiles and rich life forms are made to swarm the waters. It is also water that moistens the earth for other forms of life to appear.

The separation of the elements permits them to interact in a positive sense, recognizing the intrinsic value of each. Disorder and confusion among the elements provokes a return to the primeval chaos. Humankind is thus called to live in harmony with creation and to respect its integrity.

Conservation of water is good because it provides for future generations that fundamental good which nourishes and allows us to protect such a source of power beauty and many other nice things.

None of the issues presented here is done in isolation. Only in a true holistic approach can the human being confront the challenges set forward in addressing the issue of water. The Holy See's contribution is presented with the conviction of the central role of the human being in caring for the environment and its constitutive elements. Only when humankind respects the integrity of creation, in conformity to God's providential plan, will we reach a true appreciation of the significance of water in creation and for humankind.

Vatican City, 14 March 2003

CANON LAW SECTION

Cases and Inquiries

JAVIER GONZÁLEZ, OP

RENEWAL OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

QUESTION:

What is the duration of the temporary religious profession? What are the conditions for its renewal? What is the status of a temporary professed religious whose profession period has elapsed while he is forcibly incommunicated with his Order or Congregation? Can his profession be considered automatically renewed since such is his intention, and will he be still considered a member of the Institute upon his release with all the consequences it implies?

ANSWER:

These questions are related to the renewal of religious profession. The first has direct reference to the duration of the temporary religious profession; the second is concerned with the conditions of profession renewal; and the third refers to a particular case that, given

its unique circumstances, seems to belong rather to casuistry. For purposes of clarity, we will give the canonical side of each.

1. Duration of the temporary religious profession

Religious profession can be *temporary* or *perpetual.* The Code of Canon Law establishes that temporary profession "is to be made for the period defined by the institute's own law" and that *"this period may not be less than three years nor longer than six years"* (c. 655). However, the same Code makes an exception to this principle in canon 657 §2 by establishing that "if it seems opportune, the period of temporary profession can be extended by the competent Superior in accordance with the institute's own law; the total time during which the member is bound by temporary vows *may not, however, extend beyond nine years."* In short, the duration of the temporary religious profession, regulated by the proper law of each institute, swings between a minimum period of three years and a maximum of nine years.

When the time for which profession was made has elapsed, several options concerning the latter's continuity are contemplated by canon law, namely, (1) the renewal of the temporary profession; (2) the extension of the temporary profession; or (3) the anticipation of the perpetual profession (c. 657). Each of these possibilities has its own characteristics and limitations:

a) Renewal of profession. "Renewal" and "extension" are two different juridical acts. The renewal has to be freely requested by the religious; so it is in fact established:

"When the period for which profession was made has elapsed, the religious, who freely requests this and who is judged suitable, is to be admitted to the renewal of profession or to perpetual profession; otherwise he should leave." On the other hand the extension is discretionarily imposed on the religious by the competent Superior, in accordance with both the universal and the proper law.

b) Extension of profession. The extension of temporary profession is facultative (*"can* be extended") by the competent Superior. The only reason for it mentioned in canon 657 §2 is "if it seems opportune"; and the justification of said opportunity, as it is gathered from the same canon, would be the existence of solid doubt about the suitability of the religious or about lack of freedom to definitively embrace the state of religious life. But in reality other prudent reasons of convenience either on the part of the institute or on the part of the religious, as well as the moral conviction that the candidate's vocation will be strengthened as time passes by, would justify the extension within the maximum margin of nine years established by the Code.

c) Anticipation of perpetual profession. "Perpetual profession can *for a just reason* be anticipated, but not by more than *three months"* (can 657 §3). On saying "for a just reason" the canon is moving in the lowest degree of gravity demanded by the law and therefore somehow indicating that the decision of the Superiors in favor or against such anticipation is "just" (fair) if they simply act in accordance with the responsibilities of their office. And regarding the three months mentioned as maximum

possible period of anticipation of the perpetual profession, it is clear that it refers to the three months immediately preceding the day on which canonically the perpetual profession should be made, once the concrete period of time prescribed by canon 655 has ended as well as the possible facultative extension in accordance with canon 657 §2.

