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WORLD DAY OF PEACE

John Paul II

SELECTED SYNODAL INTERVENTIONS

Synod of Bishops

ON CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION
IN THE MAY 11, 1998 ELECTIONS

Jaime Card. Sin

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Prayer for the Year of the Holy Spirit

VICENTE CAJILIG, OP

Pope John Paul II on the first day of the year addressed the whole world: his focused was on the theme "From the justice of each comes peace for all." He said *"justice goes hand in hand with peace and is permanently and actively linked to peace. Justice and peace seek the good of one and all, and for this reason they demand order and truth. When one is threatened, both falter; when justice is offended, peace is also placed in jeopardy."* This address is a good follow-up of his earlier documents on social issues.

We suggest to our readers to relate the address with the prayer of the Pope for this year: the Year of the Holy Spirit.

*Holy Spirit, most welcome guest of our hearts,
reveal to us the profound meaning of the Great Jubilee
and prepare our hearts to celebrate it with faith,
in the hope which does not disappoint,
in the love which seeks nothing in return.*

*Spirit of truth, you who search the depths of God,
memory and prophecy in the Church,
lead mankind to recognize in Jesus of Nazareth*

*the Lord of glory, the Savior of the world,
the supreme fulfillment of history.*

Come, Spirit of love and peace!

*Creator Spirit, hidden builder of the Kingdom,
by the power of your saints guide the Church
to cross with courage the threshold
of the new millennium
and to carry to the coming generations
and the light of the World who brings salvation.*

*Spirit of holiness,
divine breath which moves the universe,
come and renew the face of the earth.
Awaken in Christians a desire for full unity,
that they may be for the world
an effective sign and instrument
of intimate union with God and of the unity
of the whole human race.*

Come, Spirit of love and peace!

*Spirit of communion
soul and strength of the Church,
grant that the wealth of charisms and ministries
may contribute to the unity of the Body of Christ;
grant that laity, consecrated persons
and ordained ministers
may work together in harmony
to build the one Kingdom of God.*

*Spirit of consolation,
unfailing source of joy and peace,*

*inspire solidarity with the poor,
grant the sick the strength they need,
pour out trust and hope
upon those experiencing trials,
awaken in all hearts a commitment
to a better future.*

Come, Spirit of love and peace!

*Spirit of wisdom, inspiration of minds and hearts,
direct science and technology
to the service of life, justice and peace.
Render fruitful our dialogue
with the followers of other religions,
lead the different cultures to appreciate
the values of the Gospel.*

*Spirit of life,
by whose power the Word was made flesh
in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
the woman of attentive silence,
make us docile to the promptings of your love
and ever ready to accept the signs of the times
which you place along the paths of history.*

Come, spirit of love and peace!

*To you, Spirit of love,
with the Almighty Father and the Only Begotten Son,
be praise, honor and glory
for ever and ever. Amen.*

From the Justice of Each Comes Peace for All*

JOHN PAUL II

Justice goes hand in hand with peace and is permanently and actively linked to peace. Justice and peace seek the good of one and all, and for this reason they demand order and truth. When one is threatened, both falter; when justice is offended, peace is also placed in jeopardy.

Precisely because there exists a very close connection between the justice of the individual and the peace of everyone, in the present Message for the World Day of Peace I wish to address above all the Heads of States, keeping in mind that today's world, though marked in many regions by tension, violence and conflict, is nevertheless seeking a new composition and a more balanced stability, with a view to a true and lasting peace for the whole of humanity.

Justice and peace are not abstract concepts or remote ideals. They are values which dwell, as a common patrimony, in the heart of every individual. Individuals, families, communities and

* Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace 1 January 1998.

nations, all are called to live in justice and to work for peace. No one can claim exemption from this responsibility.

At this moment my thoughts turn to those who, without wanting it, are caught in the midst of bitter conflicts. I also think of the marginalized, the poor, the victims of all kinds of exploitation. These are people who are experiencing in their own flesh the absence of peace and the terrible effects of injustice. Who can remain indifferent to their craving for a life rooted in justice and in genuine peace? It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they achieve their desire: there can be no complete justice unless everyone shares in it equally.

Justice is at one and the same time, a moral virtue and a legal concept. Sometimes it is represented as a blindfold figure; in effect though, it is the proper task of justice to be clear-sighted and vigilant in ensuring the balance between rights and duties, fostering an equitable sharing of burdens and benefits. Justice makes whole, it does not destroy; it leads to reconciliation, not to revenge. Upon examination, at its deepest level it is rooted in love, which finds its most significant expression in mercy. Therefore justice, if separated from merciful love, becomes cold and cutting.

Justice is an active and life-giving virtue: it defends and promotes the inestimable dignity of every human person and is concerned for the common good, insofar as it is the guardian of relations between individuals and peoples. No one, in fact, ever lives in isolation. From the first moment of life, each human being exists in relationship to others, in such a way that the good of the individual and the good of society go hand in hand. Between the two there exists a delicate balance.

Justice rests on respect for human rights

The human person is by nature endowed with universal, inviolable and inalienable rights. These rights do not however exist in isolation. In this respect my venerable predecessor Pope John XXIII taught that the person "has rights and duties, flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature."¹ It is upon the correct anthropological foundation of these rights and duties, and upon their intrinsic correlation, that the true bulwark of peace rests.

In recent centuries, these human rights have been formulated in declarations of principles and binding legal instruments. In the history of peoples and nations in search of justice and freedom, the proclamation of these rights is remembered with rightful pride, also because it was often experienced as a turning-point after patent violations of the dignity of single individuals and whole peoples.

Fifty years ago, after a war characterized by the denial for certain peoples of the right even to exist, the General Assembly of the United Nations promulgated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was a solemn act, arrived at after the sad experience of war, and motivated by the desire formally to recognize that *the same rights belong to every individual and to all peoples*. In that document we read the following statement, which has resisted the passage of time: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".² The concluding words of the document

¹ JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963), I, 1: AAS 55 (1963), 259.

² *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Preamble.

deserve no less attention: "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein".³ It is a tragic fact that today this provision is still being blatantly violated through oppression, conflict and corruption, or, in a more subtle way, through an attempt to reinterpret, or willfully misinterpret, the very definitions contained in the Universal Declaration. That document must be observed integrally, in both its spirit and letter. It remains — as Pope Paul VI of venerable memory declared — one of the United Nations' principal titles to glory, "especially when we think of the importance which is attributed to it as a sure path to peace."⁴

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, being celebrated this year, it is fitting to recall that "the promotion and protection of human rights is a matter of priority for the international community".⁵ Certain shadows however hover over the anniversary, consisting in the reservations being expressed in relation to two essential characteristics of the very idea of human rights: their *universality* and their *indivisibility*. These distinctive features must be strongly reaffirmed, in order to reject the criticisms of those who would use the argument of cultural specificity to mask violations of human rights, and the criticisms of those who weaken the concept of human dignity by denying juridical weight to social, economic and cultural rights. Universality and indivisibility are two guiding principles which at the same time demand that human rights be rooted in each culture and that their juridical profile be strengthened so as to ensure that they are fully observed.

³ *Ibid.*, Art. 30

⁴ *Message to the President of the 28th General Assembly of the United Nations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (10 December 1973): AAS 65 (1973), 674.

⁵ *Vienna Declaration, The World Conference on Human Rights* (June 1995), Preamble I.

Respect for human rights not only involves their protection in law. It must include all the other aspects which stem from the notion of human dignity, the very basis of rights. In this regard attention to education assumes great relevance. It is likewise important to attend to the promotion of human rights: a task which follows from love of the human person as such, "since love goes beyond what justice can provide".⁶ In the context of promoting human rights, further efforts must be made to protect the rights of the family, which is "the natural and basic unit of society".⁷

Globalization with solidarity

The vast geopolitical changes which have taken place since 1989 have been accompanied by veritable revolutions in the social and economic fields. The globalization of the economy and of finance is now a reality, and we are realizing more and more clearly the effects of the rapid progress related to information technologies. We are on the threshold of a new era which is the bearer of great hopes and disturbing questions. What will be the effect of the changes taking place? Will everyone be able to take advantage of a global market? Will everyone at last have a chance to enjoy peace? Will relations between States become more equitable, or will economic competition and rivalries between peoples and nations lead humanity towards a situation of even greater instability?

For a more equitable society and a more stable peace in a world on the way to globalization, it is an urgent task of the International Organizations to help promote a sense of responsibility for the common good. But to achieve this we must never

⁶ SECOND ECUMENICAL VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 78.

⁷ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, No. 16, 3; cf. *Charter of the Rights of the Family* (22 October 1983), presented by the Holy See.

lose sight of the human person, who must be at the center of every social project. Only thus will the United Nations become a "family of nations", in accordance with its original mandate of "promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".⁸ This is the path for building a world community based on "mutual trust, mutual support and sincere respect".⁹ The challenge, in short, is to ensure a globalization in *solidarity*, a globalization *without marginalization*. This is a clear duty in justice, with serious moral implications in the organization of the economic, social, cultural and political life of nations.

The heavy burden of external debt

Nations and whole regions of the world, on account of their fragile financial or economic potential, risk being excluded from an economy which is becoming globalized. Others have greater resources, but unfortunately cannot take advantage of them for various reasons: unrest, internal conflicts, a lack of adequate structures, environmental degradation, widespread corruption, criminality and other reasons as well. Globalization has to be linked with solidarity. Special aid must be forthcoming so that countries which are unable to enter the market successfully on their own strength alone can in fact overcome their present situation of disadvantage. This is something owed to them in justice. In a true "family of nations" no one can be excluded; on the contrary; it is the weakest, the most fragile which must be supported, so that they too can develop their full potential.

My thoughts go here to one of the greatest difficulties which the poorer nations have to face today. I refer to the heavy burden of *external debt*, which compromises the economies of whole

⁸ *Charter of the United Nations*, Preamble.

⁹ JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization* (5 October 1995), 14: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 6 October 1995, p. 7.

peoples and hinders their social and political progress. In this regard, the international financial institutions have recently initiated significant attempts to secure a coordinated reduction of this debt. I earnestly hope that progress will continue to be made in this direction by applying conditions in a flexible way, so that all eligible nations can benefit before the year 2000. The wealthier nations can do much in this respect, by supporting the implementation of such measures.

The debt question is part of a vaster problem: that of the persistence of poverty, sometimes even extreme, and the emergence of new inequalities which are accompanying the globalization process. If the aim is globalization *without marginalization*, we can no longer tolerate a world in which there live side by side the immensely rich and the miserably poor, the have-nots deprived even of essentials and people who thoughtlessly waste what others so desperately need. Such contrasts are an affront to the dignity of the human person. Certainly there is no lack of appropriate means for eliminating poverty, including the promotion of consistent social and productive investments on the part of world economic bodies. This presupposes that the international community intends to act with the necessary political determination. Praiseworthy steps in that direction have already been taken, but a lasting solution requires a concerted effort by everyone, including the States concerned.

*A culture of respect for the rule
of law is urgently needed*

And what are we to say of the grave inequalities existing *within* nations? Situations of *extreme poverty*, wherever they are found, constitute a prime injustice. Eliminating them ought to be a priority for everyone, at the national as well as the international level.

Nor can we pass over in silence the *evil of corruption* which is undermining the social and political development of so many peoples. It is a growing phenomenon insidiously infiltrating many sectors of society, mocking the law and ignoring the rules of justice and of truth. Corruption is hard to combat, because it takes many different forms: when it has been suppressed in one area, it springs up in another. Courage is needed just to denounce it. To eliminate it, together with the resolute determination of the authorities, the generous support of all citizens is needed, sustained by a firm moral conscience.

A grave responsibility in this battle falls on people in public life. Theirs is the duty to work tirelessly for the equitable application of the law and for transparency in all acts of public administration. 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. Good government requires accurate controls and complete honesty in *all* economic transactions. In no way can it be permitted that resources intended for the public good are used for other interests of a private or even criminal nature.

The fraudulent use of public monies penalizes above all the poor, who are the first to be deprived of the basic services essential for personal development. And when corruption creeps into the administration of justice, it is again the poor who pay the heaviest price: delays, inefficiency, structural insufficiencies, the lack of an adequate defense. They often have no choice but to suffer the abuse of power.

Particularly offensive forms of injustice

There are other forms of injustice which put peace at risk. Here, I wish to mention two. First, *not having the possibility of fair access to credit*. The poor are often obliged to remain

outside the normal financial system or to place themselves in the hands of unscrupulous money-lenders who charge exorbitant rates of interest. The end result is the aggravation of an already precarious situation.

For this reason it is everyone's duty to work to ensure that the poor have access to credit on equitable terms and at affordable interest rates. Actually, financial agencies offering mini-credit on terms favoring the poor already exist in various parts of the world. These are initiatives to be encouraged, for this is the path which can lead to the radical elimination of the shameful scourge of usury, by giving everyone access to the economic means needed for the dignified development of families and communities.

And what are we to say of *increasing violence against women and against children of both sexes*? Today this is one of the most widespread violations of human rights, and tragically it has even become a terror tactic: women taken hostage, children barbarously slaughtered. To this must be added the violence of forced prostitution and child pornography, and the exploitation of children in the workplace in conditions of veritable slavery. Practical steps are needed to try to stop the spread of these forms of violence. In particular, appropriate legal measures are needed at both the national and international level. If, as I have often stated in previous Messages, the dignity of every person is to be recognized and respected, the difficult task of education and cultural promotion must be faced. One element, in fact, absolutely must not be lacking in the ethical and cultural patrimony of the human family as a whole and of each individual person: awareness that human beings are all equal in dignity, deserve the same respect, and have the same rights and duties.

***Building peace in justice
is a task for one and all***

Peace for all of us comes from the justice of each of us. No one is excused from a task of such importance for the whole of humanity. It concerns every man and every woman, each according to his or her own competence and responsibility.

I appeal above all to you, *Heads of States and Leaders of Nations*, the principal guardians of the rule of law in your respective countries. Certainly this is not an easy task for you to fulfill, but it constitutes a primary obligation. May the codes which govern the States you serve be a guarantee of justice for the people and an incentive for an ever growing sense of civic responsibility.

Furthermore, building peace in justice calls for the cooperation of *every sector of society*, each in its own area of influence and in harmony with other groups within the community. In particular I encourage you, *educators* engaged at every level in training and educating the younger generation: form them in moral and civic values, instill in them a lively sense of rights and duties, beginning with the experience of the school community itself. Educate in justice in order to educate in peace: this is one of your primary tasks.

In the formative process, the *family* is indispensable. The family is the appropriate environment for the human formation of the younger generation. From your example, dear *parents*, depends to a large degree the moral character of your children: they assimilate it from the kind of relations which you foster within the family nucleus and towards those outside it. The family is the first school of living, and the influence received inside the family is decisive for the future development of the individual.

Finally, to you, *young people* of the world, who spontaneously aspire to justice and peace, I say: always keep alive the quest for these ideals, and have the patience and persistence to pursue them whatever the concrete situation in which you find yourselves. Be quick to reject the temptation of unlawful shortcuts towards false mirages of success and wealth. On the contrary, value what is right and true, even when to do so requires sacrifice and commits you to going against the current. Thus it is that "from the justice of each comes peace for all".

Sharing, the way to peace

The Jubilee of the Year 2000 is fast approaching, a time which for believers is devoted in a special way to God, the Lord of history, a reminder to all of the radical dependence of the creature on the Creator. But in the Biblical tradition it was also a time for freeing slaves, for returning land to its rightful owner, for forgiving debts, thus restoring the conditions of equality willed by God among all the members of the people. It is therefore a special time for seeking that justice which leads to peace.

By virtue of their faith in the God who is love and of their sharing in Christ's universal redemption, Christians are called to act justly and to live in peace with all, for "Jesus does not merely give us peace. He gives us *his* Peace accompanied by *his* Justice. He *is* Peace and Justice. He becomes *our* Peace and *our* Justice".¹⁰ I said these words almost twenty years ago, but against the backdrop of the radical changes now taking place they assume an even more specific and vital meaning.

The distinctive mark of the Christian, today more than ever, must be love for the poor, the weak, the suffering. Living out

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Homily at Yankee Stadium, New York (2 October 1979)*, 1: AAS 71 (1979), 1169.

this demanding commitment requires a total reversal of the alleged values which make people seek only their own good: power, pleasure, the unscrupulous accumulation of wealth. Yes, it is precisely to this radical conversion that Christ's disciples are called. Those who commit themselves to following this path will truly experience "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (*Rom 14:17*), and will taste "the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (*Heb 12:11*).

I wish to repeat to the Christians of all continents the admonishment of the Second Vatican Council: "The demands of justice should first be satisfied, lest the giving of what is due in justice be represented as the offering of a charitable gift".¹¹ A society of genuine solidarity can be built only if the well-off, in helping the poor, do not stop at giving from what they do not need. Moreover, offering material things is not enough: what is needed is *a spirit of sharing*, so that we consider it an honor to be able to devote our care and attention to the needs of our brothers and sisters in difficulty. Christians, the followers of other religions and numberless men and women of good will today feel called to a simple life-style as a condition for making the just sharing of the fruits of God's creation a reality. Those living in poverty can wait no longer: they need help now and so have a right to receive *immediately* what they need.

The Holy Spirit at work in the world

The First Sunday of Advent marked the beginning of the second year of immediate preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, dedicated to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of hope is at work in the world. He is present in the selfless service of those who work alongside the outcast and the suffering, those who

¹¹ Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 8.

welcome immigrants and refugees, those who bravely refuse to reject a person or a whole group for ethnic, cultural or religious reasons. He is especially present in the generous activity of all who patiently and perseveringly continue to promote peace and reconciliation between people who were once opponents and enemies. Indeed, these are signs of hope which encourage us to seek the justice which leads to peace.

The heart of the Gospel message is Christ, who is everyone's peace and reconciliation. May his countenance shine upon the path of humanity as it prepares to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium!

May his justice and his peace become a gift for all, without distinction!

"Then shall the wilderness be fertile land
and fertile land become forest.
In the wilderness justice will come to live,
and integrity in the fertile land;
integrity will bring peace,
justice give everlasting security" (*Is* 32:15-17).

From the Vatican, 8 December 1997.

Message of the Special Assembly for America

SYNOD OF BISHOPS

(The following are excerpts from the Message of the Special Assembly for America, released in the Vatican last December 11 in the four languages of the Synod: English, French, Portuguese and Castilian.)

INTRODUCTION

Called from all the nations of America to gather with the Successor of Peter for this Special Synod, we are grateful to our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, for this opportunity of prayer, study and reflection. For indeed we have prayed together and listened to the stories of the wonders and the needs of the Church in this New World.

We believe that we are one community; and, although America comprises many nations, cultures, and languages, there is so much that links us together and so many ways in which each of us affects the lives of our neighbors. This historic gathering of the Church in America at the Holy Father's invitation has impelled us to seek the answers to the problems and concerns of our lands, not in the service of one part of America or even

the needs of another, but in calling forth the resources of both and becoming more conscious of the needs of each. This has been done over the weeks of the Synod, as we listened to the concerns and the hopes of our neighbors from all these lands.

THE JOYS OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

First we greet you, our brothers and sisters in faith, those millions of Catholic men and women throughout America whose faithful practice of the Christian life, whose devotion to the Lord, to His Blessed Mother, and to His Church are for us both an inspiration and a challenge to greater service.

We greet you, the families of America, the foundation of our society, proud and gratified by your Christian commitment to the defense of life from the moment of conception until natural death.

We greet you, the laity of the Church, whose generous use of your diverse gifts builds up the Body of Christ in the world. We are very conscious of those of you, especially the elderly and the sick, who devote yourselves in a special way to prayer.

We send special greetings to you, the women of our continent, conscious of the extraordinary role you have already played in our history and in the handing on of the faith.

With special love and care we greet you, the children. We pray that your days of childhood may be spent with those who love you and who shield you from the dangers of our society, so that you can grow in wisdom, grace and strength before God and your neighbors.

We greet you, the youth of our local Churches. We need you. We are proud of your idealism and your desire to make the world a better place. You are a vital part of the Church of

today. Your own special love of the Holy Father is a grace in which we all rejoice.

We greet you, our brother bishops, who with such dedication watch over the People of God, the priests who are our devoted brothers and fellow workers, and who share with us the pastoral ministry for the care of souls; the permanent deacons whose coming to pastoral service in our lands has been so great a gift, the consecrated men and women whose grace-filled lives make such a difference in the work of the Church... .

We greet you, our seminarians, with affection and encouragement, assuring you of our fervent prayers in your journey to the Altar of Christ, and we greet with equal gratitude you, the growing number of men and women who, with such sacrifice and devotion, serve the Church in education, catechesis, charity, social ministry, the promotion of justice and peace, and other apostolates.

THE CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

During these days we have heard and taken to heart the sufferings of the Church in America. We have heard the concerns of you, the families both in the North and in the South. We are conscious of the burdens borne by poor families everywhere who find opportunities to improve their lives denied them, and conscious, too, of the stresses which modern life brings even to families of means, stresses which hamper the best attempts to live the Christian life.

We recognize that the great ideal of the home as a "domestic Church" where children are raised by both father and mother is often unrealized. We grieve over the brokenness of so many families in all classes, and we offer to you our prayers. *To* you single parents who, with trust in God, bravely assume the responsibility of raising children in the Christian life without the

companionship and support of a spouse, we extend the encouragement of the family of faith.

We reach out to you the young men and women who search for God in today's world, to you the young among the poor who are deprived of opportunity to earn a living and begin a family, to you the youth whose idealism has been so diminished by an excessive consumerism, and to all you young people who long for a sense of God's loving presence in your lives.

We turn with heavy hearts to the bitter hardships borne by you, the children of the streets. What you, the children of God, suffer, should happen to no one. You may enjoy a secure and normal life and discover the presence of God's love.

To you, immigrants who find yourselves unwelcome in the lands where you have moved, we send words of encouragement. The Church has walked alongside generations of migrants in the march for a better life, and she will not cease to stand by you with every kind of service.

To you minorities who are victims of prejudice, we sympathize with the frustration you suffer on account of discrimination, the pain imposed on you by the hostility of others, and the abuse often inflicted on you by social institutions. You are created in God's image and share equally in the dignity of the human person.