2. *Conditions for the renewal of vows*

For the validity of the temporary profession, three requisites are required, namely, the minimum age of eighteen years, the completion of the novitiate and the free admission granted by the competent superior with the approval of his/her council. For the renewal of said profession, the law prescribes also the following requirements: (1) that the time for which profession was made has ended; (2) that the candidate freely and spontaneously requests it; and (3) that the candidate is judged suitable. To these requirements two more can be added that are required for the validity of any religious profession, namely, (4) that the profession is expressed and made without force, grave fear or fraud; and (5) that the candidate is received by a legitimate Superior personally or by his delegate (cc. 656-657). Let us say a word about each of them:

a) End of the period for which the profession was made. The renewal of the religious profession has to be made immediately on expiration of the term for which it was made, otherwise the religious ceases being such, since the vows cease automatically upon the expiration of the time for which they were pronounced. For the reckoning

of that time the provisions of Book I, title IX (cc. 200-203) must be taken into account, as well of what was previously said on the duration of the temporary religious profession, its facultative extension in particular cases and the possible anticipation of the perpetual profession (cf. cc. 655-657). Indeed the period of the temporary profession ceases either with its renewal, with the candidate's leaving the Institute or being rejected by it, and with the candidate's admission to the perpetual profession.

b) Free and spontaneous request on the part of the candidate. With the due anticipation prescribed by its own constitutions, the candidates are required to submit a petition in writing and personally signed in which they express their willingness to renew their religious vows. This prescription is intended to guarantee the individual personal freedom necessary so that religious profession may be considered valid. Nevertheless, since such request is not by itself a definitive proof of the candidate's freedom, Superiors and members of the concerned religious community are not exempted from making sure that the profession is made "without force, grave fear or fraud" (c. 656 §1). Due to the importance of this requirement, the Code mentions it expressly, instead of leaving it tacitly understood as the previous Code did.

c) Verified suitability. The basic personal qualities required for admission in religious life are mentioned in canon 642 grouped in three chapters: health, suitable character and sufficient maturity to embrace the life of the institute. The canon adds that these qualities have to be verified, if necessary, with the collaboration of experts,

always safeguarding the rights to fame and privacy that all persons have (c. 220). The required health has to be proportionate to the nature and apostolic activities of the institute, just like the degree of human and religious maturity demanded of the candidates. In any case the final decision on the sufficient possession or not of these qualities on the part of the candidate pertains to the competent superior, who in his/her evaluation will have to consider the demanded minimum requirements for the valid admission to novitiate (c. 643) and the prescriptions of the proper law.

d) Profession made without force, fear or deceit. Without leaving any margin for automatic or tacit professions, the Code prescribes that all religious profession be expressly or explicitly made. Actually all religious institutes have their own formulation of the profession as well as their own ritual or way to conduct it. Specifically contained in that profession form are the religious' free personal condition, the consecration scope (some orders or congregations add a "fourth vow" or some concrete promises) and the period of time for which it is made. This principle which is valid for all professions is undoubtedly valid also for the profession that is renewed.

e) Reception by the legitimate Superior. So that the renewal of profession in a religious institute be valid it must be received by the legitimate superior. Such reception is a true act of governance by virtue of which the superior, personally or through a representative officially delegated, accepts the dedication of the one professing in the name of the Church and of the institute, to which the religious is by that very fact incorporated.

The profession renewal, although juridically seen as a mere extension of the temporary religious consecration, being therefore a provisional stage and a step towards perpetual profession, is nevertheless very important, because, on the one hand, it allows the candidate to complete the preparation before taking a definitive commitment and, on the other hand, allows the institute to evaluate the suitability of the candidate for such a challenging and lasting state of life.

3. *Automatic renewal of profession under forcible circumstances?*

The case is about a temporary professed religious whose profession period expires while he is currently outside his Institute and, furthermore, forcibly incommunicated with it. And the question is about his canonical status, specifically on whether his profession can be considered automatically renewed (since such was his intention), and whether he may still be considered a member of the Institute upon his release and that those years of presumably temporary profession might count for his perpetual profession....

Well, the case is very particular, bordering on casuistry, and as such should be treated. Canon Law is silent about automatic renewal of religious profession. That is why the answer may be subject to different opinions on the matter. I am expressing my personal opinions on the matter.

When speaking of religious institutes as societies in which, in accordance with their own law, the members pronounce public vows, the Code adds that if the vows are temporary they *are to be renewed when the time elapses*

(c. 607 §2). Their non-renewal, letting the period for which they were made pass, would mean their cessation, and with it the juridical consequences that religious profession implies, namely, consecration to God, vowed assumption of the three evangelical counsels, and the incorporation into the institute.

Canon 1194 states that "A vow ceases by lapse of the time specified for the fulfillment of the obligation, or by a substantial change in the matter promised, or by cessation of a condition upon which the vow depended or of the purpose of the vow, or by dispensation, or by commutation" (c. 1194).

Are these instances applicable to this particular case? I believe so, even if there are extraordinary circumstances. The law contemplates facts, not just mere intentions, inasmuch as juridical effects or consequences take effect upon the commission of external actions. No doubt that the candidate's intention may be to continue being incorporated to the Institute – and most probably the Institute's also in regard to its member in temporary vows – but the juridical effects of religious profession take place upon the actual pronouncement of the latter. (N.B. The talk here is of the "juridical effects" not of those theological or spiritual ones that can be attached to vehement longing for something, like for instance the longing to receive Holy Communion when it is not materially possible, which is traditionally known as "spiritual communion." The vehement desire of a member temporarily attached to a religious institute to continue being incorporated into it when there is no possibility of profession renewal may be commendable and even meritorious but in itself is devoid of juridical

effects.) It has been said that one of the requirements for the validity of profession is that it is *actually received by the legitimate Superior personally or by his delegate* (c. 656).

Are there any anticipated solutions that can be applied to situations similar to this one, particularly when they are somehow foreseen? Yes, I guess. At least two come to my mind:

a) A written document prepared beforehand by the competent superior (with the consent of his council), upon the request of the candidate, containing a mutual understanding between them in case such foreseen situation happens. The validity of this solution, which can be even encouraged by the proper law of the Institute, will only be based on the principle that *ad impossibilem nemo tenetur* ["Nobody is bound by the impossible"].

b) The establishment of some indirect contact between the Superior and the candidate by secret means or intermediaries, through which delegation to give and receive the profession is given. This solution will not imply any canonical exception, but does not address exactly the case of the inquiry, which speaks of total incommunication...

May the principle of "Ecclesia supplet" be applied to this case, thus assigning juridical value to a purely intentional renewal? I do not think so, for this principle contained in the Code of Canon Law refers to the supply of power of governance in favor of some persons in authority to validly perform acts which otherwise, due to lack of such power, would have been invalid. The

principle reads: "In common error, whether of fact or of law, and in positive and probable doubt, whether of law or of fact, the Church supplies executive power of governance for both the external and the internal forum" (c. 144). But this is not the case here.

One question that may fittingly be formulated about this particular case is *whether or not the Institute is morally bound* to readmit the temporary professed religious who without fault on his part was unable to have his profession renewed in due time and is now knocking at the Institute's gate. I am inclined to believe that in some extraordinary cases the Institute is indeed bound to incorporate into its bosom the member by new profession, whenever this is possible, making recourse if necessary to some dispensation or canonical healing. This is dictated not only by charity and common sense, but also by the ecclesiastical law itself, since particular situations may call for an application of canon 689 to them. The canon reads: "Even though contracted after profession, a physical or psychological infirmity which, in the judgment of experts, renders the member [in temporary profession] unsuited to lead a life in the institute, constitutes a reason for not admitting the member to renewal of profession or to perpetual profession, *unless the infirmity was contracted* through the negligence of the institute or *because of work performed in the institute.*" At times the situation demands not just for a literal application of the canon but rather for an analogical one, like for instance when the incommunication was due to religious persecution and the consequent infirmity connotes heroic witnessing. Since in such instances a temporary professed member cannot be excluded from the Institute, therefore it looks reasonable that in the same or similar situation the Institute should accept him.

Sunday Homilies for September-October 2008

ENRICO GONZALES, O.P.