We call to mind you, the aboriginal and indigenous peoples of America, who have suffered so much these past five centuries at the hands of the greedy and violent, and who even today enjoy so little of the abundance our lands have produced.

We want to speak to you, our brothers and sisters of African heritage, whose ancestors came to America in bondage as slaves. The wounds of those terrible centuries of slavery still sting the soul. We pledge ourselves to continue to work with you so that

you may enjoy your full dignity as children of God, and so that you may always feel welcome in our churches and communities of faith.

We reach out as well to you who live alone and all who feel lonely, particularly the elderly, the homebound, the sick, and the forsaken. The Church is your home, and we in the Church are your brothers and sisters.

Indeed, of all the concerns of God's people that have resounded in the hall of this Special Synod for America, the cry of the poor has been heard with a special attention. Not a single episcopal conference in America has failed to speak clearly and with deep emotion about the quest for justice for our brothers and sisters whose lives and human dignity are challenged by poverty and want.

In the North, we look with dismay and alarm as the gap widens year by year between those who have an abundance and those who have only the barest of resources. Where material benefits are so widespread, many among us face the temptation of the Rich Man in the Gospel to become indifferent to the needs of those at our own doorstep.

In the South, there are regions which suffer conditions of such utter human misery that they cannot be reconciled with the dignity which God has bestowed equally on each of His children. In every part of America, there is need to protect innocent unborn children from the scourge of abortion. Even where wretchedness has not reached so great a depth, there are still to be found the sufferings of children who go to bed hungry, of mothers and fathers without work or sustenance, of indigenous peoples whose homelands and livelihoods are threatened, of thousands without jobs or shelter because of changing and volatile market conditions. To these woes must be added those caused by abuses in the globalization of the world's culture and economy, those caused

by the drug traffic, the diversion of scarce resources into the arms trade, and political and business corruption which deprives people of the share of material goods intended for or earned by them and to which they have a right.

The burden of external and internal debt, which for many countries has been something from which there seems to be no prospect of relief, has been a considerable concern during the Synod. ... We join the Holy Father in his appeal for the reduction or forgiveness of debts in an effort to give relief to the people of some of the world's poorest nations. Relief from debt will only begin to lift the burdens of the poor.

We call on the leaders of government and of industry and finance, on those who are rich in material possessions, on economists, on social workers, on theologians and experts in the Church's social teaching, and all people of good will to walk together with us and the poor and to search with them for a way that respects their human dignity. We are grateful to God for the assistance we receive from many sources. ... Before us, as always, are the two paths: the wide and easy one of acquiescing in the way things are, and the way that is long and hard that leads to justice. We must choose the hard path.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

We call on you the faithful to take up the call of the Lord to be the evangelists of the new millennium, sharing your faith openly and courageously. We invite you to witness to your faith by your lives of holiness, by your kindness to all, your charity toward those in need, and your solidarity with all the oppressed.

We will need to foster vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. In preparation for the Great Jubilee, all Christians must discover how best to fulfill their call to holiness.

In addition, the missionary efforts of the Church must be fostered. ... The New Evangelization envisages a continued exchange of gifts with many ways of collaboration between our local Churches in the common work of sharing the Gospel. Priests and other missionaries from the North continue to be needed in the South and elsewhere. At the same time, the Church in the South has intensified its efforts to send missionaries to the North and to other lands.

The media of social communications play an increasingly influential role in the life of society and the Church. ... The Church needs to continue the development of her own use of these means in service of the Gospel. Her dedicated corps of professionals in communications can serve as the leaven which influences those in a field of endeavor often unmindful of religious values to reconsider their values for the sake of society.

For the most part, we in America enjoy the blessings of religious liberty. Still, as the Church lives out the Gospel, in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, in advocating justice for the poor, and in defending human life and dignity, she faces many obstacles. In some places, despite legal protection of the Church, bishops, priests, deacons, delegates of the Word, consecrated and lay people are penalized and slandered, intimidated and even slain for their Gospel defense of the poor. In still other places, a new, aggressive secularism would deny a voice to people of faith in the public arena and demean the enormous contribution of the Church to public life. Accordingly, we appeal to the faithful in public life and to people of good will who have influence on public opinion to stand with us in defense of the Gospel of Life against abortion and euthanasia.

JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE

This then is our simple message: Jesus Christ is Lord! His resurrection fills us with hope; His presence on our journey fills us with courage. We say to you, as the Holy Father tells us all so often: Do not be afraid. The Lord is with you on the way, go forth to meet Him.

We shall accept the call to conversion, to a change of life, to a new beginning in grace. ... This conversion will touch the lives of the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. It will remind the politicians of their responsibility to foster the common good; and it will challenge the economist to find a way to solve the material inequalities of our societies.

If we come with courage to this personal encounter with Jesus Christ, we shall find there an irresistible call to communion.

Ultimately, the personal encounter with Jesus Christ leads to solidarity, which is a requirement of charity, as it must be practiced in human relationship today.

Perhaps we can summarize our message in the words of the Holy Father: "Do not be afraid to cross the threshold of hope. There we shall all meet the Lord, the living" Jesus Christ, who is our hope and our salvation."

Selected Synodal Interventions

Synod's First General Congregation

The First General Congregation of the Special Assembly for America of the Synod of Bishops opened on Monday morning, 17 November, in the presence of the Holy Father, with the singing of the hymn Veni, Creator Spiritus. The first to speak was the President Delegate for the session, Cardinal Eugenio de Araujo Sales, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Here is a translation of his address, which was given in Portuguese.

With love and veneration, I would like to greet the Holy Father, who on his recent visit to Rio de Janeiro for the Second Meeting with Families brought to vast multitudes the light of a pure encounter with the Christian faith. I would like to greet all the members of this Synod, which is actually the first Synod for America. We are here in order to obey Jesus Christ who "set us apart for the service of the Gospel" (Rom 1:1), and to whom we give account for this historic opportunity: "preaching the Gospel gives me nothing of which to boast" (1 Cor 9:16). We will remain in communion with the Holy Father. He has called

us so that, together with him, we may convey to America and to the world, which so thirsts for God, the power of the risen Christ.

1. The post-conciliar situation in America

The life of the Church in America, the subject of this meeting, must be seen in the light of the Gospel but also in relation to the secular and the religious situation. Within America, one must always keep in mind the interlinking among all the countries on the continent. The Council caused the Gospel to make great progress in all the countries of America. We praise God for these incalculable benefits.

The Second General Conference, meeting in Medellin (1968), made a decisive contribution to the application of the Ecumenical Council, especially in Latin America. At Puebla (1979), the Church reaffirmed its evangelical identity, acquiring new vigour and serenity. At Santo Domingo (1992) we were given directives in various fields, including missionary activity and culture. This Synod was first announced there. Together with these events, there was the history of CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Council), CAL (Commission for Latin America) and the efforts of each Diocese. In the north of the continent, evangelization in the United States and Canada has been no less effective.

In the meantime, negative aspects have arisen in some areas of Church life. I will point out some major aspects. After the collapse of Marxism, which had aroused so many hopes in significant areas of America, many disappointed people, while still members of the Church, have not always been in clear, decided communion with her since awakening from their false hopes. Far from confessing their errors, they turned to other ideologies which arose to fill the gap. Philosophical and theological relativism, characteristic of our times, is a basic problem. Relative values are important as long as they are still relative: when they are

made absolute they become diabolical (see Ratzinger in *Humanitas*, Santiago de Chile, n. 6, 1997, pp. 280-293).

Ideas are often cleverly proposed, claiming that each religion is a possible path and that no religion possesses the whole truth (Editorial in *Civiltà Cattolica*, 147/1 [1996], pp. 107-120). According to this theory, Christ has a place in the "pantheon of universal religiosity", but at the cost of absolutely denying Christ as the Son of God incarnate (Ratzinger, op. cit.).

Democratization is valid in human affairs, as well as in some non-essential elements of the Church. However, it becomes a negative factor when it undermines or denies the constitutive values of God's Revelation in Jesus Christ.

Disobedience in the Church reveals a loss of the mystical, a weakening of faith and wrongful behaviour, contrary to the love and example of Christ. In a worrying number of priests and religious, obedience is being subordinated to personal rationalizations and the pressure of public opinion.

An important factor in the distortion of ecclesial life in America is the divorce between faith as such and its influence on personal life and on economic and political structures. This is the origin of the scandal of serious social injustice, which affects a considerable part of the continent's population. It can be found both in rural areas as well as on the periphery of the cities. This is one of the greatest challenges for this Synod. One of the difficulties in facing it is the real dilemma with regard to this dualism: to solve it starting from God, or to reach God through a priority concern for man.

There is often an inversion of values. In practice, how often is highly important social and socio-political work given top priority? The Church's primary task is not denied but obscured — that of announcing the integral Creed, the Triune God, the

Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection as the most important truths which give right measure and true meaning to the whole world. The Church as the definitive sacrament of salvation, Christian morality as the paschal victory in daily life, worship as profound participation in the life of Christ: are not these values given too little attention? In many places, has not our Mother Church (cf. Gal 4:26) been affected by a slow, progressive paralysis in so many of her members and communities? It is time to reflect on the holiness of the life led by Christians, on the need for vocational and missionary work, on pastoral activity in the family, among youth, in the media, on the training of leaders among the lay faithful, on fervent religious life, and on the universities which preserve their Catholic identity.

What is needed in the Church is generous dialogue with all cultures, but within the context of unconditional fidelity to Christ, the one Saviour, who "is the measure of all culture" (John Paul II in Santo Domingo, n. 6). A Christian philosophy and a new, vigorous application of the principles of fundamental theology are necessary. The Church must rediscover her specific mission as the instrument of salvation for the world, as a missionary sent to every conscience, culture and peoples.

These negative aspects do not always have an explicitly aggressive form. Many times they are implied and alluring but always harmful.

2. The Special Synod for America

This Synod calls each one of us to be a living voice of that true Church which proclaims the ineffable mysteries of God, and in them the true destiny of man and society, in justice and harmony. She does not just proclaim them, but is an important factor in the well-being of the children of Jesus here in their earthly existence.

There are three factors that merit our special attention and must be examined in the light of post-conciliar experience at the present moment of the continent and in view of the future.

The *first* is to be aware of the global reality in which all America is situated. Also, the phenomenon of globalization, whatever our position on this may be. Many times we isolate ourselves within the confines of our Dioceses; we deal with our problems and we forget that the isolated person never achieves lasting success. The world has changed, and yet there are persons who continue to live in an environment which no longer exists. At a time when everything is being "globalized", with its inevitable marginalizations, Christians must perceive with even greater clear-sightedness the truly global nature of the Church's redemptive power: the Mystical Body of Christ, where no one is excluded or condemned, universal peace and pardon reigns in a fraternity that emanates from the Father of mercy.

The *second* factor derives from this and is the dynamic power of the Catholic Church as communion. This will contribute, in an extraordinary way, to resolving the religious, social, political and economic problems of our nations. And we must never forget that one local Church in difficulty affects all the others. Mutual collaboration will become a way. For example: instead of sending a priest to a Diocese with few priests, send, for a determinate time, a small formation team, open a seminary or offer scholarships. I know of a Diocese that had only 12 priests. With a true spirit of collaboration, another Diocese sent a rector for a short time and offered scholarships to his major seminary. This caused a total transformation. Today, after 15 years, that Diocese has 25 priests, almost all of whom are young and have had a good formation, and 30 major seminarians, in addition to a minor seminary.

In any work, fruit of communion, firm and decisive unity with the Pope is essential, and, in the Diocese, with the Bishop

who is in communion with the Episcopal College and the Roman Pontiff. This is the only way we can utilize communion for the integration of the American continent.

The *third factor* is to have the courage to concentrate pastoral efforts on some vital areas, such as the pastoral care of the family, the media, the formation of leaders and vocation work.

My mission at this moment is not to propose solutions, but to call attention to the current post-conciliar situation and to raise questions so that the Church in America may be adequately prepared for the Great Jubilee. It is up to the Synod, by the grace of God and the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to discern and to indicate the ways. Obviously, as pastors and not as politicians; as ministers of God and not as experts in social structures, always conscious that the true Christian faith takes precedence, and its consequences are justice and love among men.

3. Conclusion

Our words will have neither force nor permanence, if they do not echo the voice of Jesus Christ. We must encourage the good, while at the same time inviting all priests, theologians, men and women religious, catechists and faithful not to question the faith and its sacred deposit, but with this faith to shed light on suffering, life and death in the modern world.

I recall here the words of Pope Paul VI. Every witness, even the most "beautiful witness will be totally powerless, if not illumined and justified ... by a clear and unequivocal announcement of the Lord Jesus ... There will be no true evangelization if the name, the life, the promises, the reign, the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, is not proclaimed" (cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 22).

Mercy towards those who repent of their errors, love for all humanity, would be changed into deception and lies, if we did

not assume our first duty: to serve the Gospel, to bring all mankind to honour and adore God, our Lord, and in his name, to witness to the paschal victory and the beginning of the "new creation" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). Thus we will lead the greatest possible number of people to full participation in Christ's glory, anticipated on earth by being in communion with the true Church of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Only thus can we encounter justice and peace. Pope Gregory the Great, in Homily 17, which we read on the feast of St. Luke, wrote: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few ... Even if many willingly listen to good doctrine, there are few who proclaim it. We receive the priestly *munus*, but we do not fulfill what the mandate of such an important office demands". If he were here today, his words would be different. Danger threatened the flock yesterday as much as today. Nevertheless, the Pastors of our beloved America are vigilant, united with the Supreme Pastor. In the unity of the Church, as the fruit of fidelity to the Successor of Peter, lies the secret of victory. The watchful Bishop, faithful to his office, courageous in fulfilling his duties, is the sign of the vitality of Christ's Church on our continent: encounter with the living Christ, the way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America.

Cardinal Sandoval's 'Relatio ante disceptationem'

General Rapporteur introduces theme to be discussed by Special Assembly for America

After Cardinal Schotte had given his report, Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iniguez, Archbishop of Guadalajara, Mexico, and General Rapporteur, gave the Relatio ante disceptationem, a general introduction to the theme to be discussed by the Synod partici-

pants. Here are English excerpts from his address, which was given in Spanish.

I. Introduction

This Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for America is the result of the initiative of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, who first made known his desire for a "gathering of representatives of the Episcopate of the entire American continent" on 12 December 1992, in Santo Domingo, during his inaugural discourse for the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops. The idea gained momentum and was favourably received by the Bishops of the entire continent in such a way that the Holy Father was able to propose formally the realization of the Special Assembly for America in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente*.

The principal goals which the Holy Father has assigned to this Synod Assembly are the following:

- to foster a new evangelization on the whole continent as an expression of episcopal communion;
- to increase solidarity among the various particular Churches in different fields of pastoral activity; and
- to shed light on the problems of justice and international economic relations among the nations of America, considering the enormous imbalances between the north, central and south of the American continent.

In response to the desire of the Universal Pastor and under his guidance, the Pastors of the New People of God in America have the opportunity to pray together, to strengthen the bonds of communion and to map out fresh initiatives for the new evangelization. What shall we do, so that this Synod will be of importance in the future, so that in some way it may help give a renewed impulse to the task of spreading the Gospel? What

shall we do, so that this Synod may have an impact on persons, places and communities on the continent, both inside and outside the Church? What shall we do, so that all people might allow themselves to be captivated by the splendour of the mystery of Christ and his design of mercy and justice?

For a better development of synodal discussion, a presentation on the historical realities will be offered for the purpose of better understanding the mission of the Church in the present and the future of the American continent. It is both advantageous and necessary for us to understand better the present so as to be able to look to the past and be able to discover how the first evangelization developed, bearing in mind the following questions: what features of the faith resulted from the first proclamation of the Gospel and what characteristics of the faith were imprinted on the cultures of America? How were the ideals of freedom born, ideals which fostered independence in the countries of the continent, and how did they develop? Moreover, what influences did certain political conceptions, such as Marxism and Neo-liberalism, have on the societies of America, etc.?

This Synod Assembly is primarily a call for unity and solidarity among the peoples of America. These objectives can only be achieved through an encounter with the living person of Jesus Christ and through a profound conversion to him. This mysterious union, existing between Christ and the Church, is the highest expression of communion in the faith. It is in virtue of this mystery that the New People of God is called to give testimony to unity and love in the world.

With regard to the concept of unity it is proper to use the expression "globalization of solidarity", expressed by the Holy Father in one of his discourses at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. This vantage point can serve as an assistance in the dialogue among the various political and social structures of life,

and likewise among different ecumenical groups, so as to bring about a health pluralism.

The unity announced and promoted by the Church is founded in Christ and finds its growth in supernatural faith and charity. Under the providential love of a common Father and of one Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Church is strengthened so as to build, with the help of the Holy Spirit, communion among people. Only from this supernatural perspective can a person overcome the racial, cultural and economic differences which are a cause of division.

From an ethnic point of view, the American continent is a multicoloured mosaic in which many ethnic groups live together. In recent migrations, many people have come from various European nations, thus enriching the religious and cultural patrimony of America. Recently, a noteworthy immigration of people is coming from the Asian countries. This diversity need not be in itself a source of conflict, because beyond this diversity there is always the possibility of communion in Christ.

Unfortunately, tendencies towards racism and nationalism sporadically emerge, advocating the exclusion of certain social groups. In contrast to this, the Church is always seeking to sow the seeds of fraternity in people's hearts and tries, by preaching the Good News, to work to promote human rights and respect for the dignity of men and women by taking in consideration that, despite these overall differences, a common element exists: faith in Jesus Christ, preached in the New World for more than 500 years, which has made of this land a continent fundamentally Christian and for the most part Catholic. We have *to ask ourselves* as Pastors of the People of God if we are conscious of the need to undertake initiatives for the communion of our people, directing the faithful in this way to commit themselves increasingly to the great task of promoting the bond of unity among the nations.

Above all, we need to ask ourselves as Bishops if we are doing everything which Our Lord has asked of us to live in communion among ourselves.

As the end of the second millennium of Christianity approaches, the Church in America wishes to be united with the universal Church in celebrating with faith and gratitude the Jubilee of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the central and decisive event in the history of salvation. This Synod Assembly, which is an integral part of the preparation programme for the Jubilee, constitutes an excellent occasion to reflect on the Church's evangelizing activity at the beginning of the third millennium, and to propose new guidelines for pastoral action.

An optimistic outlook and a sense of hope should animate our pastoral tasks in order to acknowledge with gratitude the gifts received, for example, the *magnalia Dei* in America, and the challenge of building a future on the basis of the great Christian and Catholic heritage of the continent. The *magnalia Dei* is manifested in a special manner in the witness of many saints and blessed who flourished in America: missionaries, martyrs, confessors, virgins, all magnificent fruits of the faith and contemporary examples for the person of today in following the Lord Jesus Christ. These holy people are part of the history of the American continent and are always present in the consciousness and the hearts of our people.

II. The Synod theme

The theme established by the Holy Father is well-known: "*Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: the Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America*". This theme intends to relate all problems of the continent to evangelization and primarily to propose authentic solutions drawn from faith in Jesus Christ, the one Saviour.

In regard to the person of Jesus Christ as the centre of the proclamation of the Gospel, many voices are rightly insisting on the need to present the Christological mystery in its entirety so as duly to respond to the confusion in which some members of the People of God occasionally fall, i.e., reducing the life of Christ to one or another aspect of his life, or his person or his salvific work. The new evangelization implies, for the most part, a renewed proclamation of the Catholic doctrine of Jesus Christ to the men and women of America. It is evident that the newness of the new evangelization does not consist in changing the contents of the message, but rather in renewing the attitudes of those who evangelize.

Encounter, the first word of the Synod theme, contains all the dynamism of the faith: the divine initiative, the free response of the person, God's desire to communicate himself to every human being and the duty of every person to draw close to God and respond to his call. It deals with the Christian vocation, the true encounter in which God comes to the person and each one turns to the Creator and Redeemer through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is opportune to emphasize the necessity of a free personal response in the context of the mystery of divine grace and human freedom. In the face of the exaggerated exaltation of freedom, the supposed independence of the person in creating his own destiny, and certain genetic, psychological and sociological predeterminants — so much in fashion today — the Church must proclaim the gift of human freedom and the need to exercise it in a responsible way in all fields, principally in that of salvation, where people ought freely to respond to God through the love revealed in Jesus Christ.

This encounter is with the *living Jesus Christ*. So that this encounter with the living Jesus Christ may be real and authentic, one must look for him where he can truly be found. Pope Paul VI enumerates distinct ways by which Christ is present through

his Church: he is present in his Church at prayer, in his Church performing works of mercy, in his Church performing works of mercy, in his Church which preaches, and in his Church who, through her shepherds, guides and governs the People of God. He is in the hearts of the faithful in faith and love through the work of the Holy Spirit. In a more sublime and special way, he is present in the Eucharist, with a presence which is called real — the Pope adds — not by exclusion but by antonomasia.

When we speak of Jesus Christ as the *Way*, his words come to mind: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me" (Jn 14:6). Conversion, communion and solidarity refer to Christ as their beginning and goal because he is the Way to the Father in the Spirit. Conversion, communion and solidarity are, at the same time, the fruit of the encounter with Jesus Christ and those life experiences which draw one yet closer to him.

Conversion is the first and indispensable step in order to receive salvation and to draw near to Christ: "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15). Our treatment of the topic of conversion offers us, as Shepherds of the People of God, the opportunity to reflect upon the need for reconciliation which the Church in America, in so far as she is a human institution, ought to confront in her pastoral structures, in her members, and in all the contingent realities which limit the growth of the kingdom of God. It falls to us, as Shepherds of the Church, to set an example, making a sincere examination of conscience as the first step in conversion as a preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

To approach the topic of *communion*, it will be necessary to meditate on the mystery of the Church as a communion of people with God and people among themselves. As the Church is one, holy, catholic, apostolic, the Body of Christ and the People of God brought together in virtue of the unity of the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit, it is always possible to promote forms of communion in faith and charity as the basis of a future collaboration in solidarity among the particular Churches of the continent. This is precisely one of the objectives of this Synod Assembly.

This Synod offers us, the Bishops of the whole continent, a valuable opportunity to promote interecclesial communion and to bear witness to unity in confronting the tensions which affect the entire human race and which manifest themselves in conflicts between North and South, between rich and poor, and between developed nations and those in the process of development.