SEPTEMBER 7 – TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 18:15-20

THE HEALING POWER OF THE CHURCH

"Grace" is a very strange word in our vocabulary. We use it often and yet, we are usually unaware of its detailed implications. It is a word we use in forgetfulness. It is like our Tagalog word "ano" or the English term "whatever" – common expressions we employ when words have failed us or we have failed words to indicate exactly what we mean. In theology, we understand grace as rooted in the life of God itself. But who knows among us what this "life of God" exactly means? In our experience, we use "magrasya" – "graceful" – to describe someone who has the charm to appear to us as lovely. Thus, a

lady may not be exactly pretty but there is something more in her that meets the eye. We call her not exactly as beautiful but charming – "magrasya". This only goes to say that way deep inside her is a mysterious factor so powerful that even her rough physical appearance cannot hide. Without getting into academic discussion, we simply call this "grace".

We have the intimations of grace not because God directly appears to us and explains to us his life and our participation therein. No. We know grace because it appears to us in human form, to be exact in Jesus, who is the Word in flesh living among us (Jn 1:14). From this Jesus, "we have all received grace upon grace." (Jn 1:16) Now, Jesus is no longer made present in grace as an individual person. Still grace keeps pouring on us through his continuing incarnation. Yes, up to now the grace that comes from Jesus still reveals itself in human form: the Church. The Church is indeed the social body which Jesus has taken to continue his incarnate presence in our midst. Jesus saves us through the Church. So even if this Church, for being a body albeit social in nature, possesses weaknesses inherent to the human form, still, it can be an instrument of salvation. Thanks to Jesus whose incarnation the Church images or should we say "sacramentalizes".

Looking at the Church, which because of its head – Jesus – is holy, we ironically find this holiness not exactly reflected in the lives of its members. In this world, the Church is not the communion of saints. Oftentimes, to our dismay, it is a communion of sinners. But this dismay should not lead us to despair. Because of Jesus, the Church,

notwithstanding the sinfulness of its members, still lives in hope. Grace will eventually triumph. The Church is not hell where healing is no longer possible. The Church is a hospital where weak and sick people find their health restored. No wonder the Church has "medical protocols" which may at times look cruel. But at times it takes to be "cruel" to be kind. The case for example is the Gospel-Reading for this Sunday. Jesus laid down "the legal protocols" to be observed in order to bring to order the human society we call the Church. When the Church is disturbed by erring members who proved themselves scandalous and recalcitrant, Jesus, like a good doctor, laid down his prescriptions. Prevention is of course the best medicine. But when sickness begins, the doctors prescribes the appropriate drug. And when the sickness gets worse, surgery at times becomes the only option.

When the Church instills disciplines among its members through its laws, do not think it enjoys imposing sanctions and punishments. The Church, like Jesus in today's Gospel-Reading, is just resorting to remedial measures to heal us. Again, like in the hospital, for all the discomforts and pains we experience there, the hospital remains an institution of hope. So, with the Church: notwithstanding, the pain we experience in the scandals of its members – clergy and laity alike – the Church, continues to be a beacon of eternal redemption. Jesus is after all the head of the Church. He is our doctor. He will heal us.

SEPTEMBER 14 – TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JN 3:13-17

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

Why has the sign of extreme failure become the ultimate symbol of victory? Because with Jesus the cross has become the antidote to selfishness which causes death. Death is synonymous with disintegration. Disintegration is absence of unity. Selfishness is the very root of this disunity in all its dimensions – physical, psychological and moral. With selfishness, an individual isolates himself from everything, and imprisons himself in his extremely narrow self. But nothing is created only for itself. Creation is the work of the triune God and therefore, his image. And God – the Holy Trinity – is in himself a communion of substantial relationships. Selfishness is the very opposite of such communion. Opposing God, selfishness contradicts unity; opposing unity which in itself the nature of God, selfishness destroys creation by sowing destruction and chaos. Selfishness is indeed not self-preservation but absolute suicide.