The Christian concept of *solidarity*, as practised in the commandment of love, has its origin in faith in a God who is always in solidarity with humanity. This God, who chooses a people, forms that people and establishes a covenant of love and faithfulness with them. At the same time, this covenant of solidarity implies a religious and ethical commitment which equally regulates the sanctity of worship and the respect for life, the spiritual life and the concern for the poor, the duty towards God and one's neighbour (the practice of justice, assistance to orphans, widows, strangers and those marginalized by society). With the incarnation of God's Son, divine solidarity becomes manifested in a most excellent manner.

The Church has again and again reiterated her preferential love for the poor. Pope John XXIII said that since the Church is for everyone, she especially desires to be the Church of the poor. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council says that the Church recognizes in the poor, as in a moral mirror, the image of her poor and humble divine founder. Paul VI, in a speech to the farmers of Colombia, calls the poor the "sacrament of Christ," and the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* reaffirms the link between the Gospel of Christ and the liberation from misery. The Holy Father John Paul II in his inaugural address

at the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate advocates a social commitment on behalf of justice and a just distribution of goods. Furthermore, it is well-known that the Latin American Bishops in the General Conferences of Puebla and Santo Domingo have declared themselves in favour of the preferential love for the poor.

III. Opportunities for encounter with the living Jesus Christ

At the present moment, there are many situations, many fruits of divine providence and also many human and social factors which not only provide favourable opportunities for the development of the evangelizing work of the Church but also permit us to look to the future with hope.

1. *The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* will be a special year of the Lord's grace. "For Christianity, time acquires a fundamental importance", says Pope John Paul II, since the eternal designs of God are realized in time. For this reason, the year which follows will be a special time of grace in which the whole People of God will long for the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The jubilee is also a time of freedom. What better opportunity is there than this, to rediscover and to proclaim the true concept of Christian freedom? This is a concept which must not be confused with human ideologies because it is at the heart of the Gospel.

2. *The thirst for God* is one of the most outstanding characteristics of our contemporary culture. It is said that we have entered post-modernity and often allusions are made about the unsatisfactory expectations created by rationalistic humanism. Our environments are over saturated with the feeling and conviction that people do not have the solution to "the problem of

humanity" and, consequently, are incapable of giving a response to the heart's yearning for the transcendent.

Humanity today shows signs of a religious and moral skepticism and is beginning to search for God (cf. Acts 17:27) in cults or esoteric philosophies, in pseudo-pantheistic religions, in the cult of nature (naturalism), in new and very diverse religious circles. Nevertheless, there still remains in the person an existential emptiness and a thirst for God which can only be satisfied by Jesus Christ, the only Saviour.

3. *Common Christian roots* are one of the fundamental elements of the identity of the American continent. Without knowing the different histories, ethnicities, cultures and economies characterizing the various regions of America and co-existing at times in the same region, it can be said that from a religious perspective America has a Christian identity, which has its origin in the proclamation of the Gospel on the continent, begun more than 500 years ago. Beyond the obvious differences, there are common Christian roots, which are the fruits of the seeds of the Gospel planted by the first missionaries who proclaimed the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

4. *Popular piety* has particularly significant manifestations, especially among the peoples of Latin America and in the Latin American peoples who live in the North. Essentially, this popular piety is distinguished by its Catholic character. In each case, it is all the more necessary to consider popular devotions in a pastoral programme, especially as it is set forth in the teaching of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* and the teaching of evangelization advocated by John Paul II from the beginning of his pontificate.

Popular piety expresses the faith of a humble and simple people; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Popular piety contains great religious and human values, such as the sense of transcendence

and the pilgrimage of human existence, penance for our sins and the keeping of one's promises and commitments, the sense of sharing the joy of a feast and the experience of living the faith in community. For everyone, popular piety, purified and duly catechized, is a privileged and decisive setting for the evangelization of families and communities.

5. *The Second Vatican Council* was a grace-filled event for the entire Church, for it provided pastoral guidelines for evangelization in the present and in the third millennium. We are all aware of the pastoral and spiritual fruits set forth in the conciliar documents which present the Church as mystery, communion and mission. Therefore, this Ecumenical Council is a necessary point of reference for evangelization in America, because it indicates a fundamental approach to pastoral action for the present and the future. However, one must recognize that there still remains much to be put into practice from the pastoral orientations of this Ecumenical Council.

6. *Social communications*, which have reached a notable proliferation in our days, should be considered in a positive way as an apt way for spreading the Gospel. Among the "modern *aeropagi*" calling for evangelization, one of the most important is specifically the means of social communication, given that they exert such a great influence on almost all individuals and are leading to the creation of a true mass culture. The scarce presence of the Church — and in some cases her complete absence — in this field is an inescapable pastoral challenge. In the Church, the use of the means of social communication oftentimes is not adequate because of the lack of up-to-date technology, economic resources and skilled personnel. It is also necessary to enlighten with Gospel values the ethical principles which guide the communication of information.

7. *The promotion of certain values related to the dignity of the human person* contribute to the spread of the Gospel.

America is a continent where the people have a clear awareness of freedom and democracy, the dignity of the human person, and the inalienable rights and equality of all human beings. The equality of all the baptized, by reason of the common dignity of the children of God and their belonging to the chosen people, is one of the fundamental values of the Gospel. This is why we can say that these values concerning the dignity of the person offer a wide and fertile field to proclaim the Good News.

IV. Challenges

Among the negative situations impeding the encounter with the living Jesus Christ and posing real challenges to the evangelizing mission are the diverse features of the social, economic, ecclesial and familial structures.

1. The social environment shows signs of the spread of secularism. The nuances which secularism takes on in America are the boundless affirmation of one's freedom and autonomy, the exaltation of an oftentimes accentuated individualism and the enthusiasm for the achievement of science and technology. All this leads to the illusory belief that contemporary humanity has no need of God.

In the field of culture, atheism is in no small way predominating intellectual and cultural circles. Committed Catholic laity are few in universities and in cultural, professional and artistic milieus, as well as in the means of social communications. In the field of education there is a frequent tendency to reduce education to mere instruction, without giving emphasis to transcendent values.

Another of these social phenomenon deserving of mention is the accelerated process of urbanization. Big cities are growing in a disorderly manner with well-known negative consequences:

poverty, cultural depravity, loss of family and religious traditions, anonymity, violence, etc. The situation requires a pastoral plan adequately to address the conditions of this growing urban culture.

Corruption in social and political life, evident in the countries of the North, as well as those in Central and South America, is one of the major problems of contemporary society. Nevertheless, the disciples of Christ are called to be the salt of the earth, giving testimony to the Gospel values through word and deed. Intimately connected to corruption is the problem of drug-trafficking, which has both a continental and worldwide dimension.

In recent times, indications of an awakening of racism and fanaticism are being seen, and in certain parts of the continent there is xenophobia against immigrants. The Church has much to say in this regard. There are fundamental biblical texts which set forth teachings on the right to emigrate and the treatment which should be given to foreigners.

2. *The economic sphere* shows signs of enormous economic differences, a result in part to those situations which manifest themselves in the social life as "structures of sin", as Pope John Paul II has called them. The problem of the international debt of many countries of the continent is serious. The way to a solution to such a complex situation in the context of the globalization of the economy can only be achieved by following fundamental ethical principles in which each party assumes responsibility. The proposal of Pope John Paul II deserves attentive consideration, i.e., to try to find a solution to this problem of the international debt, taking advantage of the spirit of the Jubilee of the year 2000, so as to consider a notable reduction, or a possible total cancellation, of this debt.

In many societies of America a significant lack of distributive justice exists; there is an increase in unemployment, low wages and an increasingly evident disproportion between the rich and

the poor. Money is also unjustly used in the war industry through the making and selling of arms, encouraging the arming of people and the shedding of blood. Unfortunately, many resources which could be used for education, food and housing are often spent on arms.

Economy and politics are not the tasks of the Church, but the Church does have the task to shed light on these realities with the principles of the Gospel. The papal Magisterium has emphasized the social question on numerous occasions, and Pope John Paul II has shown his concern for a greater universal solidarity with respect for the dignity of the human person and the vocation of following Christ.

3. *Even in the ecclesial sphere* various deficiencies and problems can impede evangelization and the encounter with Jesus Christ. A loss of a sense of sin exists (with little reference in preaching and catechesis), and a distinction between good and evil is fast disappearing (with little reference in preaching and catechesis), and a distinction between good and evil is fast disappearing in the consciences of many of the faithful. Is this not one of the reasons for the decrease in the frequency of the sacrament of Reconciliation?

Many members of the People of God show signs of a certain decrease in their faith in Jesus Christ as the one Saviour and in the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation. When this vision of faith is lacking, one looks at Jesus Christ as just another historical figure and at the Church as a mere human reality which can fail, which can and ought to change even in her essentials and which ought to be subject to the judgement of the majority as any other human society.

Likewise, certain dissenting groups exist in the Church and a lack of harmony by certain theologians with the Church's magisterium, primarily regarding certain topics of dogma, morality the mission of the Church and that of Christians *vis-d-vis* socio-

economic and political realities. These dissenters, who seem to be organized, are creating a great confusion among the People of God.

The sects and other religious movements are having a negative influence on many members of the Church who have not received a sufficiently solid formation to reject the effects of proselytism and the religious fanaticism which characterizes these groups. There is a general agreement in the entire continent on the serious problem which the sects and other religious movements represent. So extensive is the phenomenon that in Central America, the Caribbean and South America, the Caribbean and South America one can speak of a true "invasion" and a "co-ordinated plan" on the part of the sects to change the present religious identity of Latin America. Similar negative effects are being produced by a current of pseudo-religious thought called *New Age*, present on the whole continent and on a global scale. The question must be raised: Why do Catholics join the sects? What kind of Catholics leave the Church and what does their action say about what might be lacking in the Church? But above all, we must ask ourselves: What action ought to be taken in the face of this phenomenon?

4. In the *area of life and the family*, there are many threats to this basic nucleus of society, which is also the sanctuary of life. A kind of "conspiracy against life and against the family" exists in the societies of America, as seen in the violation of human rights, the legalization of abortion, the campaigns against life, the programmes of sterilization, the acceptance of euthanasia, concepts of family contrary to the natural order, the abuse and violence of minors, etc.

With respect to health care, the Church in America feels called to face the problem of caring for the sick as an expression of evangelical charity and as service of collaboration with society,

above all in extreme cases such as cancer, AIDS, drug addiction and alcoholism, as well as physical and mental handicaps.

V. Invitation to hope

The theological virtue of hope implies a primarily eschatological dimension, since it is based on faith in the divine promises and is oriented towards the final resurrection. The Church's teaching of eschatological hope ought not to decrease interest in temporal realities. The well-being of humanity is certainly in the hands of those who know how to give to coming generations the reason to live and to hope.

Certainly there are many serious challenges and difficulties in the midst of the Church and the world alike. However, much greater is our hope in Jesus Christ, who by his Death and Resurrection triumphs over the fires of evil and destroys sin and death. The power of his paschal mystery continues to be at work in the world; and the Living Jesus Christ leads his people to the fullness of life.

The presence of the Virgin Mary is a sign of favour and a reason for hope in the task which awaits us. Through her, through whom we receive "all graces", we can come to an *encounter with the living Jesus Christ, the way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America.*

Proclaiming the Gospel on the family and life

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo

President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

The Gospel on the family and life, which constitutes in the integral Gospel of Jesus Christ a "*single and indivisible Gospel*" (cf. *Evangelium vitae*, n. 2), is one reason, always old and always

new, that today, in a very special way, unites the whole Church, called together by the Successor of Peter, in order to expedite this struggle for the dignity of individuals and peoples.

The Holy Father refers to this new category of individuals who are not a "*social class*" according to the interpretation recognized by some ideological currents, as in Marxist collectivism, with its characteristic conception of "class struggle". Fortunately it has been rethought by some theologians, which provides hope for harmony with the doctrine of the Church. This new category is constituted by the poorest, most defenceless and unarmed; by the most innocent: the "unborn" (conceived, not born), the seriously sick, the elderly considered as a mere burden. This new category is constituted also by the poor peoples, who are subjected to the great powers of this world, which would like to impose a new culture, a new morality, a new anthropology. In defence of the flock and of humanity, as St. Gregory the Great asked them, Pastors have to "fill the gap ... to come face to face with the great ones of this world, speaking in total freedom...". This is happening and must be invigorated.

There remains, with all its demands, the ethics of justice and solidarity, the Gospel option for the poor. Families accosted by the scourge of poverty have the right to all they need for the fulfillment of their mission and to attain their happiness. Children cannot be victims of a misery that destroys them, undermines their home or the possibility of constructing it, and thrusts them with inclemency to abandonment *in* and *of* the streets. Authentic solidarity with the poor and with those stricken by misery, as demanded by justice and solidarity, uses as a thermometer the actual situation of families and their possibility for integral human development. One cannot take advantage of misery in order to impose on peoples and families a contraceptive and abortive colonialism that reduces persons to things.

This is a cause that calls together the Bishops and the peoples of America in an historical service to humanity. It mobilizes pastors *in a new and dynamic unity*, liberating with the strength of the truth, rather than ideological reductionism. It frees humanity from its current historical shame that will be recognized as such, as today one recognizes with embarrassment the regime of slavery and above all the racial discriminations, which used to prevail on our continent.

The Holy Father offers us the liveliest example of prophetic zeal in this cause of the Church and of humanity, in order to give a voice to the poorest and the most innocent.

Pastoral planning urgently needed in cities

Cardinal Jose Freire Falcao

Archbishop of Brasilia, Brazil

The Cardinal spoke of the rapid process of urbanization in the Latin American countries as a challenge for a new evangelization in Latin America.

There is need for a courageous urban pastoral plan in cities marked by permissive morals and by a crisis in the institution of the family, religious and cultural pluralism, rapid cultural changes, the migratory phenomenon and social marginalization, technological progress and a scientific-technical mentality, and by threats to life. Urban culture demands the revitalization of parishes, as well as new and daring structures of evangelization.

There is a need for a catechesis which leads to personal faith, conscious and committed, nurtured by Sacred Scripture, faithful to Tradition and to the Magisterium of the Church, which can withstand the aggressiveness of sects, integrate itself into the process of urbanization of the Latin American peoples, and confront the questioning of Christian values by means of social

communication and by strong currents of public opinion. This catechesis must be able to confront a secularist view of life, practical agnosticism and religious indifference.

He concluded by saying that we must pass from a presupposed Catholicism to a proposed Catholicism, from a defensive Catholicism to a forward-looking Catholicism which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This is what is needed, to respond to the pastoral challenges of large cities.

Role of the laity in missionary work

Archbishop Marcelo Pinto Carvalho

Paraiba, Brazil

There has been found a greater consciousness among the lay faithful concerning the gift of Baptism which leads to a missionary commitment. In regard to this, the Holy Father said: "Pastors should recognize and promote the services and functions of the lay faithful that have their sacramental foundation in Baptism and Confirmation".

Today, more than ever, it is up to all God's People to accept the priority task of the new evangelization. The action of lay people is necessary and, in many fields, decisive. The Instruction of the Holy See, published on the 13th of this month, is not a regression in the call for the laity to participate in the Church. Attention is only called to some abuses and there is a warning about certain doctrinal errors.

Brazil is 87% Catholic in a population of 150 million inhabitants. In the third millennium, as far as numbers are concerned, it will be the biggest Catholic country in the world. It has 15,500 priests. One priest for 10,000 people. More to our advantage is that the clergy are constantly increasing in number and we have 890,000 lay collaborators, which means 57

lay collaborators for every priest. There are many "extraordinary ministries" carried out by lay people with due authorization in the fields of liturgy, the sacraments, administration and Church services, in councils, in community and group social activities.

Lay activity is especially important in their own specific field, which is the secular world. Without the "leading role of lay people", the Gospel would not reach modern culture and the *areopagi* of our time.

I would like to call attention to the serious situation of the continent in the southern hemisphere. The North must take into account the globalization of the neo-liberal system, which is marginalizing millions and millions of poor brethren in Latin America. We need not only fight the facts but also struggle to overcome the deadly system of capitalism in its terrible current phase, which is economic neo-liberalism. The text of St. Matthew's Gospel, 25:31-40, inspires us to take the position of the "preferential option for the poor".

Evangelization of families is a pastoral priority

Archbishop Claudio Hummes, O.F.M.

Fortaleza, Brazil

The process towards secularism, to a large extent the result of urban, modern and post-modern culture, which afflicts the family today, profoundly weakens fundamental family values such as respect for life, matrimonial indissolubility, conjugal fidelity, and the religious education of children.

At the same time, divorce, abortion, contraception, sterilization etc. have been introduced and many times approved by civil law.

Having said this, we become the messengers of the Holy Father on behalf of the family and of life, as at the Second World

Meeting of the Pope with Families in Rio de Janeiro, last October. Thus, the following:

1. Make the evangelization of families a pastoral priority.
2. Regarding the evangelization of families, announce to them first the person of Jesus Christ, dead and risen, and the immense love of God for families, which is manifested in Christ, as well as the good news of the sacrament of marriage.
3. In the daily life of a Christian family, unite freedom with truth, happiness with faithfulness, love with responsibility.
4. Fight in the parliaments for laws favouring the family and life from the moment of conception until natural death.
5. Be committed to the struggle against misery and hunger, which affects so many families, making it difficult for them to live their vocation and mission as family.

The need for effective evangelizing strategies

Bishop Cipriano Calderon Polo

Titular Bishop of Thagora

Vice-President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America

Proclaiming Jesus Christ. This is the formidable cry of St. Paul that continually echoes through the Synod hall. It is the topic the Pope has chosen for this Assembly so that the attention of the American Episcopate is entirely concentrated on evangelization. The key point, the nerve centre, is the topic of the living Jesus Christ. John Paul II recently stated in a Message to CELAM that "everything planned in the activities of the Church must stem from Christ and his Gospel". The Church must focus all its pastoral attention and all its evangelizing efforts on Jesus Christ, her Lord. At this decisive hour, in this Synod, we must examine with fortitude, sincerity and a sense of realism how we are carrying

out the task of evangelization and how we are to accomplish it in the future. We should be very faithful to pastoral philosophy and the divine evangelizing teaching of Jesus. Perhaps we should be more concerned not only with the poor as the primary object of evangelization, but also with poverty itself in evangelization as a source of apostolic fertility. Considering our resources and time, it is important to give further attention to direct evangelization.

Consider some concrete proposals:

— Trace in the most expressive and concrete way the figure or likeness of Jesus Christ the Evangelizer as a reference point for the overall task of new evangelization which the Synod must promote in America.

— Seek really effective evangelizing strategies with a solution to the problems we have raised and to the great challenges that confront us at the end of this century: among these I would like to mention the urgent need to deal with the aggressiveness and expansion of the sects.

— Listen to the outcry of the poor, the native peoples, the African-Americans and the Hispanics.

— May the Synod bring about a widescale renewal in the Church.

— May the Synod be an evangelizing event, preparing the continent's Churches to enter the third millennium of Christianity.

— May the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, the outcome of the Synod, bear the emblematic and programmatic title of *Christ in America*.

Media are in urgent need of evangelization

Archbishop John P. Foley

Titular Archbishop of Neapolis in Proconsulari

President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications

One of the "modern Areopagi" requiring urgent evangelization is that of the means of social communication. There is an agreement to deal with this question at two levels: 1) the use of the media to transmit the Gospel and the Magisterium; and 2) the integration of the Gospel in this "new culture".

How can we use the media to transmit the Gospel message and the Magisterium of the Church? The following are practical steps:

1) Every Diocese and Bishops' Conference should develop and carry out a pastoral plan for communications and include communications in every pastoral plan. Because we are celebrating a Synod of Bishops for America, it would be appropriate for the Bishops of America to develop together a pastoral plan in communications for all of America, especially regarding satellite use, the sharing of programming and cooperation in production.

2) I would ask that every Diocese and Bishops' Conference use the free air time offered in some countries for religious programming.

3) The telecasting of well-celebrated liturgies can offer not only consolation to the sick but also catechesis for active and inactive Catholics and evangelization for those who do not share our faith.

4) We can tap the creative talents of Catholic broadcasters to develop programming for stations of general interest in various formats, even value-centred "telenovelas".

5) We should continue the establishment of Catholic radio and television stations where that is legally and economically possible.

6) There is a need to develop and support sound Catholic publications of professional quality for all levels of the reading public as a means of Catholic information, formation, inspiration, continuing religious education and reinforced Catholic identification. It is helpful to cooperate with specially gifted lay people and religious who have developed media ministries. The Bishop should be a principle of unity and coordination in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the media.

The integration of the Gospel message in this "new culture" created by modern communications is an even greater challenge. Pastoral outreach to media professionals can have an effect throughout society. Personal contact with media professionals and with media owners and directors to explain Catholic concerns can often be more fruitful than a public declaration of war over a perceived grievance. It is important to be honestly responsive to questions on sensitive issues through brief and apt response. Media formation centres are most important to form committed Catholics in the language of the media and to offer well trained personnel to the media.

One way the Church is entering into the new culture of communications is through the development of a computer network, the *Red Informatica de la Iglesia in America Latina*. The *RIIAL* organizes its work in three distinct areas: the communication system, the documentary archives system and data bases of entities and persons. The *Red Informatica* is a Church activity because it uses media techniques within its capacities and promotes the exchange and broadcasting of news, documents and other information, as well as maintaining a constant relation with the members of the Church, in order to uphold the faith and the building of the kingdom of God.

Holy Eucharist, source of our solidarity

Cardinal Adam J. Maida
Archbishop of Detroit, USA

Despite the many differences between the North and South of the American continent, all Catholics are united in and through the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the most visible and effective structure already in place to ensure and deepen solidarity between North and South.

To make the Holy Eucharist an even more effective instrument of solidarity, three concrete suggestions were offered. First of all, a petition could be recited at every liturgy and in the Divine Office referring to the Christian baptismal obligation to work for justice. Secondly, a symbol of an empty chair could serve as a visible reminder of the hungers of others throughout the world.

Finally, the Sunday celebration of the Lord's Death and Resurrection challenges all Christians to take a new look at the meaning of human-labour and life itself. The people of the Northern hemisphere of America can learn much from the people of the Southern hemisphere, especially with regard to the way family relationships are the heart and centre of people's lives; living and dying are always seen against the backdrop of the wider story of the community and the story of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. By truly living the Eucharist, the Church in America can be built up in solidarity!

Renegotiate the foreign debt
Bishop Jorge Mario Avila del Aguila, CM.
Jalapa, Guatemala

The foreign debt as a serious financial, human, ethical and moral problem:

1. Considerations:

1.1. The problem of corruption: this is often due to bad administration, to unnecessary projects, which benefit the individuals who have thus been enriched.

1.2. Conditions frequently imposed on countries in debt: more favourable conditions are made for lending institutions than for countries with conditions imposed against their will. Sometimes the interest paid equals the principal, which continues to produce additional interest.

1.3. The support of international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) for creditor countries.

1.4. The foreign debt often hinders the development of debtor countries, some of which allocate 25% of their budget for interest payments. Pope Paul VI's saying, "Development is the new name for peace", is in conflict with the foreign debt.

1.5. A decent standard of living for people in debtor countries is hindered by the foreign debt.

2. Conclusions:

2.1. An urgent need for the dialogue proposed by CELAM: "with economists, politicians, businessmen and professionals on the ethical aspects of man and the economy".

2.2. Relations of solidarity among nations not only on the occasion of natural disasters, but also for social disasters, such as the foreign debt. From this standpoint we can hope for the following:

- renegotiating the conditions;
- social mechanisms which make it possible to exchange the foreign debt for ecological programmes; social investment to benefit the marginalized;
- cancellation of foreign debt (or at least of the interest).

2.3. Governments must be reminded not to contract debts

behind the people's back, so that the people know the specific reasons for the loan, its terms and effects.

2.4. Whenever a debt is contracted, there should be real democratic control in order to avoid bad handling and the risk of corruption.

New evangelization calls for new apologetics

Archbishop Francis E. George, O.M.I.

Chicago, USA

The dialogue between faith and culture is different in North America, where the faith has been predominantly Protestant, from the same dialogue in Latin America, where the faith has been Catholic. This difference creates a special difficulty for new immigrants from Latin America, who find themselves a minority (Hispanic) within a minority (Catholicism). Immigrant Hispanic Catholics have to find a new way to be Catholic in order to preserve their faith in what is often a culturally hostile environment. The situation calls for a new apologetics as part of the new evangelization. It also calls for a clear distinction among Catholics between ecclesial communion and social solidarity, lest the Church seem to claim hegemony over society or the Church's mission be reduced to social amelioration. Solidarity reaches toward communion in the Church's self-identification with the poor.

Create institution linking all three Bishops' Conferences

Bishop Jose Dolores Grullon Estrella

San Juan de la Maguana

Dominican Republic

On the theme "Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: the Way to ... Communion", on behalf of the Dominican Episcopal

Conference we would like to make the following proposal: that an organization be set up by the Holy See which would bring together the three Conferences: Canada, the United States and Latin America, with its own headquarters, permanent staff and procedural norms, with the aim of following up the proposals made by this Synod for America.

It should be a permanent organization and not merely a series of gatherings or meetings as are held at present. An institution, set up by the Holy See, with the aim of living the mystery of communion more effectively and to be the sign and instrument of the unity of all the members of God's People and of the local Churches on the American continent in union with the universal Pastor. At the same time, this organization should be an effective witness to unity and solidarity for civil society in America and throughout the world.

With regard to the theme of ecclesial communities and solidarity.

The basic ecclesial community is the privileged place where the laity, integrated into the parish, will make it their own and work for the new evangelization. It is a matter of calling and involving everyone in mission, and of creating the opportunity for greater local participation in the work of evangelization so that the Good News of Christ reaches even the remotest corners.

Since the Diocese is a geographical unit divided into other geographical units known as parishes, we must further divide our territories into smaller and smaller units until we have units of 20 to 150 families: the small community for all the families in the area.

Just as we have our diocesan and parish councils, we should also set up a community council, a key organization for bringing together the men, women and young people who have important

roles in the evangelization of the community. The aim is increase faith, the conscious participation in the sacraments which impart divine life to us, and the organization of all in following Jesus, so that the community may have an abundance of good works and everyone may grow in a life of family and community prayer.

Migration offers challenges and opportunities

Archbishop Giovanni Cheli

Titular Archbishop of Santa Giusta

President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care
of Migrants and Itinerant People

The migration phenomenon has been an integral part of the American continent's history and has marked the stages of development of both civil society and the Church. Today migration is particularly marked by the massive movement of people both within the continent (especially from the South to the North) and from various countries.

In every time and place the phenomenon is marked with new features that the Church must carefully face. Today most "emigration" is the result of war, violence or disaster — creating a vast group of refugees — or of difficult or desperate economic situations. At the same time, "immigration" is subject to restrictions and controls that make it harder and more problematic, giving rise to the phenomenon of clandestine immigration mentioned by the Holy Father in his 1996 Message for World Migration Day.

The migration phenomenon presents the Church — at the point of origin and destination — with challenges and opportunities. It is a challenge to offer newcomers respect, acceptance, assistance and protection in Christ's name; the opportunity lies in the human and Christian richness that the newcomers bring with them, and in the possibility of evangelizing them.

Pilgrimages to the many shrines — especially the Marian shrines — where attentive pastoral care can and must bear marvelous fruits of evangelization, conversion and grace, are a very special expression of human mobility on the American continent.

Pastoral contribution. The number of deacons is still small. Barely 15% of Catholics can participate in the Sunday Eucharist. More than 3 million Catholics take part, on Sundays, in a celebration of the Word led by lay persons. Access to Penance and the Anointing of the Sick is not easy. How can these problems be solved before the situation deteriorates? How can the Synod help us provide a creative solution to the problem of ordained ministers and their collaborators?

Ecumenical formation without ambiguity

Bishop Jose Luis Lacunza Maestrojuan, O.A.R.

Chitre, Panama

Ecumenism is an irreversible option and an action connatural to the Christian faith. However, due to the lack of formation and the presence of the so-called sects, the experience of ecumenism in official declarations differs from the way it is experienced in pastoral life.

On the one hand, in Latin America the fact that there is a Catholic majority has caused ecumenism to be considered as unnecessary, superfluous, an issue for experts and even a sign of weakness. On the other hand, the aggressive and proselytizing presence of the sects gives rise to confusion, suspicion and defensive attitudes which have sometimes created a sort of obstacle to ecumenical dialogue.

We should therefore take three aspects into account:

1. Ecumenical formation: there is an urgent need to form skilled personnel at all levels in view of ecumenical dialogue, since, with some exceptions, there is no one in our Churches who can act as spokesman or leader in the ecumenical dialogue.

2. Ecumenism without ambiguity: it is important to denounce and overcome the conflicts that arise in many Latin American countries due to the attitude of the members of certain historical Churches who pass themselves off as Catholics.

3. Ecumenical attitudes: ecumenism is not only pursued by words but also by acts, and, in the face of approaching or seeking dialogue with these so-called sects, it is worth examining the use of the term "sect" which for many seems negative or pejorative.

Evangelizing man means evangelizing culture

Cardinal Paul Poupard

President of the Pontifical Council for Culture

The mystery of Jesus Christ is good news for mankind and his culture in the cultural context of America.

1. The Church's basic mission is to evangelize, to fulfill man's heartfelt desire in his search for God, until he finds in him his fullness of life and joy.

2. Evangelizing man also means evangelizing his culture — this culture which is the special way in which human beings (in a given people) cultivate their relationship with nature, with other human beings and with God, in order to reach a truly and fully human level. The Holy Father has always emphasized the twofold wealth of popular cultures throughout America: their great

diversity and at the same time their common heritage of Gospel values. All the American peoples can recognize Christ as the archetype of their ideal of life, and in the Blessed Virgin Mary, "the star of the first and new evangelization".

3. New evangelization is grafted onto the common Christian roots, present in the different cultures. It enlivens the experience of Christians and challenges those who live far from the Church. Evangelizing cultures implies proposing models of life inspired by the Beatitudes, transforming society from within by overturning the defining criteria of judgement and values with the force of the Gospel.

4. The Gospel is not merely another culture in the overstocked market of liberal pluralism. For the Church, proclaiming the Gospel in its integrity is a question of fidelity to God and to man. This is the Christian newness which gives soul to the cultures of all the peoples in the new world, cements their communion and inspires their solidarity.

5. Globalization of culture causes an impoverishment that cuts man off from his roots and deprives him of his vital relationship with God. Conversely, the miracle of Pentecost shatters the restrictions of cultures and opens them all to the fullness of love.

6. The Church offers the true answer to the paradoxical quest for a new spirituality, aroused by the emptiness of the prevalent hedonistic and materialistic culture: the person's integral development is only totally fulfilled by salvation in Jesus Christ.

7. Inculturation of the faith and the evangelization of cultures go hand in hand.

8. The Church does not cease to account for the hope that is in her (1 Pt 3:15). Sharing hope means affirming that the centre

of faith in Christ is always the living Jesus Christ, to build an authentic civilization of truth and love.

9. The Church respects the diversity and plurality of cultures, the better to enrich them. The evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the faith are achieved in the particular Churches in communion with the universal Church. Evangelizing a culture does not mean lacking respect for it, but rather witnessing to the greatest respect for it by calling it in Christ's name to its full development.

Christological catechesis must be fruit of Synod **Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Our Synod's main theme is the encounter with Christ — an encounter which becomes conversion, in other words, the transformation of our mind, our will, our heart. This conversion, which is a passing from the "I" to the "you" of Christ, produces communion, the collective "we" of people who have gone beyond their own self to become one with the "you" of the Lord. This profound communion — "I no longer live but Christ lives in me" — is the condition for solidarity in everyday life. Therefore speaking of Christ is not an escape from the harsh reality of the major economic, political and social problems into a purely interior world; it is, rather, true realism which goes to the root of our problems. A renewed Christological catechesis, the heart of evangelization, should therefore be the first and fundamental fruit of this Synod.

Young people must not be marginalized

Bishop Fernando Claudio Gamalero Gonzalez

Escuintla, Guatemala

In the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum laboris*, the subject of young people and their problems has not been treated; it simply does not exist. Young people are in the majority in Latin America and they have to face a harsh and difficult future. This means that we must make a resolute decision to give them our firm and decisive support.

There is no excuse for the exclusion and marginalization of young people in our societies, and we have a suggestion regarding this. We are all very aware of the large number of young people who emigrate to the Northern countries from Central America and Mexico. Poverty obliges them to emigrate and face the risk of countless difficulties.

One of the most worrying factors for our Churches is that, when they reach their destination, most young people remain on the fringe of their own culture and are immediately absorbed by the new things they encounter. They are forcefully uprooted from their culture, and even worse, they run the risk of losing their faith. This is a cause of concern since with the loss of their faith they lose all that was based on it: their moral and ethical values.

We suggest the following: the creation of an opportunity for permanent dialogue at the episcopal level, integrated by the Bishops responsible for youth ministry throughout Mexico, Central America, the United States and Canada; this should provide an opportunity to become familiar with the problems of the young people in our particular Churches who emigrate to the United States and Canada, and to try to solve them. Contact should also be made with all the Churches so that young Catholic emigrants will be welcomed to the Church by the young people in the parish where they settle. There they will encounter the living Christ

on the way to conversion, communion and solidarity, and so enrich the local Church that receives them.

Religious relativism must be avoided

Cardinal Francis Arinze

President of the Pontifical Council for the Interreligious Dialogue

While contact with other believers in America is part of the evangelizing mission of the Church, care should be taken not to be involved in religious relativism, the error of putting all the religions on the same level.

With reference to the indigenous and the Afro-American religions, may I mention a 1993 Circular Letter of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the Bishops concerned. The Letter urges pastoral attention to these religions by way of study, so that the road to healthy inculturation may become clearer.

Christians, when they meet with Muslims in America, should urge the Muslims to seek to convince their co-religionists in many Arab countries to give Christians and other believers as much religious freedom as Muslims enjoy in America, especially the USA and Canada.

It would also be important that Jews, Christians and Muslims in the USA and Canada raise their voices in favour of justice and peace in the Middle East, with particular reference to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The attraction which some Christians in America find in Oriental religions sometimes takes the form of interest in meditation, asceticism, mysticism and yoga; this is an indirect way in which Catholics are calling on their Bishops, priests and men and women religious to initiate them more and more into the riches

of Christian meditation, prayer, contemplation, asceticism and mysticism.

Catholic schools must proclaim Christ as source of all values

Cardinal Pio Laghi

Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education
(for Seminaries and Educational Institutions)

The Church is present and pastorally active at all levels of education in every country of the American continent; she runs more than 60,000 primary and secondary schools, attended by more than 17 million school children; 330 universities and 40 theological faculties. This represents a qualitatively high cultural-educational "potential" on which the Church can draw for her work in evangelization, and for the dialogue between faith and science and between the Gospel and culture.

It is well known that without education man cannot achieve his true development, either as a human being or as a Christian; education enables him to exercise his rights and duties in society, and offers the Church a primary way to proclaim and spread the Gospel.

To ensure that this "potential" is put to the best possible use we must bear in mind that a Catholic school should not limit itself merely to transmitting "human values", but must first proclaim Christ as the source of every value and the light guaranteeing the authenticity of these values meant for the benefit of humanity. This means that a Catholic school must teach faith in Jesus Christ, since Christ is the basis of its educational programme.

A clear and precise Catholic identity should therefore be maintained in all scholastic institutions, especially in the Christian

guidelines for programmes and pastoral initiatives: the adjective "Catholic" applied to these schools must never be reduced to a simple "adverb", but given the status of a "noun". This "educational project" requires planning so that, together with an efficient technical-professional training, it is able to offer a vision and culture inspired by Gospel values, and to this end, to form teachers who are not only professionally well-qualified but also committed Christians who witness to their faith in the classroom as well as in their lives.

It is especially important to make a combined effort to increase the academic and scientific potential of Catholic universities, also by means of cultural exchanges and cooperation between centres in the North and the South, and, at the same time, to promote and safeguard their Catholic identity through fidelity to the Christian message, institutional commitment to serving the Church, and reflection in the light of the faith: only in this way can we carry out an evangelization that reaches to the roots of the life and customs of peoples, i.e., their culture, and provides the Church's pastoral activity with its natural support.

**Pastoral care must attend to Asian
and Pacific peoples
Bishop John S. Cummins
Oakland, USA**

1. The *Instrumentum laboris* may under-emphasize the presence, long established but rapidly growing in this century, of Asian and Pacific Island peoples.

The Church's pastoral action in the USA must attend to an Asian/Pacific population (7.2 million) equal to the population of Bolivia and greater than that of Paraguay and Uruguay.

2. The *Instrumentum laboris* rightly fears the "inadequacy of [immigrants] inserting themselves into the societies". Add to that a mood of unwelcome prevalent today in the USA and in other industrialized countries.

3. The Church, bearing the Gospel, speaks for those in need, but especially for the household of the faith, with concern for families and for disadvantaged workers. The Church in the U.S. must seek the counsel of Asian/Pacific Island Bishops to aid them with the various communities as well as seeking the help of Maryknoll and other experienced missionary societies. Priests and religious who serve their own communities are esteemed, along with those others in the Diocese who learn the new languages.

4. Asian/Pacific Island people in the U.S. seek recognition. They sense their leadership both because of the length of residence in the country and their well-developed talents. The young, so disproportionately numerous in college and university populations, promise influential leadership in the future.

5. A last question remains why overseas Chinese are so strong in the Churches of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia compared to our hemisphere.

Twelve percent of the USA will be Asian/Pacific people by the year 2025. They are worthy of much attention.

Effective impact of the Church's social doctrine

Archbishop Emilio Carlos Berlie Belaunzaran

Yucatan, Mexico

1. The social doctrine of the Church is part of the doctrinal heritage of the Church and its precise contribution to the enlightenment of society can only be understood in the context of this heritage.

2. Above all communion is not something done by us; it is the gift of the Triune God who gave us the Holy Spirit to enable us to live — as a Church — in the same unity as the divine Persons. The solidarity the Church promotes is not the communion which is the Church, but a reflection of it in the world, in the hope that God will bring his work to completion and be "all in all". The Church benefits the world but remains distinct from it. The social doctrine stems from this communion and strives for solidarity.

3. The social doctrine offers fullness and depth to politics and the economy, but above all to the immediate perception of everything human, the breadth and depth that make it possible to maintain the noblest aspirations of social life, and at the same time indicate the way to their fulfilment. About a century and a half of intense social activity shows that it is substantial when it results from following Jesus Christ. Great value must be placed on Gospel poverty a source of transforming power.

4. The social doctrine can illuminate the multi-coloured stained-glass window of continental America so that the face of Jesus Christ is visible in our communion, the same yesterday, today and for ever.

The development of lay ministries

Bishop Julio Csar Bonino Bonino

Tacuarembó, Uruguay

The "great increase today of the ministries entrusted to the lay faithful" (*Christifideles laici*, n. 23) has already been acknowledged; these ministries are often very diverse and are a gift of the Spirit in the life of the communities, offered as a service to the Church and to the world.

The three major criteria for the promotion and guidance of these ministries are the ones taken from n. 73 of *Evangelii nuntiandi*.

We should return to the idea of the Church as People of God, stressing the equal dignity of all her members in the diversity of ministries, so that we can all find a way of being Church, each according to his own particular vocation.

To achieve this mission, all the members of the Body of Christ receive gifts from the Holy Spirit for the common good. Among these gifts, the community discovers and approves some more clearly recognized roles, which are given for the good of the whole Body. When these roles are recognized by the community and confirmed by its Pastors, they then become ministries.

Lay ministries are distinguished by their "essence" and not by the degree of the ordained ministry, and can develop within the broad areas of the three functions of Christ, priestly, prophetic and royal, serving the community so that the latter can fulfill its mission in the world.

'Globalization' process contains ambiguities
Bishop Carlos Maria Collazzi Irazabal, S.D.B.
Mercedes, Uruguay

The Church considers very positively the growing interdependence among peoples and nations when it takes place within the ethical parameters of authentic development, the elimination of poverty and a greater development of the universal common good.

Although good in itself, this reality is not devoid of ambiguities.

When interdependence does not take the form of world solidarity, it becomes a mechanism for the exploitation of others by some people and nations, and for the destruction of cultures and identities. However, the Church must strongly insist on the moral parameters which shape the ethical validity of this process.

In this context it is most important for our continent to distinguish between this phenomenon and the ideology which dominates it and claims to convert it into a "globalization" process.

"Globalization" appears as an ideological concept which in theory claims to explain and transform the growing world interdependence into the reality of a free market economy.

The ideology of globalization convinces great masses that it is they who are to blame for their poverty, and that they are incapable of competing in this "market", which is unjust and deceptively free.

The Church cannot but denounce and condemn the ideology that seeks through the "globalization" process to establish worldwide economic mechanisms that bring about the systematic exclusion of the weakest.

The important role of parishes and lay ministers

Bishop Jacques Berthelet, C.S.V.

Saint-Jean — Longueuil, Canada

To ensure that the encounter with Jesus Christ takes place, we must draw attention to the places where this encounter mainly occurs, that is, the parishes, nor can we fail to support those who are its primary artisans, that is, the priests and their many lay co-workers.

A parish is often considered a place where the sacraments are celebrated, but its mission field is more extensive by far. In addition to the pastoral image, it must be inspired by the biblical images of the sower of seed and the fisherman. The image of the sower reminds the parish of its vocation, sent out into the world to sow the Word of God with liberality on all the paths and among all the groups of people it must evangelize. The image of the fisherman calls to mind its mission to go far out to sea, a dangerous place but also where the miraculous catch can be made ... The parish is called to be open to what is larger and what is smaller than itself. It has no future in this modern world if it withdraws into itself. It must create links with neighbouring parishes, the living forces of the area and other social and economic agents. It must become human and personalized, by forming numerous small ecclesial communities- linked to one another. In any case, it is called to renewal in order to find new life.

Moreover, the ministries must also be arranged and organized better, to make the encounter with the living Jesus Christ possible. In some American Dioceses there are no longer enough priests to do this. It is a grace for the Church that some lay men and women with a sound theological and pastoral formation can participate in the pastoral work. These persons exercise a real ministry. Their contribution to the evangelization of young people, families and other areas of life has become indispensable. Together with Pope Paul VI, who joyfully and openly acknowledged their contribution, saying: "The Church recognizes the place of non-ordained ministries which are capable of providing a special service to the Church", it is good that this Synod, which is concerned about evangelization in America, should encourage all the artisans of evangelization.

Ensure priests' holiness by quality of formation

Archbishop Tulio Manuel Chirivella Varela
Barquisimeto, Venezuela

The Archbishop of Barquisimeto emphasized that the path to conversion, communion and solidarity necessarily involves a witness to holiness by the Pastors, who with openness to honest and sincere dialogue with their closest collaborators (priests, deacons, consecrated persons and laity), must strive to see in them a concrete sign of the living Jesus Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel must be imbued with holiness so that the Church may draw strength from it to renew the world and the structures that require conversion.

To this end, we should definitely think of an apostolate of sanctification. The saints are models of authentic conversion, who, having actually experienced a living personal encounter with Jesus Christ, are agents of communion open to the Cross in its two fold vertical and horizontal dimension, so that a real encounter of man with God and of men with one another becomes possible. If we want in-depth evangelization, we must make the path to holiness our own.

The new evangelizers must appear as visible, transparent and credible signs of the living Jesus Christ and of the Church.

The greatest force for the transformation of personal, family and social life is holiness; it should therefore be the starting point for all pastors who must seek in every way to identify and model their lives on the eternal High Priest, so that they have the same feelings and attitudes as the Supreme Pastor. America and the whole world need holy priests.

To face this challenge, it is essential that the clergy are given a proper formation in which three basic aspects are clearly apparent:

1. Candidates for the priesthood must be properly selected.
2. The necessary quantity and quality of superiors and teachers in seminaries must be ensured.
3. The ongoing formation of priests must be given its full importance, without excluding any of the aspects of an integral process which enables them to live in accordance with the gift and ministry to which they have been called.