Jesus extended his arms on the cross. The arms with which selfishness led man to embrace only himself became the ultimate gesture of reaching out for everyone in love. Man, who in sin has long been mummified – his arms symbolically fossilized in tight suffocating self-embrace – became supple, soft and warm again. Thanks to Jesus,

man is alive once more. Thus, the whole process was reversed. Through the cross, Jesus halted disunity and re-introduced unity to creation – from chaos to order, from death to life, from selfishness to love. The crucifixion is indeed the crowning glory of God's incarnation. For the incarnation of the Word found its fulfillment in atonement. We cannot redeem ourselves and repair the damage our sin has done: death. The dead cannot bring itself back to life. Only God can do that. Jesus by embracing death itself takes to himself our own punishment. By suffering for us, by doing the ultimate sacrifice of dying on the cross, Jesus atoned for all the sins of humankind. This absolute atonement brings as a result universal **at-one-ment.** Now we have entered a new phase in our history. Jesus started it; now, we continue what Jesus has done by using the grace of the cross to bring unity to creation and to the world of men once more. We struggle to abandon our selfishness and with generosity sacrifice our own petty self interests for the sake of the common good, we persevere carrying our daily little crosses if only to prove we learn the lesson of Jesus' crucifixion. There is indeed only one road to at-one-ment: **atonement.** Only through the cross, we will find the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer for us to the Father: "... that they may be one, as we are one." (Jn 17:11)

SEPTEMBER 21 – TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 20:1-16

THE JUSTICE CALLED GRACE

Men are petty. They know only one kind of justice: revenge. Revenge reveals this pettiness of man. He cannot go beyond feelings. To him, feelings are the only things that matter. Forget about love. But is not love feeling? Yes, love to be human must feel, but again, for love to be human, it must be more than feeling. It must be commitment to persons other than oneself. Revenge crosses out this commitment. When we take revenge, we satisfy only our feeling: the desire to avenge an ego slighted and hurt. Yes, at times revenge looks like a noble drive which finds justification say, in fighting for one's honor, defending one's relatives, friends and countrymen but after a soul-searching analysis, revenge boils down to just one: self-satisfaction. Deep inside, we just want to put an end to our irritation and self-consuming hatred. We think wrongly of course that we can achieve such satisfaction only through revenge. But can eye for an eye restore sight to the blind? Can tooth for a tooth prevent tooth decay? Funny, but it hurts when we laugh for this kind of justice – revenge – is the kind of justice that brings disorder instead of order in the world.

In today's Gospel-Reading, Jesus introduced us to a new world where a new kind of justice rules: the justice

of grace. Grace is both an invitation which comes from God to participate in his own life and this communion in God's life itself once this invitation is accepted. Because this invitation and life is God's, he can extend it to whomever he chooses. There is no rule to restrict God in his generosity. Grace is absolutely free because it is the expression of God's nature itself: mercy. Mercy is love in action. That is why mercy, like love which it articulates in action, is not just feeling, but commitment to persons. Certainly such commitment goes beyond the kind of justice, which for our pettiness the only kind we know. In today's parable the earlier batch of workers typifies such attitude. They appreciate only cash. Justice for them has only one property: quantifiable and countable. Eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth. Jesus brought an end to this Old Testament's mentality and introduced us to a new world which he alone can describe. For this is his world: the world of grace. There, he lives and rules. No wonder that when we accept God's invitation to grace – an invitation to participate in his life – we will experience justice that knows no measure. God's justice in God's world is pure mercy. That is why when we reach the fulfillment of God's kingdom, we will finally understand the lesson with which today's parable has ended: "the last will be first, and the first will be last." (Mt 20:16) Surprise, surprise? To us who in this world experience only that kind of justice that knows no mercy, God's justice and his last judgment will indeed be a surprise. God's justice is grace and for this reason, truly amazing. Amazing grace, indeed!

SEPTEMBER 28 – TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 21:28-32

THE ULTIMATE SURPRISE

Accordingly, all the residents of heaven are open-mouthed and literally at that. Why not? To open one's mouth is the most expected bodily reaction to extreme amazement, isn't it? What event can surprise us more than to see tax collectors and prostitutes entering heaven ahead of us whom the society considers righteous? But Jesus stated that this will definitely happen on judgment day. The Last Judgment is indeed the ultimate surprise. For those whom we consider unworthy of heaven will be there and those whom we regard as deserving of heaven might not even be there. Witnessing this reversal of fortune, we cannot help but open our mouths in utter amazement. At the Last Judgment, such surprise must be so etched in our faces that we will look terribly funny. Looking at us, God cannot help but laugh. Indeed, the Last Judgment is the last laughter of God and it will resound forever.