Underline jubilee nature of the Church

Archbishop Carmelo Juan Giaquinta

Resistencia, Argentina

1. The Synod is an occasion for us Bishops to profess our faith and love for Jesus Christ on the eve of the Great Jubilee of his birth. It is appropriate to recall the words of the Extraordinary Synod of 1985: "Christ is the light of nations! ... The Church becomes more credible if she speaks less of herself and preaches more and more Jesus crucified". Let us ask ourselves whether in our pastoral work there has been some kind of distortion which could relegate Jesus Christ to a place below that of pastoral organization.

2. Hence there is a certain pastoral harshness which forgets that "sacramenta sunt propter homines", and which must be overcome by a study of pastoral anthropology.

3. It is necessary to underline the Jubilee nature of the Church as a permanent, constitutive feature. To this end:

a) Adapt the practice of the sacrament of Penance even more closely to the style of the merciful Jesus. To do so, encourage Bishops to exercise the ministry of pardon with spiritual liberality, and to help today's confessors give a better preparation to their successors.

b) Examine whether the phenomenon of the sects has taken root within the Church, whether, for example, it stems from poor pastoral care.

c) Insist on the need to promote the communion of goods and the Church's economic reform, as a sign of faith in Jesus Christ, who, "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

Importance of dialogue as way to communicate Gospel

Bishop Raymond John Lahey

St. George's, Canada

Paul VI taught that the Gospel must be preached not only in language that is faithful, but also in language that can be heard. It has no culture of its own, but takes root in the world's varied cultures. Such diversity of expression is a sign of the Gospel's vitality and richness.

This "dialogue of salvation" begins by listening, and by respecting the truth, value and dignity within the other person. It uses the language and culture of the hearer. In honest dialogue, the Church must admit its own mistakes. No issue, however painful, can stay closed to discussion.

In the Americas, the Church, seen as peripheral to real-life issues, is less rejected than marginalized. In turn, the Church often attempts to preserve the Gospel rather than communicate it. Many times it simply repeats religious language the culture finds meaningless.

Instead, the Gospel demands that the Church today must dialogue with those estranged from it. Such groups include: women, on their role in Church and society; homosexual persons, on discrimination and sensitivity toward them; youth, on the values

they hold; environmentalists, on the use of creation and population issues; the pro-choice movement, on freedom of conscience; New Age movements; those in fractured families and broken marriages; and other similar groups.

Dialogue involves risk and will not be easy. But given the Church's marginalization, there is greater risk in no dialogue. To be faithful to the Gospel is not to be fearful for it.

At the Areopagus, Paul brought the Gospel into culture in a way that respected the values of his hearers. John Paul II suggests a "modern Areopagus" as a model. Our Gospel is that of the Cross of Christ, which embraces every woman and man. With the Gospel as our bases, must we not engage in dialogue even with those who may not understand or accept all the Church teaches?

Church's relationship with Catholic universities

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

Superior General of the Society of Jesus

The virtually unanimous welcome that *Ex corde Ecclesiae* received reveals the genuine desire of Catholic universities to remain in the heart of the Church. However the turmoil over the implementation of the Apostolic Letter in an important part of America reveals that the discovery of an appropriate concrete relationship between the Catholic universities and the Church remains elusive.

As *Ex corde Ecclesiae* states, the Catholic university is first of all a university that, as a university, has the added characteristic of being a university in service of the Church's mission. "A tension exists between these two aspects of the Catholic university, a tension that must remain a creative one. A mere juridical or legal approach will not resolve it. Rather solutions will arise only

in genuine listening to the teaching of the Church in that atmosphere of openness that academic freedom presupposes.

The Synod should encourage Catholic universities to affirmative action in their hiring practices, to an apostolically preferential academic commitment, and to an academic freedom that is sensitive to mission. The Word that the Church teaches will not be understood unless it is born out of a search, in dialogue, for the specific task and mission of the Catholic university.

Be conscience of a world that ignores God's Law
Cardinal Augusto Vargas Alzamora, S.J.
Archbishop of Lima, Peru

When the Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax" published its document on the foreign debt in 1986, it pointed out that responsibility for this problem was shared by both sides, creditors and debtors, and this meant that both had to take action to resolve the situation. The same idea appears in various documents of the Pope's Magisterium.

However, I now wish to recall in particular what the Encyclical *Centesimus annus* tells us clearly and firmly: "It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied, and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish" (n. 34).

It is our task as Pastors of our Church on the American continent to echo this papal statement. In this very place we have heard the reports supported by precise facts on the suffering of our peoples and their tragic plight, caused precisely by the debt incurred.

Now we must clearly point out the need to demand the judgement in strict justice of the various administrations which,

taking advantage of apparently generous loan offers, have recklessly pawned the future of their impoverished countries: the temporal benefits promised have not reached the majority of the impoverished masses, but have permitted an increase in the capital of the few who are rich today.

Moreover, with regard to those who facilitated me loans without bothering about the punctual payment of interest, it should be said that it is not right that these new debts be added to the principal, thus continuing to increase the interest of an already unpayable sum, which oppresses people who are even poorer than before and makes them indefinitely dependent on their creditors.

We must fulfill the obligation to be the conscience of a world that continues culpably to ignore God's law and is governed by human laws imposed by those who wield financial power. They should renounce this interest.

True concept of 'communio' is anchored in the Trinity
Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes

Titular Archbishop of Nis
President of the Pontifical Council 'Cor Unum'

The *Instrumentum laboris* develops the Synod theme in the ecclesiological context of communion. Therefore it seems important to preserve the Trinitarian anchoring of the concept of "communio". "Communio" in the biblical and patristic sense has its origin in the reciprocity of the divine Persons and denotes participation of the members of the Mystical Body in intra-Trinitarian life. If "communio" is conceived in this way, it follows that:

1. The participation of the Father and the Holy Spirit remains integral to the work of salvation carried out by Christ.

2. Christian preaching retains the fascination flowing from the fullness of life in the Trinity, without falling into superficial moralism; love for neighbour is possible thanks to the grace of God.

3. Confusion between "communio" and solidarity is avoided; in fact, solidarity describes reciprocal commitment to a social guarantee between the individual and the community, and does not necessarily include the divine and mystical dimension of the Church.

Bible must serve as basis of renewal

Fr Camilo Maccise, O.C.D.

Superior General of the Order of Discalced Friars of the
Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel

Citing St. Jerome, the Second Vatican Council stated that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 25). Precisely for this reason, it is important and essential to familiarize the People of God with the Bible as the point of departure for renewal and for meeting the great challenges of the present moment in America.

It is a question of a vital reading with the conviction that the Scriptures spring from the life and experience of a people guided by God who, through faith, discover his presence and summons in history and are compelled to respond.

On this faith journey, by which one is led to a clearer recognition of the truth, all the People of God have an active role. The Church, guided by its Pastors, advances in a knowledge of God's word which corresponds to the signs of the time and place.

"By virtue of actualization, the Bible can shed light upon many current issues: for example, the question of various forms

of ministry, the sense of the Church as communion, the preferential option for the poor, liberation theology, the situation of women. Actualization can also attend to values of which the modern world is more and more conscious, such as the rights of the human person, the protection of human life, the preservation of nature, the longing for world peace" (Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, ch. IV, A, 2).

In planning a new evangelization of America, it is important to restore the Bible to the People of God, for whom it is intended. One has to guide them in this reading. With this guidance, we are sure that the people will read the Bible in their own situation, in order to express in daily life, at a personal, community and social level, the ideal of communion and solidarity proposed by this Synod.

Migration is challenge to charity and justice

Archbishop Vitorio Pavanello, S.D.B.

Campo Grande, Brazil

Millions of impoverished people (field hands and the unemployed) are migrating, seeking in the cities or in another country a more dignified life, survival and material improvement.

They risk their lives, spend their savings, live underground. Without any legal guarantees, many of them fall into the hands of exploiters. They accept burdensome, unhealthy and degrading jobs. They abandon moral values, often going into prostitution or drugs. They often live in subhuman conditions, scorned and excluded.

Religious values are the first to go. Without these, the human personality becomes unscrupulous and aggressive. When people lose their cultural roots and religious traditions they feel insecure and are an easy prey to proselytizing and fundamentalist sects.

The current migrations are not caused by wars or political persecution. Nevertheless, they are very worrying.

"The problem of migration ... is ... a challenge to charity and justice in the world" (John Paul II). The Church has always been concerned for migrants and must be even more so today. This is a special task for pastors in the countries of origin and destination.

One has a right to migrate, to be welcomed and have one's religion and traditions respected. Instead, immigration laws are becoming stricter.

Proposals: create an evangelization plan for migrants; influence lawmakers to pass juster laws; pressure governments to implement development policies aimed at curbing migration; organize a joint missionary effort so that the faithful can see that we love them and look after them with tenderness and concern.

New synthesis of faith and culture needed

Archbishop Eduardo Vicente Miras

Rosario, Argentina

Faced with the familiar challenges of contemporary culture — especially relativism which is ignorant of the objective moral order and the tension between technological and ethical values — it is also important to look at the many positive values which modernity, and even post-modernity, has brought us. These values must still be secured, but they now represent a great hope and an enormous help for the new evangelization.

For the evangelization of culture, closer attention must be given to the ethical implications of technology in order to orient them towards man and his dignity, while calling all Christians

to their commitment to the faith in order to influence morality, in such a way that Christian values are respected in society.

A new language must be found for giving a clear and complete exposition of the entire mystery of Christ and his Gospel.

The great challenge is to achieve a new synthesis of faith and culture with the new contributions of today, without returning to the forms of the past.

Rediscover religious aspect of Catholic schools **Bishop Juan Abelardo Mata Guevara, S.D.B.**

Esteli, Nicaragua

I would like to refer to the *Instrumentum laboris*, no. 20, which discusses the evangelization of culture. In fact, this section gives the reasons for the Church's presence in education.

Certainly, Mother Church's interest in education is not a recent phenomenon, occurring only in our day; rather it goes back to the fruitful stage that followed those shining moments of the original evangelization: the organization of missions gives rise to education, which consolidates the proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ and extends to America the maternal vision of our Church.

We have already heard this from the heart of many pastors in this Synod hall.

It hurts us to note that "a kind of 'conspiracy against life and against the family' exists in the societies of America" (cf. *Relatio ante disceptationem*). With sorrow, we see that in our small cities (I am talking particularly about Central America) there are serious problems of poverty, uprootedness, drug trafficking, prostitution of children and youth, alcoholism; with horror we note the presence in our universities of atheistic secularism, educational deficiencies, especially illiteracy, etc.

Nevertheless, the presence of the Consoler permits us to cherish the certain hope that we too, on the threshold of the third millennium, can leave the mark of Catholicism on America and thus build in our time the civilization of love. To this end, our primary field of action is education, particularly formal education.

It is imperative in our time to rediscover the Christian dimension of the Catholic school and the importance of the parochial school, the college and the Catholic university.

There are various communities of consecrated persons who, under the pretext of pastoral work, leave the classroom to dedicate themselves to parochial activities. Is formal education not a pastoral service? Does it not bring us to the very heart of families in order to transform them in Christ? For the evangelization of culture in the educational field, it is particularly necessary to coordinate the teaching apostolate and to train lay teachers who are competent professionals and committed Christians.

Exchange of missionaries should be objective
Bishop Luiz Demetrio Valentini
Jales, Brazil

I am returning to the topic of solidarity to emphasize some of its aspects.

In the first place, the expectation of the people who are waiting for a new relationship between the Churches and countries of this continent.

Our Churches must be the starting point for our witness. Solidarity between the Churches of America received a great impetus from the appeal of John XXIII.

Archbishop Gervais described the influence of missionaries in the Church of Canada. As a mark of gratitude I wish to give

a testimony: prison ministry in Brazil is coordinated by a Canadian and a U.S. priest. The example of the missionaries helps us understand the importance of the option for the poor. They are the Church's wealth and a challenge for our fidelity to the cause of Jesus.

I am in favour of creating a Church body for the whole continent with one primary objective: the exchange of missionaries.

A testimony from my own Diocese: its vitality is apparent in the abundance of lay ministries and in its missionary openness. I believe that the Church of America will be saved by its attitude of service and its missionary dimension.

As for the foreign debt, it should be urgently put on the agenda of political debate.

We must fortify our intention with effective action. This Synod could sum up its proposals in a single proposition: to renew the great insights of Vatican II, updated with the suggestions of *Tertio millennio adveniente* and symbolically expressed in the names of our Pope: John and Paul.

Ministry of Baptism essential to evangelization

Bishop Emilio Bianchi di Carcano

Azul, Argentina

The first purpose of this Synod is "to foster a new evangelization on the whole continent as an expression of episcopal communion" (*Instrumentum laboris*, n. 1).

It is a continent where the immense majority of the faithful request Baptism for their children. From the most committed to the Church's life, to the lukewarm and perhaps indifferent; to the

smallest and humblest in the fields, the towns and the big cities: everyone is ready to experience — if the Church gives them the opportunity — an extraordinary moment of evangelization. The new evangelization requires that we value and respect the desires of all those who request it for their children, including those who find themselves in particular situations. In this way, we encourage the basic personal encounter with the living Christ and we can open the way to conversion, communion and solidarity for every man and woman in our lands.

For us, the ministry of Baptism is one of the most important ecclesial activities, a task directly linked to the new evangelization. It is the whole Church which must take care to welcome those who request Baptism for their children and to give them a cordial, generous and festive invitation to prepare themselves and to participate actively in the sacrament through the Word and actions.

Unity of the continent is a treasure to be preserved

Cardinal Lucas Moreira Neves, O.P.

Archbishop of Sao Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

The theme for this Special Assembly of the Synod, as proposed by the Holy Father and formulated in the *Lineamenta*, is an authentic programme of reflection and action. This Synod intends to help all America (North, Central, South and the Caribbean) to find the way to conversion, communion and solidarity in an interpersonal encounter with the risen Jesus Christ, who seated at the right of the Father, is living and present in the Church.

In his homily during the opening Mass of the Synod, the Holy Father emphasized the unity of the continent as a treasure to be safeguarded and promoted.

This unity, which gives life to solidarity, is far from perfect: there are deep divisions between the North and the South, and very little association among the poorest and the least developed peoples.

It is important and urgent to create a solidarity based on integration (i.e., absence of exclusion), interdependence and interaction between all the countries of the continent. This presupposes and creates a real capacity for growing together, and not at the cost of some benefiting from the stagnation of others.

It is neither the function nor the intention of the Synod to create new structures of solidarity on the continent: it only wishes to consolidate the communion of Churches on the continent, through an encounter with the living Jesus Christ. Thanks to this witness of profound communion in faith and love, the Synod will encourage new and greater solidarity among the peoples of America.

I hope that, with its moral authority and institutions, the Holy See would encourage public authorities to create and/or improve effective measures of concrete solidarity.

Agenda for Liturgical Reform

FRANCIS MANNION*

Since at least the mid-1970's, the need for a new liturgical movement in Catholicism has been regularly suggested. No movement of the high profile desired by many presently exists and certainly none seems entirely capable of unifying the disparate directions proposed for Catholic liturgy. What movement does exist is highly diffuse and fans out in a variety of directions. I suggest that, in fact, there exist today not one but five identifiable liturgical movements in the United States and probably in the English-speaking world in general. These take the form of five distinct agendas of liturgical reform. An understanding of the character and ideals of the various agendas is a necessary prelude to discussion about the future shape of Catholic liturgical renewal.

The various existing liturgical agendas are not entirely separate, free of overlap or mutually exclusive. While there exists a considerable variety of opinions and commitments in the perspectives I shall identify, it can be readily admitted that some

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elements of difference are more a matter of emphasis or of priority than of fundamental principle. At the same time, the differences between the various agendas should not be underestimated. As will become clear, each of these agendas stands in a particular relationship to the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" of the Second Vatican Council, and each may be seen as based on a particular reading of that constitution.

Advancing Official Reform

The first agenda may be described as "advancing official reform." This agenda, which has its roots in the more theologically and historically conscious features of the modern liturgical movement, was formulated immediately after Vatican II and was institutionalized in the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy established in 1964, in the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1969 (into which the consilium was subsumed) and in the subsequent evolution of that congregation. Because of its official character, this agenda regards itself with considerable justification as the legitimate executor of the program for reform set forth in the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy." The principal fruits of the official agenda are the actual revised liturgical books of the Catholic Church as we now know them.

The agenda of advancing official reform is concretized in the work of the U.S. Bishops Committee on the Liturgy and the various liturgy secretariats of the English-speaking episcopal conferences. Today this agenda finds notable focus in the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), founded during the council to provide a cooperative agency in translation matters for the episcopates of the English-speaking world.

Organizations in the United States such as the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and We Believe! are strongly

supportive and even defensive of the official agenda. If the organizations just mentioned belong on the more progressive end of this agenda, it seems fair to say that the present Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments stands on the more conservative end.

The most comprehensive account of the agenda of advancing official reform based on the trajectory established by the post-Vatican II Consilium is found in Archbishop Annibale Bugnini's work, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975* (1990). Indeed, Bugnini himself may be regarded as among the principal authors and advocates of this agenda. His book is probably the most insightful guide to the history of liturgical reform from the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" through the massive revision of the liturgical books, to its present focal point, as far as the English-speaking world is concerned, in the work of ICEL.

The agenda I am describing here is, by its official character, the norm and the standard around which the various other agendas I will identify are organized. For this reason, the other agendas may be seen in one way or another as centering on points of criticism or some form of questioning and probing of the official agenda.

In a certain sense, the official agenda is the most difficult to define, because it is both so monumental and all-embracing. This agenda operated after the council, as the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" indicated it must, with a high and unified theological consciousness, in which the liturgical life of the church was connected more adequately to trinitarian doctrine, Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology. It followed a path conceived within a set of dialectics: tradition and progress, unity and diversity, simplicity and complexity. An overriding emphasis was the renewal of active participation of the Christian people and the need to re-establish diverse ministerial roles within the worshiping assembly. The operational principles of this agenda included

arriving at lucidity of liturgical understanding; recovery of the instructive facility of the liturgy; achieving "noble simplicity," clarity and brevity; and freedom from useless repetition and from the necessity of much explanation. The ideal of the official agenda was the early Roman liturgy, which it sought to uncover and reappropriate in a methodologically scientific and historically critical manner.

Among the more notable features of this agenda since the council has been its internally evolutionary character. The process of evolution found particular expression in the area of language. The "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" allowed a very restricted use of the vernacular in the Mass, but it left open the way for appeals to the Holy See by episcopal conferences for more substantive concessions. Accordingly, restrictions on the use of the vernacular were progressively lifted in the face of representations by hierarchies from all over the world until, by 1971, the use of the vernacular in public Masses was left entirely to the judgment of particular conferences.

The present projects of ICEL highlight a second notable feature of the official agenda: this is the two-phase understanding of the process of reform that has been operative for over a decade. In 1981 ICEL began a process of looking toward the systematic revision of the nearly 30 liturgical books issued since Vatican II. The current work of ICEL in proposing a new wave of changes is seen by its sponsors as a further legitimate development of the official conciliar and postconciliar programs. This review process envisages not only new translations but also original texts and significant ritual revision. The official agenda presently centered in ICEL continues, then, to evolve internally and looks to substantive textual and ritual developments.

We turn now to the two agenda groups that exist on the conservative or traditionalist end of the spectrum. The first of these is committed to what I would call "restoring the preconciliar."

Restoring the Preconciliar

Among the restorationist agenda group, there exists a fundamental suspicion of the Second Vatican Council, of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," and naturally of all subsequent liturgical developments, both theoretical and practical. To greater or lesser degrees, a conviction operates that the authentic liturgy of the church has been compromised since Vatican II and that the Mass of 1969 is fundamentally objectionable because it is neither in continuity with the preconciliar liturgical order nor an adequate expression of the fullness of the mystery of faith.

The followers of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the clerical Society of St. Pius X, which include a diverse American following, represent the more extreme expression of the restorationist agenda. They are unambiguously committed to the so-called Tridentine Mass. This wing of the restorationist agenda fundamentally rejects the ability of any pope to reform the Tridentine Mass and, for that reason, it objects in principle to the Missal of Paul VI. Apologists of this school have argued variously that the Mass of Paul VI must be rejected due to its Protestant inspiration, its formal invalidity and the defective priestly intention it enshrines. The new Mass is said to be a symbol of resurgent modernism and an instrument of revolutionary errors in the church.

Not all Catholics who espouse the restoration of the preconciliar have been quite so radical in their objections to liturgical reform. Many Catholics whose loyalty to the Holy See remained strong sought for years the restoration of the Tridentine Mass without rejecting out of hand the Missal of Paul VI. All in all, however, Catholics of this persuasion remain most suspicious of Vatican II and are deeply disappointed in what the

postconciliar reforms have produced. The president of the Latin Liturgy Association in the United States expressed this outlook pointedly when he wrote recently that the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" belongs to a set of "fallible human documents written by fallible human bishops as a result of a process which was not devoid of politicking."

The 1984 Vatican indult allowing the use of the old Mass under strictly controlled conditions and the more generous 1988 document, *Ecclesia Dei*, were proposed largely in response to increasing expressions of disaffection and even defection on the part of traditionalist Catholics. The official provisions for the Tridentine Mass seem to have provided some relief from the tense situation that was developing in Catholic traditionalist circles. One result was the reconciliation with the Holy See of some followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, creating in 1988 the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, now found in a number of U.S. and European dioceses.

The activities and perspectives of this agenda group may be gleaned from newsletters and papers such as *The Remnant*, *The Precious Blood Banner* and *The Latin Mass*. Very little scholarly material has been available up to now in support of the restorationist agenda. The outlook of this agenda group calls to mind what the Scripture scholar Raymond E. Brown, S.S., has called in other circumstances "non-scholarly conservatism." This does not mean that this agenda is for that reason to be dismissed; it is to recognize that it has a popular rather than a scholarly or academic base. But a movement to provide a scholarly foundation for this agenda seems to be under way more recently. While the center of such activities is Europe, developments are followed with a lively interest in Tridentine Mass circles in the United States. The movement Renaissance Catholique in France has taken the initiative or organizing in Paris, with American support, the International Center for Liturgical Studies, which seeks to provide a theological defense of the Tridentine Mass.

William D. Dinges estimates that there are over 375 Tridentine Mass centers in the United States and that these are attended by between 15,000 and 20,000 Catholics. Nearly half of these are unauthorized; the rest operate with official approval. About half of all U.S. dioceses now sponsor regularly celebrated Tridentine Masses.

Probably in mildest form of the restorationist agenda is that espoused by an indeterminate body of Catholics who have learned to live with the Mass of 1969, but whose preference would be for the Tridentine Mass.

Reforming the Reform

Not all on the conservative or traditionalist side are restorationists. A much more moderate grouping is committed to what has been described as "reforming the reform." This expression was popularized with the appearance of the book, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, by Msgr. Klaus Gamber, published in English in 1993.

The reform of the reform does not seek to restore the Tridentine Mass, but rather to return to what it regards as the true intentions of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" and start the process of liturgical reform afresh. The proponents of this agenda have in common with Tridentine restorationism a strong, if less radical dislike of what came after Vatican II; but unlike the restorationists, they insist that they embrace fundamentally **the** vision of Vatican II and the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy." The critical concerns of this group are the actions and initiatives of the post-Vatican II consilium and the character of the reformed liturgical books themselves. The central program espoused in this agenda is returning to the 1962 Missal and renewing it in a less severe manner, in light of what its proponents perceive to be the true intentions of the preconciliar liturgical movement and of Vatican II.

The broad lines of this agenda are set out as follows by Monsignor Gamber: "It is generally accepted that, in one way or another, a liturgical reform, particularly an enrichment of the Roman rite, had become necessary because, since the Council of Trent, it had become ossified into a form of rubricism. There is also a consensus that the 'Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' of the Second Vatican Council corresponded in many respects to the legitimate pastoral requirements of our time. But no such consensus exists when we look at the reforms that were actually introduced, particularly the new liturgical books composed by a group of experts after the conclusion of the council."

More recently the agenda to reform the reform has been taken up by Joseph Fessio, S.J., and leaders of the organization Adoremus in the United States. Adoremus is, in its own words, committed to "a complete rethinking and *authentic renewal* of the reform of the liturgy, using both *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and an evaluation of the experience of the post-conciliar years to arrive at a renewed liturgy in keeping with the principles of the Second Vatican Council." The guiding prescription invoked here is Article 23 of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," which states: "there must be no innovations unless the good of the church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing." This principle, it is thought, has been offended against in the agenda of official reform.

As with the other agendas, a spectrum of positions exists within this one and a variety of perspectives espoused. The actual project of reforming the reform has not by any means achieved complete clarity or unanimity. But the leaders of this movement appear to have an overwhelming conviction that liturgical renewal has gone beyond anything envisaged by Vatican II, that ICEL bears much responsibility for this state of affairs and that the episcopate has in liturgical matters abdicated its authority to specialists and scholars.

A more detailed account of how, in regard to the Mass, the reform of the reform should be carried out is found in the first issues of *Adoremus Bulletin*, which in 1995 and early 1996 featured a three-part essay by the Rev. Brian Harrison. Harrison espouses the position of Gamber that the Roman rite has been destroyed in the postconciliar reforms and that a new rite of the Mass should now be created and instituted, "having *equal status and recognition* with the rite introduced by Paul VI." Toward this end, Harrison calls for a modification of the Missal of 1962 in light of the principles of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy." Among his proposals are the following: the restoration of the recitation of the canon in Latin; exclusive use of the Roman canon; the restriction of Communion to one species; priest and the people facing in the same direction during the eucharistic liturgy; the use of two Scripture readings instead of three, and the exclusive use of men in liturgical ministries.

How widely shared these proposals are in this agenda group, I am uncertain. My impression is that they are widely shared by those who speak of reforming the reform. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has spoken positively of Harrison's proposals and the English Dominican Aidan Nichols has suggested a similar direction in his recent book, *Looking at the Liturgy*.

I want to turn now to the two agenda groups that represent respectively progressive and corrective programs for ongoing liturgical reform. The first of these may be described as committed to "inculturating the reform" and the second to what I propose to call "recatholicizing the reform." What both of these agenda groups have in common is a fundamental affirmation of the Second Vatican Council and the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," as well as an *acceptance of the reformed rites as they now exist as the basis for any further development*. Unlike the two conservative groups — which wish more or less to go back to or behind the council — the two groups I am now introducing seek to go beyond

the reform as it has been carried through in recent decades, but in rather different ways.

Inculturating the Reform

The fundamental conviction operative in the agenda of "inculturating the reform" is that while the revisions of the past 30 years have more or less successfully given the church a new set of liturgical books, these achievements are but a prelude to a much more profound and far-reaching reform of the liturgy. An entirely new phase of creativity must be initiated by which the officially revised liturgical rites will be adapted to the various cultures of the world, including those of North America. This position proposes a new pluralization, diversification and decentralization of Catholic liturgical life.

I stated at the outset that a certain overlap may be identified in the relationship between the various agendas. This is evident in the connection between the official agenda and the inculturation agenda. The latter does not simply take up where the former leaves off. If the roots of the inculturation agenda are in the official reform, it is clear that the official agenda—especially in regard to the translation processes that have engaged ICEL more recently—embraces at least the beginnings of liturgical inculturation. Yet the thoroughgoing inculturation ideals go considerably beyond the present scope of the official agenda.

The positions espoused within the agenda of inculturation are as diverse as in the other groups. Some envisage the need to adjust the Roman liturgy to modern North American needs and conceptions. Others focus on the necessity of liturgical adaptation to the religious ethos of particular cultural communities, for instance, African American, Hispanic and Native American. Dialogue between feminist theology and spirituality and Catholic liturgical tradition represents a particularly strong movement within the inculturation agenda. The need for "inclusive" gender

language both in relation to God and the human person generally provides the starting point here. Likewise, those influenced by liberation and political theologies bring their own set of concerns to the liturgical inculturation agenda.

The Spirit of Experimentation and adaptation that has characterized liturgical celebration at the parish level in the United States since Vatican II may be understood as implicit inculturation. Popular styles of priestly presidency, preaching, music and art, as well as small group dynamics in the liturgy, represent an absorption into Catholic worship of celebrative idioms native to popular American culture. As the Roman liturgy is adapted to the mainstream culture of the United States, it becomes notably "informal" and personalized, and a high value is placed on ritual and symbolic creativity and variety.

The inculturation agenda claims theoretical legitimacy by reference to Articles 37 to 40 of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," about the need for renewal to proceed beyond a reform of the liturgical books to an adaptation of those books to new cultural circumstances. The intention of the Second Vatican Council, it is argued, was not only to recover the historic core of the Roman rite but also to adapt the liturgy to new and diverse cultural environments. Article 37 of the constitution is invoked here: "The church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations." Accordingly, "anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the liturgy itself, providing they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit."

Once the substantial unity of the Roman liturgy is safeguarded, the constitution states, "provision shall be made, when

revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries." Article 40 allows for even more radical adaptation of the rites and prescribes that local ecclesiastical authority must "carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship." The same article prescribes that this process be carried out through a program of approved experimentation and involve the input of experts in cultural adaptation.

At the international level, Anscar Chupungco, O.S.B., remains the most notable and respected theoretical proponent of the inculturation agenda. The North American Academy of Liturgy is probably the principal scholarly forum espousing the program of inculturation in the United States. This agenda is widely embraced in the better known academic programs in liturgy in the United States, and it finds strong advocacy in the nation's Catholic black, Hispanic and Native-American organizations.

Recatholicizing the Reform

This brings me to the fifth and final agenda, which I describe as "recatholicizing the reform." I admit this is not a very elegant expression, and it can give a wrong impression. It is neither meant to suggest that the other positions are not Catholic, nor to invoke the argument of some critics that Catholic liturgy has suffered a "Protestantizing" process since Vatican II. The word "recatholicizing" invokes the understanding of "catholicity" found in such theologians as Avery Dulles, S.J., and Henri de Lubac, S.J. For these scholars, the catholicity of the church is found in the spiritual depths, institutional richness, religious exuberance and creativity of Christian history. Father Dulles's magisterial work, *The Catholicity of the Church* (1985), provides the immediate inspiration, as far as nomenclature is concerned, for the agenda I am describing here. In this work, Dulles presents a rich and

compelling vision of the catholicity of the church. When the church is truly "catholic," it is characterized by a profound trinitarian consciousness; it reaches into the very depths of the human soul; it engages the magnificent spiritual heritage of historic Christianity, and its vision is centered on the glory of God and the kingdom to come. It is precisely this kind of framework that constitutes the agenda for recatholicizing the reformed liturgy.

Unlike the conservative or traditional agendas, the recatholicization of the reform shares with the inculturation agenda the conviction that the reforms of the liturgical books since Vatican II are to be fundamentally welcomed and embraced, even as they need to be subject to some further development. But the exact direction in which further development ought to proceed is what distinguishes the recatholicization and inculturation agendas from each other. If the inculturation agenda is committed to a substantive adaptation of the revised rites to diverse cultural situations, the recatholicizing agenda is primarily committed to a vital recreation of the ethos that has traditionally imbued Catholic liturgy at its best—an ethos of beauty, majesty, spiritual profundity and solemnity. In this, the recatholicizing framework is not opposed to the inculturation agenda—even if it does regard the actual achievements of that agenda with considerable reserve—but critically and carefully incorporates the fundamental principles of inculturation.

The recatholicizing agenda is also open to what it regards as the many positive prescriptions of the ongoing agenda of official reform (for instance, better translations), yet its primary interest is not with the creation of new texts or translations or with ritual modifications and expanding options. The recatholicizing agenda, unlike the other four, sets no great store by further structural change in Catholic worship at this time—whether in "conservative" or "progressive" directions. While it does not deny the need for further structural developments in the Roman liturgy, it does

not regard this as greatly necessary at the present moment of liturgical history. This agenda seeks, instead, a period of settling down and intensive pastoral appropriation now that the liturgical books have been revised. In this respect, it embraces a highly conservative view of the dynamics of liturgical change. Thus it regards the various present proposals for further revision as potentially disorienting and destabilizing of the church's public worship.

What distinguishes the recatholicizing agenda from the other four is that it regards the principal challenge of ongoing liturgical reform as *spiritual* rather than *structural*. The recatholicization agenda stands for a spiritual broadening and deepening of the postconciliar liturgical order set forth in the revised books. It does not regard that order as perfect by any means. It does view it, however, as eminently worthy of reception and as expressive of spiritual riches in great part unappreciated and untapped. This agenda seeks an intensive rather than extensive renewal of the liturgy, by which is meant a spiritual unfolding of the potentiality of the revised liturgy rather than its expansion with new texts, rites and symbols.

Recatholicization means renewing the spiritual, mystical and devotional dimensions of the revised rites; bringing about a renaissance of liturgical music, art, architecture and poetry, and a refinement of the practice of liturgical celebration. This agenda underscores the necessity of a renewal of a sense of the cosmic in the liturgy that will overcome the present tendency of liturgical celebration toward narrowness and self-enclosure. It seeks a recovery of the sacred and the numinous in liturgical expression that will act as a corrective to the sterility and rationalism of much modern liturgical experience. This agenda looks to a renewal of the eschatological orientation in Catholic worship wherein the connection between the heavenly and earthly liturgies is again encountered. Not least, recatholicization means a renewal of the

doxological, praise-filled character of worship capable of rescuing present-day liturgical practice from its excessively pragmatic, didactic and functional conceptions.

At the practical level, the recatholicizing agenda means taking the present rites and working to celebrate them in a much more profound, dignified and spiritually edifying manner than has generally been the case since the advent of postconciliar revision. This requires a deepening of the liturgical spirituality and literacy of congregations; provision for the training necessary for the laity to assume more appropriately the ministries provided to them in liturgical celebrations, and, not least, improving the standards of priestly leadership and preaching. It means advancing better quality and a more noble character in liturgical music and restoring a Catholic ethos to places of worship by creative contact with the great traditions of Catholic art and architecture.

The recatholicizing agenda operates from a conviction that some important features of the preconciliar liturgical movement were not adequately appreciated in the period of revision after Vatican II. Hence it seeks to establish contact with neglected strands of the modern liturgical movement associated with figures like Henri de Lubac, Romano Guardini and Josef Pieper and with the authors of the patristic revival. While present-day inspiration for the recatholicization agenda comes from diverse sources, the writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar are notably important, as are the liturgical theology, spirituality and aesthetics of the Christian East. Liturgical organizations sympathetic to the recatholicizing agenda include the Society for Catholic Liturgy, formed in 1995.

The Primacy of the Spiritual

As may be already obvious, my own preference among the agendas outlined here is the recatholicizing agenda. This agenda highlights the difficult and challenging nature of the work of liturgical renewal. In my opinion, it is an illusion to imagine

that a new set of texts, rites and translations—from whatever source—will significantly affect Catholic life for the better. I remain convinced that the liturgical crisis we face today is primarily spiritual, not structural.

The recatholicization agenda, in my view, is also best able to incorporate the strengths of the other agendas outlined. What the restorationist agenda has to teach about the Catholic ethos of worship can be gratefully acknowledged, even though that agenda's structural proposals cannot be embraced. Though it seems too severe in its specific program and inadequately appreciative of the riches of the new liturgical books, the reform of the reform rightly warns about the dangers of discontinuity in the postconciliar era and of haste in any further round of revisions. As the agenda of reforming the reform matures, it will surely have an important contribution to make in discussions concerning the future shape of the Roman liturgy. While the inculturation project seems inadequately attentive to the cultural compromise of liturgical practice and spirituality that is already a pronounced feature of mainstream Catholic life in the United States, its desire to engage the rich spirituality of Hispanic, Native-American, Asian and African-American cultures has much to offer in generating new expressions of liturgical catholicity. As stated already, the agenda of official reform has undoubted legitimacy by reason of its connection to Vatican II. What it has achieved over the past three decades is, indeed, the basis for the recatholicizing agenda, even if that achievement may be criticized as excessively academic in inspiration and in need of some correction.

I end on a cautionary note: The official agenda is increasingly in the "hot seat" in ongoing liturgical debates and discussions. It has something to learn from the various "unofficial" agendas described here. If it does not proceed more dialogically, self-critically and openly vis-a-vis the other agendas than it has hitherto, it could easily suffer a massive loss of confidence at all

levels of Catholic life. The best way to avoid such an outcome would be for the agenda of official reform to recognize more seriously the existence of the other agendas, to consider them sympathetically and not just critically and to moderate itself in view of their legitimate aims and ideals.

On Christian Participation in the May 11, 1998 Elections

JAIME CARD. SIN

The Year of the Holy Spirit
January 15, 1998

My dear People of God:

As we prepare for the Third Millennium in this Year of the Holy Spirit, we now face the May 11, 1998 elections. These are extremely important elections. Through them, the Filipino People will choose the national and local officials who will lead us into the next millennium. For the first time ever, it will choose some members of Congress through the party-list system. For the first time ever, it has the chance of electing its national officials and party-list representatives through an automated-election system. It has the opportunity thereby to minimize the possibility of *dagdag-bawas* cheating, which sullied our last senatorial elections.

As a Filipino people celebrating this year also the centenary of our independence, we thank God specially for the blessings of democracy. "The Church values democracy," said Pope John Paul II, "inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them,

and of replacing them with peaceful means when appropriate" (*Centessimus Annus*, 46). Especially through our experience of God's power in the People Power Revolution of 1986, which flowered into today's constitutional democracy defined by the 1987 Constitution, we know our democracy in the Philippines to be specially blessed, nurtured and protected by God.

As Filipinos we take responsibility for our democracy in participating in elections. As Christians and Catholics, we participate in these elections, knowing that the transformation of our political culture according to the values of God's Kingdom is our shared responsibility, whether we be numbered among the clergy, the religious or the lay faithful.

In this context, I am happy to present to you this little work, "On Christian Participation in the May 11, 1998 Elections." It has two parts. The first part, the Catechism on Elections, presents why and how the Church must be involved in politics, and general norms of participation and decision-making in elections. The second part, the Primer on Elections, informs us specifically about the May 11, 1998 elections. There are many new things about the forthcoming elections. If we are to participate in them as Christians, whether in a partisan or non-partisan manner, we must inform ourselves — and others — about them.

The Year of the Holy Spirit is a year of special hope. We pray that through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother of EDSA we may experience the hope of the Holy Spirit in the Christian participation of the People of God in the forthcoming elections! In hope, we pray we not be found wanting in Christian action.

PART ONE: CATECHISM ON ELECTIONS

The Church and Politics

1. What is the relation of the Church to the political community?

Following Vatican II, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) laid down general guidelines governing the Church's relation to the political community (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 74-76; PCP II, 330-53). Political authority's legitimate autonomy in working for the common good must be exercised within the limits of the moral order. The Church has the role of critical solidarity with the government in defending the moral order. As a "good rule of thumb" to follow, PCP II proposed that pastors have competence in the moral principles governing politics, while the laity have competence in active and direct partisan politics (cf. PCP II, 342). But "both clergy and laity must be involved in the area of politics when moral and Gospel values are at stake" (PCP II, 344; cf. Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC), 1162).

2. Why has the Church been unusually pro-active in addressing the subject of politics since the end of World War II and especially since the Martial Law years and the restoration of our democracy in 1986?

The Catholic Bishops of the Philippines say that there is one main reason: "Philippine politics — the way it has been practiced — has been most hurtful of us as a people. It is possibly the biggest bane in our life as a nation and the most pernicious obstacle to our achieving full human development" (CBCP Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Politics [PEPP], par. 5).

*3. Why has politics in the Philippines been so **hurtful to our nation and such an obstacle to our achieving full human development?***

- While politics is — or ought to be — the art of government and public service, in the Philippines, sadly, "it has degenerated into an arena where the interests of the powerful and rich few

are pitted against those of the weak and poor many.

- It interferes with the administration of justice and the equal application of the law, heavily weighed as it most patently is on the side of the politically connected.

- Political debts are paid with appointments to high offices of those to whom elected officials are indebted, blind loyalty counting as the most important criterion in the selection of public officials — even for government agencies mandated to be independent by the Constitution.

- The bureaucracy is packed with political proteges, many of whom do nothing except to collect their salaries in the middle and end of each month. Thus the well-intentioned among career officials and employees in government become demoralized early or withdraw into silence or resign altogether. And those who opt to continue despite discouragement are only too often harassed or eventually coopted into the system.

- The constitutional principles of separation of powers and of checks and balances among three branches of government (legislative, executive and judiciary) are, on the one hand, abused to create gridlock for political mileage; and, on the other hand, conveniently set aside on occasion for reciprocal advantage, (e.g. the cooperation between the executive branch and Congress in pork barrel items such as the Countrywide Development Funds, congressional insertions, the special funds in the public works bills at the disposition of politicians, and the discretionary funds of the President).

- On top of these, the resources or facilities of specialized or autonomous organizations where there is little or no public accountability are made to be easily accessible for political ends (e.g. the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation [PAGCOR], the Bases Conversion and Development Agency [BCDA] or sequestered companies).

- The system is shot through and through with opportunities for corruption, influence-peddling and the indiscriminate use of

public funds for partisan or personal purposes" (PEPP, pars. 7-8).

- The Church would be remiss in its duty to the Gospel of Jesus Christ if it did not address these serious concerns with effective transformative action. Its mission to evangelize must penetrate the political world.

4. *What is the meaning of a "trapo"? Can the Church support a "trapo" for public office?*

In the Philippine context, "trapo" is an abbreviation for the "traditional politician" who, in the words of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, has made politics in the Philippines traditionally "the biggest bane for the Filipino people and the most pernicious obstacle to our achieving full human development" (PEPP, par. 5). The *trapo*, which originally means a filthy rag in Filipino, achieves his questionable, political ends by empty verbiage, lying, vote-buying, backslapping, backstabbing, political treachery, massive cheating, manipulation of people and the "common good" for selfish, private or party ends. The *trapo* is responsible for a political culture of corruption, disrespect, if not disdain, for the spirit and letter of the law, and ultimately for the total separation of politics from all the fundamental Christian values of truth, honesty, respect for the human person, and dedication to the advancement of the common good. It was the politics of the *trapo* that many thought was overcome by the EDSA revolution. *Trapo* politics is the politics of the unscrupulously powerful, wealthy, and mighty; it is the opposite of the politics of authentic People Power, which empowers all, especially the small, to participate effectively in formulating government policy and shaping the future of the nation. Because the *trapo* uses means that are immoral to achieve questionable political ends, the Church cannot endorse a *trapo* for public office.

5. Has the political culture in the Philippines been affected by the Gospel?

The Catholic Bishops categorically state that the faith has been "systematically excluded" from political culture. "The prime values of our faith — charity, justice, honesty, truth — these are of little or no consequence at all when it comes to our practice of politics in or out of election time. True, religion is made use of: Candidates pay ostentatious courtesy calls on Churchmen; political conventions and other official gatherings are incomplete without prayers of invocation. But these are more instances of religion being used for political purposes than of religion influencing politics ... Politics as a whole has been, strangely, largely impervious to the Gospel. Our political culture denies, to our shame, our proud claim to the name Christian" (PEPP, pars. 27-28).

6. Are there any signs of hope for the renewal of our lives as Filipinos for the creation of a new political order?

"There have been shining moments in our political life that give us reason to hope — and the motivation to work even harder together — for the renewal of our life as Christians and as Filipinos for the creation of a new political order.

- **The Philippine electorate has more frequently removed rather than retained administration candidates and has had its judgment respected by losing candidates.**
- **In the 1978 elections during Martial Law, people took the risk of speaking out with a noise barrage against the excesses and abuses of the regime.**
- **In 1984 and 1986, volunteer citizen groups in massive numbers, unmindful of danger to themselves, courageously safeguarded the ballot against a seemingly invincible government machinery bent on thwarting the people's will.**
- **In the People Power revolution of EDSA, ordinary citizens successfully ended an entrenched authoritarian regime and restored lost-democratic freedoms in a non-violent rebellion...**
- **In 1992, the first peaceful transfer of power in 27 years took place because of the example of a president who chose to step down graciously from power and because of the unprecedented cooperation in the conduct of the election between a revitalized COMELEC and**

its deputies on the one hand, and on the other, citizens' arms like NGOs and POs, Church groups and the media.