Amazing grace, it's operation is unpredictable. We cannot foresee to what extent it will go and to what success it will lead us. At the second thought, this is not amazing at all. Mercy is so natural to God that it is taken in the Scriptures as his foremost name. God is the father of mercy. And mercy is the father of grace. And

grace is the only reason why our actions are pleasing to God. Done without grace, our good actions will only appear as pretensions to greatness. They are just done to please no one but ourselves. Such is pharisaical spirituality – a checklist spirituality to be sure – which takes a minute accounting of all the good actions done accordingly for God. Such "bookkeeping" will serve – according to this misguided thought – as though a bankbook which will buy heaven. Humbug! Heaven is definitely not for sale. Heaven is the reward of grace and ultimately the beneficence of God's mercy.

The tax collectors and prostitutes are definitely not good but they ask for help. A humble and contrite heart God cannot refuse. (Ps 51:17) "Help me" when uttered so very sincerely from the depths of one's soul cannot but reach God's heart. Listening to this plea of mercy, God's heart cannot but melt in forgiveness. On the contrary, the self-righteous never ask for help. This is their fault: they believe that they can do good without God's help, without God's grace. Like the pretentious son in today's Gospel-Reading, they appear obedient to God but in fact, they are most disobedient. Doing good, they only follow themselves in the mistaken notion that heaven is their right because they are just by themselves. But no one enters heaven under the title of justice. No one stands at the portal of heaven shouting: "Open this door! In the name of justice let me in!" The tax collectors and prostitutes know this is not the case. When by the working of grace, we someday stand in heaven side by side with them and ask them "Why are you here?" They will surely answer:

"Sa awa lang ng Dios, pare ko". As a reaction, we will open our mouth in utter amazement and realize God's judgment is so funny it deserves eternal laughter. Amazing grace, indeed, but what a pleasant surprise!

OCTOBER 5 – TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 21:33-43

PREPARE FOR THE SURPRISE

Jesus has never been judgmental. He even cautioned us not to make any judgment on our fellows lest by the same measure we would be judged. (Mt 7:1) This does not mean though that Jesus embodied all of those three monkeys that hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil. Jesus affirmed good and condemned evil when occasions presented themselves. But of course his judgment on this matter was very different from ours. Our censures are very personal. We seem to enjoy finger-pointing. We wag our forefinger right at the face of a particular individual whom we consider good enough to be a scapegoat. For every mishap, we have to blame someone. During his earthly sojourn, Jesus never blamed anybody for the ills of the world. He stood out among his contemporaries as a prophet who never condemned sinners because this world was sinful. He in fact enjoyed the company of sinners – both the overt ones: tax collectors and prostitutes and the covert ones: the chief priests and the elders, the Scribes and the Pharisees. He attended their parties and enjoyed drinking and dining with them like what a jolly partygoer should be.

Narrating today's parable, Jesus was not intending to implicate anyone, much less, his listeners – the chief

priest and the elders – in the historical rejection of the Messiah. The fact was the Messiah would be rejected and this was indeed a surprising event: "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." (Mt 21:42) But would Jesus impute guilt on anyone in the wake of the Messiah's death? Not Jesus. The end of the story did not end with the sentence of the chief priests and the elders: "He will bring those evil to an evil end, and lease the vineyard to others who will pay him in due time." (Mt 21:41) That was indeed typical of the chief priests and the elders. They loved tragic ending. Thanks to Jesus the parable did not end with revenge and therefore, more blood. Surprise of all surprises, the story wound up with a happy note: "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

Every time we listen to ordinary tale of human event, let us better prepare our hearts for a shock. Listening to radio and watching TV today are not good for health. The news are usually tragic, the images they project are gory, the ending of the broadcast is bloody. The news are getting worse day by day so that we exclaim: "What's new?" In the midst of these bad news, Jesus' story stood out like a refreshing dew in the middle of the desert. It is good news with a redeeming message. Listening to it, let us better prepare our hearts not for a shock but for a pleasant surprise. The story has a surprising twist for an ending: the triumph of grace. Amazing grace: "the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