- We have seen, in the aftermath of the 1995 elections and allegations of *dagdag-bawas*, members of the Board of Canvassers of a province (Bataan) publicly attesting through affidavits to the fraudulent acts of election officials. ...
- Some voting patterns of recent elections also give us a glimpse of what is possible: people beginning to vote more intelligently and not allowing themselves to be discouraged even when those they thought worthy turn out to be otherwise; voters choosing non-politicians over "traditional" ones, electing younger and presumably more idealistic candidates over those with money or going for candidates of known probity and good performance instead of those supported by the usual power brokers. ...
- We cannot discount or ignore these and many other positive developments in the nation's political life... It is all the more reason why we must treasure them and hold them up as examples to be emulated and replicated again and again, why we must engage ourselves totally against the forces that stand in the way of reform and systemic change, why we must encourage and support one another in what should be a common and concerned striving to create a less hurtful and more human political order" (PEPP, 29-35)

7. *Does the Church have a mission in Philippine politics?*

- "Any serious believer in God cannot allow the state of our national politics ... to persist. And in fact there is a duty for the Christian Catholic to transform politics by the Gospel. The Church, God's people, must evangelize politics. God's call to the Church is to preach the integral Gospel, the Gospel with all its social dimensions. The Gospel must influence every phase of life, every stratum of society, and "restore all things under Christ (Eph 1:10)" (PEPP, par. 36).

- Furthermore, this mission is expressed generally in the 1971 Synod of Bishops on Justice in the World which said, "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (PEPP, 58).

8. *What are some important corollaries flowing from the mission of the Church in politics?*

Some important corollaries are as follows:

- **The Task of Integral Development — Using Politics as a Means**
 - Politics must become an effective means for integral development for all rather than a tool for the advancement of a privileged few.
- **The Mission of the Laity**
 - Direct participation in the political order is the special responsibility of the laity in the Church. It is their specific task to renew the temporal order according to the Gospel principles and values. On the other hand, it is the specific task of the hierarchy to teach authoritatively what the Church believes or holds concerning the political order.
- **Plurality of Options in Political Life**
 - We must be aware that in the light of the Gospel and consistent with the Gospel, there are many political options open to Catholics (cf. GS, 43). Hence there can be no one political party nor one political program that can exclusively claim the name Catholic. That is why there is normally no such thing as 'the Catholic vote.' Nor can particular Catholic groups present their candidates as the Church's candidates. The members of the hierarchy simply set guidelines to help the laity vote wisely. Under normal circumstances, they do not endorse any particular candidate or party but leave the laity vote according to their enlightened and formed consciences.
- **Partisanship in Politics**
 - It is precisely because of the possibility of plural options in politics that clergy and religious who hold positions of leadership in the Church do not ordinarily engage in what is called 'partisan politics.'

9. *If the Church fulfills its mission in Philippine politics, does this violate the principle of separation of Church and State?*

• This is a common question. The Catholic Bishops of the Philippines reply: "Strangely, there are not a few people, even within the Church, who do not believe that to renew politics is part of the Church's mission. When Church officials praise government policies, government officials welcome such support warmly and are only too happy. But when Church officials criticize and denounce government policies, the same people immediately cry out: 'Violation of the separation of Church and State! Church meddling in politics! Let the Church stick to religion!' They cite the words of Christ, 'Render to Caesar the

things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Mt 22:21)'. They say that the Church should have nothing to do with politics because Christ said to Pilate: 'My Kingdom is not of this earth!' (Jn 18:36). They therefore conclude that the Church should not say anything about politics and politicians.

How wrongly they interpret Scriptures and the separation of Church and State! Quite unjustly they selectively level this charge of interference in politics against the Catholic Church, even while some other sects may be loudly intervening in the political process especially during elections" (PEPP, 37-38).

- From another viewpoint, Article II, Section VI of the Philippine Constitution states: "The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable." The principle guarantees freedom of religious practice so long as this does not intrude on the public order; no religion shall come under the control of the state, i.e. become a state religion; no religion will have undue access to resources of the state for its ends. The principle also guarantees that religions recognize and respect the right of the State to secure and maintain the public order. The principle, however, does not mean that should the State abuse its power for immoral ends, the Church would be barred from denouncing the abuse or acting to protect people from its ill effects. On the contrary, the Church is bound by the Gospel it proclaims to exercise its prophetic mission against abuses of the State, especially in cases of violation of human rights.

10. What general principle underlies the Church's mission in politics?

Politics is a human activity with a religious and moral dimension... "Every informed Catholic should be aware of this simple incontrovertible truth: Our Catholic faith is concerned with the religious and moral dimension of life; but every human activity that flows from the normal processes of intellect and will has a religious and moral dimension, since it may either lead to grace or sin. Or [because] it may hurt or benefit people, it may upbuild

or destroy them. Being a human activity, politics has, therefore, a religious and moral dimension which our Catholic faith simply cannot ignore" (PEPP, par. 39).

11. What are the bases of the Church's mission which explicitate this general principle?

There are at least five:

- **The Gospel and the Kingdom of God call the Church to political involvement.**
- **The Church's mission of integral salvation involves the temporal sphere.**
- **Salvation is from personal and social sin, including sin in the political sphere.**
- **The Church has an option for the poor in the field of politics.**
- **The Way of the Church is the human person who is affected by politics. (Cf. PEPP, pars. 39-48).**

12. What are the truths that must guide the participation of Filipino Catholics in political life?

Filipino Catholics must be guided by the following truths:

- **Political life must in principle constantly pursue the common good;**
- **It must be characterized by the defense and promotion of justice;**
- **It must be inspired and guided by the spirit of service;**
- **Empowerment of the People must be carried out as a process and as a goal of political activity.**

The Scriptures, the moral and social teachings of the Church, supply us with the following principles (cf. PCP II, 353, Catechism for Filipino Catholics [CFC], 1162-63, 1193)

• **Human dignity and solidarity**

- Human dignity flows from the fundamental reality that the human person, male and female is created unto the image of God and is called to share eternal life with God...
- Politics must respect and promote human dignity and the fundamental human rights that flow from such dignity...
- The equal dignity of all human beings bring them into mutual solidarity ... Solidarity is a 'firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, i.e. to the good of all and of each individual because we are really responsible for all' (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* [SRS], 38).

• **The Common Good — the Goal to Political Activity**

- It is a cardinal teaching of the Church that the political community exists for the common good. This common good embraces "the good of all and

of each individual" (SRS, 38), and is "the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enables individual, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment" (GS, 74). Political activity then should be directed precisely not at the triumph of the interest of an individual, a family, a social class, or a political party, but at the attainment of the universal good of all. ...

- **Authority and Power — a Divine Trust for Service**

- It must be emphasized that all authority and power emanate from God. God gives authority only in trust. As the steward of this trust, the holder of public office is beholden and responsible to God. Authority is not for personal aggrandizement or domination. It is given for service. Officials who do not serve do not deserve to hold authority. When legitimately constituted authority is exercised within the limits of its competence and in accord with the moral law it must be respected and obeyed. Duty when it is used contrary to the moral law, the will of God is violated and authority loses its right to be obeyed.

- **Between the Political Community and the Church — Mutual Collaboration**

- There are human needs that the political community can best serve and there are human needs that transcend temporal well-being which only the Church can meet. Mutual collaboration is therefore necessary between the political community and the Church so that the integral development of the human person and of all persons in society may be realized, even though the Kingdom of God cannot be equated with material progress. (Cf. PEPP, 49-57)

13. What is the role of the Church in the election process?

The Church is the People of God. In the Church there are clerics (bishops, presbyters, pastors, priests) and the laity. As stated above:

- **Normally, clerics confine themselves to enunciating the moral principles governing politics and political choice for public office.**
- **The laity involve themselves in direct and partisan political activity.**
- **But both clerics and the laity involve themselves in politics when moral or pastoral values are at stake.**
 - One such area is the truth and integrity of elections. Clerics, religious, and laypersons who are not otherwise committed to direct partisan-political activity do well to be involved in promoting clean, truthful and honest elections, and denouncing or combating fraudulent elections.
- **In this manner, the Church fulfills its mission to evangelize politics.**

14. Is it good for clerics to be involved in partisan politics?

As far as the Philippine Constitution is concerned, any person, whether cleric or lay, has the constitutional right to

participate in partisan politics. The right flows from Filipino citizenship. The Church's mission to evangelize even the political sphere can for certain clerics be an argument of the necessity for them to enter the partisan political sphere, even though this is the proper competence of the enlightened laity.

Normally, the priest is constrained from entering the partisan political sphere by his calling to the ministerial priesthood. The first constraint is the call to witness to the spiritual. Though it is clear the mission of the Church involves immersion in concerns that are human and material, the cleric is challenged in a special way not to allow his temporal activity to jeopardize his primary spiritual mission.

The second constraint is the unifying role that is integral to a priest's calling. He must ask himself whether choosing sides in a political debate will compromise the universality of his message or his unifying mission.

A third constraint is the matter of competence in politics. The Church and churchmen possess no special charism to make correct political decisions, whether these decisions involve the choice of form of government or of political parties or candidates, or of specific government policies or programs:

These constraints have to be carefully weighed when a cleric deliberates whether to make the partisan plunge or not. How he views these constraints in the context of the developing partisan campaign will dictate whether or to what extent he will allow himself to join the partisan fray. (Cf. Bernas, "The Partisan Temptation," *Today*, Dec. 21, 1997.)

15. Do Catholics have a duty to participate in clean elections?

Yes. Democracy has become a defining element of Philippine culture. But in the viewpoint of many Filipino Catholics, it is specially precious as the result of God's liberative intervention

during the EDSA revolution of February, 1986, which toppled the dictatorship and swept Corason Aquino into power. God's intervention was experienced as a sign of how precious in his eyes the Filipino people are. Filipino Catholics therefore see the preservation of meaningful democracy according to the moral imperatives of our Church as their special duty. It is in this spirit that they appropriate the mission of the Church to evangelize politics.

Since God has intervened in Philippine history to restore democracy, it is certain that he calls Filipinos and Filipinas to public office to serve the common good.

Since the renewal of the political sphere depends essentially on people renewing political culture, lay Christians of integrity and competence should discern seriously whether they are being called to participate in the forthcoming elections as candidates for public office.

Since the renewal of politics depends on the Filipino people electing the right candidates into public office, clerics, pastors and religious should help inform and educate people on meaningful criteria for their choosing good candidates for public office.

Since the survival of democracy in the Philippines depends on preserving free, honest and clean elections, no matter what the odds, it is the duty of all Filipino citizens to struggle to keep elections a credible vehicle of the sovereign will of the people. In the forthcoming elections on May 11, 1998, all Filipinos and Filipinas of good will must exert special effort to make the elections successful.

16. Is prayer and fasting meaningful for the forthcoming election?

Our Lord said that certain demons can be cast out only by prayer and fasting (Mark 9.29). Since it is probable that the

forthcoming elections will pit not only partisan politician vs. partisan politician and one program of government vs. another program of government, but also good, truth, dedication to the common good against evil, lies, money, dishonesty, and fanatic energy to achieve selfish ends, prayer and fasting is recommended to rid Philippine politics of these demons.

17. Can we expect our Blessed Mother to intervene again to protect democratic freedoms in our country?

We must pray to Mary and beg for her help. When we pray to Mary we often say, "Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided." We experienced this in 1986, when she interceded for us at EDS A. She did not leave us unprotected. We experienced this when she protected our democracy against repeated coup attempts. She did not leave us unaided. We experienced this when she protected our Constitution against tampering for party political ends. She interceded for us. And God heard her prayer.

Mary is the Mother of Jesus, who brings the redeeming and liberating God into our world, into our history. She is the special symbol of the Church, through which the Holy Spirit today completes Christ's establishment of God's Kingdom against all forces of evil in the world. In this light, she is truly the Mother of our Democracy and Protectress against all electoral evil. As we pray to her, we must recall that she was most outstanding in her fiat, in her yes to do God's will according to His plan, unmindful of the cost to her personally. As these crucial elections near, we must pray for Mary's special intercession and guidance, recalling her praise of God's Mercy that worked wonders through her humble submission to His will: "He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He

has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty" (Luke 1:49-53)

We must pray. But we must also act. We must give ourselves to accomplish His will — no matter what the cost.

PART TWO: PRIMER ON ELECTIONS

General Information

18. When are the next elections?

The next elections will be held on the second Monday of May — May 11, 1998.

19. Who will be elected in the 1998 elections?

The 1998 elections are crucially important for us all. Through these elections the Filipino People — on the national level — will elect a new President, a new Vice-President, and 12 new Senators. A new feature of this election is that the Filipino People will also elect party-list representatives to Congress.

On the local level, they will elect or re-elect Congressmen, Governors, Vice-Governors, Mayors and Vice Mayors of cities and municipalities. They will elect members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board), the Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Council) and Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council).

20. What is the importance of elections for the lives of Filipinos?

Elected public officials profoundly affect the lives of Filipinos. Good public officials are crucial in bringing about such as law and order, a sound economy, good laws, productive jobs, health programs, meaningful education, the advancement of the common good, happy families and a contented and harmonious people. On the other hand, bad public officials contribute to the breakdown of law and order, kidnapping, the misuse of drugs,

an economy unresponsive to the needs of the people, broken families, social unrest, class conflict and a miserable people. The elections, therefore, are crucially important for the lives of Filipinos. Through elections the Filipino voters determine whether the country will have good officials or bad officials. They determine whether for the next electoral period the common good of all will be pursued, or merely the good of some. They determine whether politicians will serve according to a rational program of government, or merely govern according to the mindless calculus of power politics. In fact, elections in the Philippines make or break fortunes on all levels of Philippines society. But most important, they determine who will make laws for and govern our people with God-given authority. Christian citizens should vote for the persons they believe God wants in public office.

In the May 11, 1998 elections, the Filipino voters will also have the opportunity to vote for representatives according to proportional representation or through party-list voting (Cf. below: "Party-list system").

21. Do we have a healthy history of democratic elections?

Democracy flows in the blood of Filipinos. Participating in elections is part of the democratic fabric of Philippine society. In order to protect the integrity of elections, Filipinos/Filipinas have not been unwilling in the past to sacrifice their time, their treasure, and their lives. This was especially evident when incumbent President Ferdinand Marcos stole the "snap election" of 1986 from the crusading challenger, Corazon Aquino. The people would not take this. Through their People Power revolution at EDSA, they swept Corazon Aquino to the presidency.

On the other hand, as much as democratic elections are treasured in the Philippines, they have also brought to fore some of the worst traits of Filipinos. Recently, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines stated: "When it comes to elections,

the electoral process has been systematically subverted with increasingly sophisticated methods of tilting the playing field or committing fraud with the result that elections are in danger of losing their credibility as a reliable means for effecting change. The machinery for cheating is planned well in advance starting with the appointment of loyal lieutenants to sensitive agencies and positions that have to do with elections, the audit of government funds or the enforcement of the Ethics Law government officials. This is combined with an elaborate propaganda machine, including government-controlled media, the purpose of which is to destroy the reputation of critics and political opponents ... People have become so cynical over government, of Congress and of the electoral process itself, that often they lose sight of the relevance of their vote to their life or further and sell it for momentary financial gain. ... Despite the guidelines regularly issued for the principled choice of candidates, many an undeserving man or woman still, just as regularly, gets voted into office" (CBCP Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Politics, 1997).

Citizens, especially those motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, must work against the opportunism of the few to use or subvert elections for their own private ends and rob the Filipino People of their right to choose their own leaders through elections.

22. *Why should we not allow the 1998 elections to fail?*

We should not allow the 1998 elections to fail because of our Gospel-based commitment to democracy and our commitment in principle to the supremacy of civilian over military rule.

23. *What would happen should we have a failure of elections in 1998?*

Since there will be no elected President nor elected Vice-President in case of a failure of elections, the Constitution provides that the Senate President take over. He takes over on June 30, when it shall have become clear that elections have failed to elect a President. Since the Senate is a continuing body, if the term

of the incumbent Senate President does not end on June 30, 1998, then he/she will be the acting President should elections fail.

If the term of the Senate President ends on June 30, then the remaining 12 Senators can elect a Senate President, who will then serve as Acting President.

Though a failure of election is not probable, it would be best for the Senate prior to the elections to elect a Senate President whose term does not end on June 30, 1998.

24. Who is qualified to be President or Vice-President of the Philippines according to the Constitution?

The Constitution says: "No person shall be elected President unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, a registered voter, able to read and write, at least forty years of age on the day of the election, and a resident of the Philippines for at least ten years immediately preceding such election" (Article VII, Section 2). The Constitution prescribes the same qualifications for the President and the Vice-President (Article VII, Sec. 3). For in case of inability of the President to govern, the Vice-President becomes the President.

25. Since the Constitution only lists minimal qualifications, what are some other important qualifications for President that a conscientious Christian voter must consider?

- The President must be a person of outstanding leadership, competence and integrity in personal as well as in public life.
- The President must be committed in public office to pursue the common good above the good of self, family, province, region or party. He must have insight into the need for limitations on terms of public office as a demand of the common good in the context of the national experience.
- The President must be a person who in life, convictions, decisions and actions is responsive to the will of God (*maka-Diyos*), to the good of the nation (*makabayan*), and to the good

of the people (*makatao*). Before God and responsive to the greater good of the nation, the President must have a special responsiveness to the rights and demands of the poor in social justice.

- The President must respect truth and the dignity of persons. He must not be a manipulator of persons through deceit, money, bribery, power-brokering.

- The President must be qualified to preside over the economic development of the nation in accordance with the constitutional goals of the national economy, namely, "a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income, and wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged" (Article XII, Sec. 1). He must do so in full responsiveness to the challenges of contemporary globalization but with full respect for the preservation of the national patrimony.

- The President must be qualified to insure peace and order to the Filipino people; he/she must be especially willing and able to stop kidnapping and eradicate drug abuse which have worsened since the last presidential elections. He/she however must do so with full respect for human and civil rights of all.

- The President must be willing and able to advance People Power in the country, i.e., the responsible participation of the people in shaping the nation's future.

- Both in personal conviction as well as in consistent personal practice, the President must be committed to the enhancement and stability of the Filipino family.

26. Are there any candidates who are "anointed by God"?

In choosing candidates, Catholics must have a sincere intention of choosing those whom God would will to be in office.

But no group has the power or authority to "anoint a candidate" and mean by this that God is choosing that particular

candidate. This would amount to a dangerous mystification of a particular historical and vulnerable choice with the infallibility and sanctity of the divine will.

Hence, serious Catholic candidates should be very wary of such anointment. Whoever or whatever institution arrogates the "will of God" to him-her-or itself is generally manipulative and dangerous in wielding the will of God.

That certain charismatic groups have taken to facilely "anointing" candidates is therefore a misrepresentation of the Holy Spirit for which they must take special responsibility.

That certain political parties have recently taken to "anointing" candidates only means that these parties, on the authority of the particular parties and not of God, endorse a candidate.

27. Who are the lawmakers in the Philippines?

Lawmakers in the Philippines are senators and members of the House of Representatives. With the May 11, 1998 elections, there will be two kinds of members of the House of Representatives: those elected through congressional districts (as most Filipinos are familiar with), and those elected through the party-list system (Article VI, Sec. 5).

Local legislators are the members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board), the Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Council) and the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council).

28. How many members of the House of Representatives are to be elected through the party-list system?

The Constitution says: "The party-list representatives shall constitute twenty per centum of the total number of representatives including those under the party-list" (Article VI, Sec. 5.2). Therefore, if there are 208 representatives elected through congressional districts, there should be 52 party-list representatives.

([number of district representatives] + [no. of district representatives / 4]).

29. *According to the Constitution, who are qualified to be Senators of the Philippines?*

The Constitution says: "No person shall be a Senator unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, and, on the day of election, is at least thirty-five years of age, able to read and write, a registered voter, and a resident of the Philippines for not less than two years immediately preceding the day of elections" (Article VI, Section 3)

30. *According to the Constitution, who are qualified to be Members of the House of Representatives of the Philippines?*

The Constitution says: "No person shall be a Member of the House of Representatives unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, and, on the day of election, is at least twenty-five years of age, able to read and write, and, except the party-list representatives, a registered voter in the district in which he shall be elected, and a resident thereof for not less than one year immediately preceding the day of elections" (Article VI, Section 3)

THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM

31. *According to the Constitution, who are qualified to be Members of the House of Representatives through the party-list system?*

Natural-born citizens of the Philippines, who, on the day of election, are at least twenty-five years of age, able to read and write, and a registered voter are qualified for election to the House of Representatives through the party-list system.

32. *What is the party-list system?*

The party-list system is a new way of electing representatives to Congress not through congressional districts but through party-lists. It is based on:

- **Article VI, Sec. 5 of the Constitution, and**
- **R.A. 7941 enacted on March 3, 1995, and**
- **Comelec Resolution 2847**

Up to now, we have only elected representatives to Congress by congressional district, e.g. Maria Maganda was elected to Congress to represent the 1st district of Manila.

But on May 11, 1998 we will elect party-list representatives, e.g. The "*Makabayan Makatao Maka-Dios*" party-list, if registered, can be elected. If elected, their party-list can be represented by as many as three representative in Congress.

33. *What are some advantages of the party-list system?*

The party-list system:

- **Provides opportunity for sectoral representations and small parties to truly participate in elections and win representation in Congress;**
- **Decentralizes power from established political parties;**
- **Necessitates familiarization with the platforms and programs of participating groups and not just with personalities;**
- **Broadens and enriches the multi-party system;**
- **Encourages membership in a particular party or group.**

34. *How many seats in Congress are available for party-list representatives ?*

When the new Congress comes together, 80% will be district representatives. 20% will be party-list representatives, granting they are elected according to the special conditions described below. In the May 11, 1998 elections, we will be electing at least 206 district congressmen. We say "at least" because there is still time for Congress to create new districts. With 206 congressmen, there will be 51 seats available for party-list representatives. If by May 11, 1998 there are 208 district representative, then there will be 52 available party-list seats.

* In others words, if the new Congress were divided into five equal parts (100%),

District Representative

yes

20%

• four parts (80%) would be district representatives,

District Representatives

20%

• one part (20%) would be possible party-list representatives.