OCTOBER 12 – TWENTY-EIGTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 22:1-14

AGAIN, THE SURPRISE

Another parable, another surprise. Today's parable seems to offset the happy note with which the parable last Sunday has ended. It sounds like an anti-climax to last Sunday's happy ending. Well, take today's parable as a word of warning, cautioning us not to be complacent lest we treat grace casually or worse, even shoddily. For, while it is true that grace is free, it is never cheap. We certainly do not deserve grace and neither can we offer anything purely human in exchange of grace. No. We receive grace not because we do good but on the contrary, we do good because we receive grace. But receiving grace does not mean spoon-feeding. God does not and will never force grace on us. For heaven, like grace which brings us there, is likewise free. Nobody enters heaven by force. Saintliness which is a requirement of heaven is the work of grace alright but it is also borne out of willful cooperation. When St. Thomas Aquinas was asked how to become a saint, he replied in no uncertain terms: "Will it."

The sad ending of the parable – the tragic fate of a gatecrasher – warns us that the story of grace is not just a fantasy. It is not just another sweet version of the children's fairy tale, *The Ugly Duckling*. As royal guests,

we attend the King's party with the right attire. Otherwise, we will come out in full view that we are in fact not invited. We are mere gatecrashers. Similarly, no one cheats on God. Nobody can steal heaven from God with a logic that speaks of irrationality. Have we not heard it often said by unscrupulous men that they would enjoy their sinful ways and repent later, just a second before their death? God is infinitely merciful anyway. So, he won't mind if they rush into heaven just in the nick of time, a second before it finally closes. What a plan! The question is: does heaven work according to our strategy? Does grace act according to our command? The error of those who presume the mercy of God rests on their false self-appreciation that they are the master of God's grace, that in justice they can make it follow their bidding because they own it. Ah grace! So free, and yet so expensive! It took the Son of God to die for us so that we may share his life – his grace. Now, do we think he will just squander it with people who treat it without reverence? Will he throw his pearl to pigs? (Mt 7:6)

OCTOBER 19 – TWENTY-NINTH IN ORDINARY TIME

THE EARTHLY LOGIC THAT MAKES SUPERNATURAL SENSE

What a malicious trap? A dilemma which confronted Jesus like a raging bull which with its two horns could gore him to death. If he answered that it was not lawful to pay tax to Caesar, he would incriminate himself to civil disobedience, to say the least, or sedition and incitement to rebellion, to say the worst. If he replied that it was lawful, he would despise himself as a collaborator of the enemies of his nation and a traitor to his country. Jesus response was a classical example of a logical resolution of a dilemma. But certainly, the mettle behind such answer was more than all logic and philosophy combined. It was practically an earthly logic that makes supernatural sense. It was debunking our usual image of the relationship between politics and religion: two parallel lines which no matter how far they go will never meet. In the case of Jesus this geometry does not make sense. In his understanding, politics and religion may be two parallel lines alright but when extended they will certainly meet at a certain point. Politics and religion both serve God and man, don't they?

Politics is not so profane that they cannot be sanctified by grace. With the advent of Jesus, nothing is indeed profane – or literally in Latin, *profanum,* which means "outside the temple". When Jesus died on the

cross, the curtains in the Holy of Holies were rent from top to bottom (Lk 23:45), signaling as though the "liberation" of the Spirit from its imprisonment in the temple. Like in the beginning of creation, the Spirit hovered once again over the waters. (Gen 1:2) Since then the spell was broken. Nothing can anymore be considered profane or "outside the temple". The whole world became the Temple and anything on it, a subject of sanctification. So, let us remove from our mind the notion that politics is dirty and strictly for ruffians. Even the pagan philosopher Aristotle has never taken politics to mean evil. He defined it as "the art of good government". And good government means service to the people. And anyone that serves the people sincerely and faithfully is never far from the Kingdom of God. For, after all, Jesus came to this world not be served but to serve. (Mk 10:45) So, expect politicians in heaven. But if ever they are there, they are there not because they are powerful in heaven as they have been on earth. Nobody reaches heaven simply because of powerful political connections. Heaven does not work that way. It only works Jesus' way: to serve and not to be served. Politicians are in heaven not because they have been kings or queens but under only one title and one claim: they are servants. So with us who are just plain citizens. Let us not think that we have to accumulate power in order to serve God and our fellowmen. While it is true that God calls some men to rule over us, majority of us will be content just fulfilling our responsibilities in this world as rank and file. Who cares if in this world we are just foot soldiers? In heaven, we will see perfect democracy. There will no longer be kings and queens, lords and masters, only God who is father to us all.

OCTOBER 26 – THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MT 22:34-40

LOVE TWICE TOLD

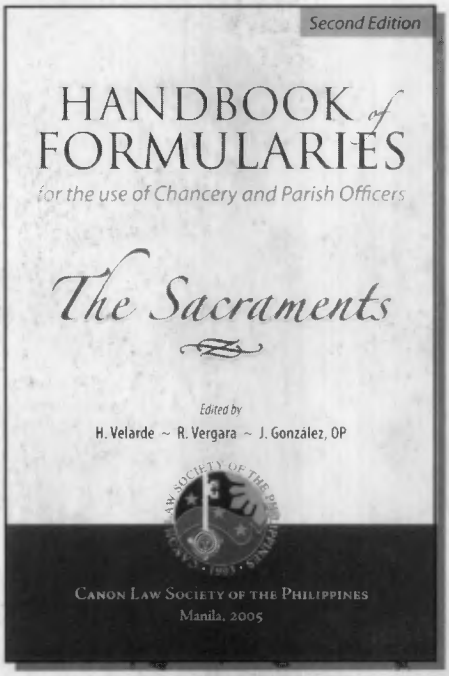
St. Catherine of Siena explained very well the tie that binds the two greatest commandments. Love of God and love of neighbor are equally necessary although they are not equally important. Of course, the first commandment is first because the second commandment serves as the human articulation of the first. Without the first, the second will lose its meaning. Why should we love our neighbor? Because, according to St. Catherine of Siena, that is the only way we can show our love for God. God loves us his way. And God's way is infinite. Can we, human as we are, repay the love of God for us his way? Absolutely not. We can only repay God's love our own way – the human way. Thus, this is the way to show that we love God: to see him in our neighbor and love our neighbor as much as we humans can. In this way, we can say that we love God whom we cannot see by loving our neighbor whom we can see. (1 Jn 4:20) This does not mean though that we are just going to treat our neighbor as our stepping stone to heaven. No. This is to insult our neighbor by using him only as a means no matter how holy our end might be. Certainly, our neighbor has an absolute value as a person. But precisely because of this absolute value, our neighbor deserves to be loved God's way.

In history and literature, we experienced that any love short of God's love is fleeting and ends up only with tragedy. The case of Romeo and Juliet in literature and the case of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra in history immediately come to mind when speaking of pure human love which ended up tragically. Cases of this sort can be multiplied to prove this point. Without divine love, human love is reduced into sheer romantic game which consumes its players entirely. To preserve human love, it needs to be consecrated in the altar of divine love. Is this not the reason why the love between man and woman has to be solemnly pledged in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony? Is this not the reason too why the love of men and women for God and his Church have to be offered as a living sacrifice in the Sacrament of Ordination and in solemn religious profession? Love to be true must indeed be one and triune. For love is not so much looking at just one another as much as looking at the same direction. All humans who have restricted their love just for "the two us" ended up condemning each other in an excruciating relationship of hatred later on. For, have you ever tried looking at just one face consistently and without let up all your life? The closer you get to see that face, the uglier it appears. Eventually such face becomes an eye sore and a despicable sight. You start hating it altogether. Maybe that is the reason why all vocations which speak of love have to be pledged at the altar: *inihaharap sa dambana*. Only when we look at each other in God's eye, we see each one of us in a new perspective: the horizon of mercy. In the merciful heart of God, all of us appear beautiful. Thus seeing God, we discover beauty, nothing but beauty. Is this not heaven after all?

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 ...?



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