• And that one part (20%) would equal to one of the four equal parts or one-fourth if all district representatives.

20%

20%

≡

20%

Therefore, the number of available party list seats depends on the number of district representatives at the time of elections. It is equal to one fourth the number of district representatives. If today there are 206 district representatives, there will be 51 available party-list seats. If by May 11, 1998 there are 208 district representative, then there will be 52 available party-list seats.

35. In general, how are party-lists elected to Congress? How many representatives can they have in Congress?

Party-lists are awarded available seats in congress in proportion to their share of all votes cast for party-lists,

- so long as no party-list has more than three representatives, and
- so long as no party-list would have garnered less than 2 percent of all votes cast for party-lists.

On May 11, 1998 the number of voters who cast votes for party lists will be counted. Since some may choose not (or neglect) to vote for a party list, this number may be less than the number of voters. This will be an important number, for it is in proportion to this number that a party will win available party-list seats in Congress.

In proportionate voting, theoretically, that proportion of votes garnered by a party list should receive that proportion of available seats. If a party list receives 50% of all votes cast for the party-list, 50% of all available seats should go to that party list.

However, since the intention of the party-list system is to increase participation in Congress through many party lists, no party list can have more than three representatives in Congress, no matter how many votes it receives.

Furthermore, since a party-list representative must represent a significant number of voters, no party list can be represented unless it garners a minimum of two percent of all votes cast for party lists.

36. This understood, how does the party-list system work?

For the party-list system three varying numbers are important:

- The number of party-list seats available in the house, x
- The number of votes cast for a party-list, y
- The entire number of votes cast for any party-list, z

With these numbers, the party-list system can be better understood.

- The number of votes cast for a party list, y , divided by the entire number of votes cast for the party list, z , is the PROPORTION $[y/z]$ of all party list votes garnered by that party.
- That party-list should have that proportion $[y/z]$ of all available party list seats in congress, x , or: x multiplied by $[y/z]$.

- However, a party list can have **NO MORE THAN THREE** representatives.
- **And IT MUST HAVE GARNERED MORE THAN TWO PERCENT OF ALL PARTY-LIST VOTES CAST.**
- This means, $[y/z]$ must be equal two or greater than two percent of all votes cast.
- **In sum, a party-list elected to $[y/z * x]$ party-list seats**
 - Provided that this does not exceed 3 seats, and
 - Provided that y/z is equal to or greater than two percent of z .

For example, if

- The number of party-list seats in the house (x) is 52,
- The number of votes cast for a party-list (y) is 1,000,000,
- The entire number of votes cast for any party-list (z) is 25,000,000
- Then, that party-list would have won $(1,000,000/25,000,000 \text{ of } 52 = 2.8)$ 2 seats.
 - But if the party-list had won 5,000,000 votes $[5,000,000/25,000,000 \text{ of } 50 = 10.4]$, it would only receive 3 seats, not 10.
 - On the other hand, if the party-list had only won only 250,000 votes $[250,000/25,000,000 \text{ or one percent of votes cast}]$, it would receive no seats, since a party list must receive a minimum of two percent of all party-list votes cast.

37. *Who can participate in the party-list election?*

The "candidate" for election in the party-list system is not an individual, like Juan de la Cruz or Maria Maganda, but a group, a party, or a coalition. The group, party, or coalition is the *party* of the party-list system, e.g. the "*Makabayan Makatao Makadios*" Party-list.

All groupings may participate. They may represent sectoral interests (e.g. the urban poor) or causes (e.g. the environment); they may represent national or regional political parties.

However, according to the law (RA 7941), the five leading parties based on their representation from the beginning of the 10th Congress cannot participate under the party-list system. For the 1998 election these are: Lakas-NUCD-UCMD (Lakas); Liberal Party (LP); Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP);

National People's Coalition (NPC); and Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBP).

According to law, 12 sectors may be represented under the system. These are: laborers, fisherfolk, tribal communities/indigenous peoples, disabled persons, youth, overseas workers, farmers, urban poor, elderly, women, veterans, and professionals.

38. *Who is/are the representatives of the party in a party-list system?*

Up to three members of the elected party-lists will be the party-list representatives to Congress, if the party-list is elected. Five names shall have been submitted to Comelec and ranked by the registered party lists.

39. *How many nominees from each party are required?*

Each party must name no less than five people and rank them. Ranking is important. Should a group win two party-list seats, the first two from the ranked list will represent the party-list. Should one of these two be unable to represent the party-list during his term, he/she would be replaced by the next in rank.

40. *What are the responsibilities of the party-list representative?*

The party-list representative is a lawmaker in Congress.

41. *What is his/her term limit?*

Like all other representatives in Congress, three years.

42. *What are the limitations on seats allowed for each party?*

By law, each candidate party or group is allowed to have no more than three representatives.

On the other hand, the group or party must obtain two percent or more of all votes cast for the party-list system.

43. *Who are qualified to vote in the party-list system?*

All registered voters are qualified to vote in the party-list system. If the automated election is pushed through, voters will indicate their choice of their party-list on the National (automated) ballot together with the President, Vice-President and Senators.

44. *In the past the President appointed sectoral representatives. With the beginning of party-list elections in the May 11, 1998 election, will the President continue to appoint sectoral representatives?*

The President of the Philippines will no longer appoint sectoral representatives. Presidential appointment of sectoral representatives was possible only for three consecutive terms after the promulgation of the Constitution (Cf. Article VI, Section 5.2). These three terms have meanwhile already lapsed.

45. *The Constitution only prescribes minimal qualifications for legislators. In the forthcoming elections what are some other important qualifications not only for senators and congressmen but, similarly, also for members of provincial boards and urban and municipal councils?*

The primary task of legislators in the Philippines is the enactment of just laws/ordinances. Legislators in the Philippines must be willing to dedicate themselves to legislating just laws/ordinances in the Philippines on the basis of sustained contact with their constituencies and with the Filipino People at large.

While members of the House of Representatives are elected by particular congressional districts or by particular party-lists, such legislators must bear in mind that in representing these particular constituencies or particular interests they are still duty-bound to pursue the common good.

Legislators should be willing to leave the execution of community development projects to local officials of the executive branch, once they have responsibly appropriated funds for the most

important of these projects after due consideration for the common good.

Those who make the laws of the country should be examples of what the law represents: justice, morality, the common good. They should be paragons of wisdom, virtue, human kindness and fear of the Lord.

46. Who are qualified to be elected local government officials during the May 11 elections of 1998?

According to the Local Government Code of 1991 (Sec. 39), the requisite qualification for local government officials are as follows:

- An elective local official must be a citizen of the Philippines; a registered voter in the barangay, municipality, city, or province or, in the case of a member of the *sangguniang panlalawigan*, *sangguniang panlungsod*, or *sanggunian bayan*, the district where he intends to be elected; a resident therein for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the day of the election; and able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect.
- Candidates for the position of governor, vice-governor or mayor, vice-mayor or member of the *sangguniang panlungsod* of highly urbanized cities must be at least twenty-three (23) years of age on election day.
- Candidates for the position of mayor or vice mayor of independent component cities, component cities, or municipalities must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age on election day.
- Candidates for the position of member of the *sangguniang panlungsod* or *sangguniang bayan* must be at least eighteen (18) years of age on election day...

Pre-Elections

47. How do I involve myself effectively in the coming elections?

Aside from making sure that I vote freely and wisely, I can involve myself in the coming elections through:

- **Partisan Politics** - where as a Christian I work for or join a political party in order myself to be elected to public office or in support for

particular candidates according to the criteria given by respectable individuals or institutions.

- **Non-Partisan Politics - where as a Christian I work in various ways, in the different phases of the electoral exercises, to enhance the consciousness of the Filipinos concerning the importance of elections and to ensure that the popular will is expressed, obeyed and not subverted by sinister forces.**

Both of these ways of participating in politics are important. In politics however, the ultimate motivation of the Christian, whether he/she be involved in partisan or non-partisan politics, must be the common good. Even involvement in partisan politics must ultimately redound not just to a group of individuals but to the common good. This is a key Gospel value: the societal consequence of the mandated to love our fellow human beings.

48. How do I get involved in partisan politics?

In partisan politics I either run myself for public office or work to advance the interest of the particular candidates whom I support, since in my conviction either I myself or these candidates best satisfy my accepted criteria for public office, including moral integrity, competence, respect for people, fear of the Lord, and greatest suitability to serve the common good. I can either formally join the corresponding political party or I can work in support of the activities of the political party. Here, I either contract or volunteer my services — personal, financial, moral technical — in campaigning for and securing votes. Through all the phases of the electoral process, I work to make sure that the votes for my candidates are counted.

49. If I am not involved in partisan politics, how can I help to insure honest, clean, peaceful and credible elections?

Being non-partisan, I can join non-partisan "election watchdog" groups such as the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV). I can also volunteer to help COMELEC directly. I can urge my friends and neighbors to vote according to the

criteria of their choice, so long as these criteria are morally sound. To ensure clean and peaceful elections and responsible voting, I can help in such as information dissemination, voters' education, fund raising, poll watching, monitoring election results and recruiting others who can help in this important non-partisan role.

For these ends, the following may be contacted:

- **Parish Pastoral Councils for Responsible Voting (PPC-RV)**
 - Address: Pope Pius XII Center; 1175 United Nations Avenue; Manila
 - Tels: 521-5559; 521-5005
 - Fax: 521-3626
- **National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL)**
 - Address: c/o RFM Foundation, Inc.; 8F RFM Corporate Center; Pioneer cor. Sheridan Streets, Mandaluyong City
 - Tels: 634-5604/05/07; 634-0141; 631-0078; 631-8101 locals 7803 / 7808
 - Fax: 634-5136
 - E-mail: namfrel@portalinc.com
- **Your local parish will also be a center of organized activity for free and clean elections.**

50. What has happened to PPC-RV and NASSA's VOTE-CARE?

The bishops have decided:

"PPC-RV will henceforth be the Church body that will coordinate the efforts of the various dioceses during election times;

"VOTE-CARE, on the other hand, will be the Church agency for her efforts between election times to educate and conscientize people for the renewal of the social and political order.

"To each diocese is given the responsibility of mobilizing the two bodies and their workers for their respective tasks" (PEPP, no. 8). The role that PPC-RV has played in organizing independent poll watchers for elections is crucial for free and honest elections and must not be neglected in the May 11, 1998 elections.

51. In involving myself in the electoral process, what is usually required of me?

To be a pollwatcher, I must be a registered voter, enjoy a good reputation, not be convicted of any election offense or another other crime, know how to read and write Filipino, English, Spanish or any prevailing local languages and dialects, and not be related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or

affinity to the Chairman or any member of the board of election inspectors in the polling place where I seek appointment as a poll watcher, (cf. OEC, Art. XV, Sec. 178, par. 2)

Otherwise, the only requirement is my willingness and energy to use my talents, abilities and resources meaningfully in advancing free and meaningful elections.

52. *How do I register to vote?*

In preparation for the May 11, 1998 elections, Comelec has called for a new voters list.

Therefore, it scheduled national registration days on June 14-15 and June 21-22, 1997.

Later registration was provided for in municipal or city branches of Comelec until December 22, 1997.

After this date, registration for the May 11, 1998 elections is not possible.

Generally, every citizen of the Philippines, not otherwise disqualified by law, who is at least 18 years old, has resided in the Philippines for at least a year, and has resided in the locality where they propose to vote for at least six months before the elections, has the right to register (Cf. OEC, Sec. 117).

To register, one normally accomplishes a voter's affidavit on the day and place specified by the COMELEC.

53. *If I have not registered during the regular registration days, or if I have not registered thereafter on or before December 22, 1997, can I vote in the May 11, 1998 elections?*

No. One must be on the new election list in order to vote.

54. *What must a registered voter do in case he has transferred residence to another municipality or city after registration?*

Section 12 of RA 8189 provides for the following:

- He/She must apply with the Election Officer of his/her new place of residence for the transfer of his registration records. The application will then be subjected to the requirements of notice and hearing and the approval of the Election Registration Board (cf. Sec. 17, RA 8189).
- The election officer of his former residence shall, after receiving the notice of approval, transmit by registered mail the voter's registration record to the Election Officer of the voters new residence.

What must a registered voter do in case after registering he/she has changed address or residence but within the municipality or city?

- **Section 13 of RA 8189 provides for the following:**
 - The said registered voter must immediately notify the Election Officer in writing.
 - If such change of address involves a change in precinct, the Board shall transfer the registration record to the precinct book of voters of his new precinct.
 - The Board shall notify the voter of his new prednct.
 - When and where shall any concerned citizen or organization be able to see and check the Certified List of Voters?

55. What can be done to help make sure that the list of registered voters is correct?

Each voter shall make sure this his/her name is on the Certified List of Voters.

56. When and where can concerned citizens or organizations see and check the Certified List of Voters?

Section 30 of RA 8189 provides for the following:

- The Election Registration Board shall prepare and post a certified list of voters 90 days (Feb. 10,1998) before a regular election (May 11,1998) and 60 days before a special election and shall furnish copies to the provincial, regional and national central files;
- The Certified List of Voters (along with the Certified List of Deactivated Voters) categorized by precinct per barangay shall also be posted in the Office of the Election Officer 90 days before a regular election and 60 days before a special election.
- The same shall also be posted in the bulletin board of each City/Municipal Hall (within the same deadlines as above, depending on manner of elections). Upon payment of the fees fixed by the Commission, the candidates and heads of registered political parties shall also be furnished copies.

- The Board shall also furnish two certified copies of said Certified List of Voters (along with the Certified List of Deactivated Voters) to the Board of Election Inspectors for posting in the polling place and for their reference on election day.

57. Does the public have the right to examine the registration records held by any election officer?

Section 41 of RA 8189 provides the following:

- All registration records or computerized voters' lists in the possession of the Election Officer, the Provincial Election Supervisor, and the Commission in Manila, shall be open to examination (free of charge) for legitimate inquiries by the public during regular office hours.

58. Why might my name not be on the Certified Voters' List even if I have registered?

There are normally two reasons why names are excluded from the voters' list:

- The name is misspelled.
- The name is inadvertently left out by COMELEC.

In either case:

- "He/she shall have the right to file an application on any date with the proper municipal or metropolitan trial court for an order directing that his/her name shall be reinstated on the list or that he be registered with his/her correct name" (OEC, Sec. 140).

In case I discover that the name of another person who registered is not on the list, I should instruct him/her to do the above.

59. What do I do if I find a name on the voters' list that should not be there?

A voter may apply with the proper municipal or metropolitan trial court for the exclusion of a voter from the list by giving the name and residence of the latter, the precinct in which he is [anomalously] registered, and the grounds for the challenge.

60. What else can be done to help prevent flying voters?

Since filing exclusion proceedings against anomalously listed voters is very tedious, it is recommended that citizens who belong

to watchdog groups get to know the particular teachers who shall be manning the precincts they are to watch personally. They should make common cause with these teachers in working to insure honest and clean elections.

61. *For the May 11, 1998 elections, when must certificates of candidacy be filed?*

Sec. 11 of RA 8486 states:

- * For purposes of the May 11, 1998 elections, the deadline for filing the certificate of candidacy for the positions of President, Vice-President, Senators and candidates under the Party-List System as well as petitions for registration and/or manifestation to participate in the Party-List System shall be on February 9, 1998 while the deadline for the filing of certificate of candidacy for other positions shall be on March 27, 1998.
 - Normally candidacy must be filed not later than 120 days before the elections.

62. *When does the official campaign period begin?*

For the President, Vice-President, Senators, and Party-List Representations, it starts 90 days before May 11, 1998, that is, February 10, 1998 and ends May 9, 1998.

For the members of the House of Representatives and elective provincial, city and municipal officials, it starts 45 days before May 11, that is, March 27. (Synchronized Election Law, RA7166, Sec. 5; Minute Resolution of Comelec 97-3808.)

63. *What is a counting center?*

A counting center is "a public place designated by the Commission on Elections where counting of votes and canvassing/consolidation of results shall be conducted" (RA 8436, Sec. 1.11)

64. *How do I know where the counting centers are located?*

Section 16 of RA 8436 states: "The election officer shall post prominently in his/her office, in the bulletin boards at the city/municipal hall and in three other conspicuous places in the city/municipality, the notice on the designated counting center(s) for at least fifteen days prior to election day.

For the purpose of the May 11, 1998 elections, the Comelec shall designate a central counting center(s) which shall be a public place within the city or municipality, as in the case of the National Capital Region and in highly urbanized areas. The Commission may designate other counting center(s) where the national ballots cast from various precincts of different municipalities shall be counted using the automated system. The Comelec shall post prominently a notice thereof, for at least fifteen days prior to election day, in the office of the election officer, on the bulletin boards at the municipal hall and in three other conspicuous places in the municipality."

65. *What happens if Comelec declares on February 9, 1998 that it is impossible to implement computerized elections for national officials and party-list representations?*

We revert back to manual elections, except in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, which shall in any case be done through computerized counting/canvassing.

RA 3436, signed into law on Dec. 22, 1997, authorizes Comelec to use an automated election system in the May 11, 1998 election and in subsequent elections. However, because of the late date of the passage of this law, the law also authorizes Comelec to revert to the manual election system, if by February 9 it becomes evident that Comelec cannot fully implement the automated election system for national positions (cf. Sec. 6).

66. *What characterizes the culture of politics in the pre-election phase in the Philippines?*

The Bishops of the Philippines describe the culture of the pre-election period in the following terms:

"In the campaign period, the first focus of attention is on getting oneself chosen as the candidate of a party. Very early on, a candidate seeking support from the 'kingmakers' is advised that he must learn to deal with 'political reality' and he is supposed

to do this by adopting the traditional method of political horsetrading, of promising patronage to financial supporters, of buying the loyalty of local traders. Soon enough he becomes adept in the ways of self-serving opportunism and he looks for a party that can help him fulfill his ambitions without regard to ideology and platform. Thus it is commonplace to see or hear of disappointed candidates switching party affiliations or founding their own parties. There is no difficulty whatsoever for an office-aspirant to be sworn into one party after another, no real stigma being attached to turncoatism. When convention time comes, delegates are 'wined, dined and womaned' ... in order to win their votes. Here at the convention level alone, election spending gets even more heavy. If candidates spend enormous amounts of money freely in the election campaign period, everybody knows they do so in the certainty that they will be able to recoup every single item of expense and more when they assume office; and that if they eventually manage by whatever devious means to become themselves 'kingpins' in their own right, they will be more than compensated for by national candidates who need the support of their political machinery.

The campaign period turns the Philippine scene into a mad circus. Candidates will, during this period, do whatever their audience bids them to do — in sharp contrast to their deafness to the same people's cries for attention once they are in office. They will dance, clown, kick-box, sing, use gutter language — anything to sell themselves and heighten 'name recall.' In short, they do everything except educate the electorate on issues. They hire expensive advertising agencies to polish up their image, often without regard to the truth, and to produce sound-bites and one-liners that will go over well in political rallies and quick interviews on radio and television. All of which only serve to worsen our personality-oriented brand of politics.

People take advantage of the campaign period to ask for donations for every conceivable 'project' from the candidates who

are pressured to give under pain of losing valuable votes. This in turn forces candidates to solicit or accept contributions from vested interests who expect a return after the elections. The same goes with the party in power: it misuses government funds and other resources for electioneering purposes. When later those guilty become vulnerable to prosecution, they whitewash investigations with the help of proteges previously deployed in strategic agencies, even go to the extent of legislating amendments to 'decriminalize' their violations" (PEPP, 15-19).

It is this culture of politics that must be rejected by thoughtful citizens and transformed by persons committed to the values of the Gospel.

67. *What are election offenses?*

Article XIII of the Omnibus Election Code lists elections offences which are punishable by law. Some are the following:

Vote-buying and vote-selling.

Conspiracy to bribe voters.

Wagering upon result of election.

Coercion of subordinates.

Threats, intimidation, terrorism, use of fraudulent devices or other forms of coercion.

Coercion of election officials and employees.

Appointment of new employees, creation of new position, promotion, or giving salary increases.

Transfer of officers and employees in the civil service.

Intervention of public officers and employees.

Undue influence.

Unlawful electioneering.

Prohibition against dismissal of employees.

Appointment or use of special policemen, special agents, confidential agents or the like.

Illegal release of prisoners before and after elections.

Use of public funds, money deposited in trust, equipment, facilities owned or controlled by government for an election campaign for any election campaign or partisan political activity.

Carrying of deadly weapons in the polling place.

Carrying of firearms, though licensed, outside residence or place of business during election period.

Use of armored land, water and air craft

Wearing of uniforms and bearing arms outside of immediate vicinity of his/her place of work.

Policemen and provincial guards acting as bodyguards or security guards unless assigned by Comelec.

Organization or maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces, or other similar forces.

Public funds released, disbursed, expended 45 days before May 11, 1998, i.e., after March 27, 1998.

Construction of public works, delivery of materials for public works and issuance of treasury warrants and similar devices beginning 45 days before May 11, 1998, i.e., after March 27, 1998.

Suspension of elective provincial, city, municipal or barangay officer.

Failure to register without justifiable excuse. Falsification of registration data.

- Voting offences (Cf. next number).

68. *Are violations of the Omnibus Election Code punishable by law?*

Article XIII, Section 264 says:

- Any person found guilty of any election offense under this Code shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than one year but not more than six years and shall not be subject to probation. In addition, the guilty party shall be sentenced to suffer disqualification to hold public office and deprivation of the right of suffrage. If he is a foreigner, he shall be sentenced to deportation which shall be enforced after the prison term has been served. Any political party found guilty shall be sentenced to pay a fine of not less than ten thousand pesos, which shall be imposed upon such party after criminal action has been instituted in which their corresponding officials have been found guilty. ...
- Any person found guilty of the offense of failure to vote shall, upon conviction, be fined one hundred pesos. In addition, he shall suffer disqualification to run for public office in the next succeeding election following his conviction or be appointed to a public office for a period of one year following his conviction.

69. *What do I do when I encounter election offences?*

Report this to the Voters' Assistance Desk of NAMFREL or PPC-RV, as best as possible. Document the incidents: date, time, precinct, persons involved, offence, others. Take photographs discretely, list witnesses, prepare affidavits.

Election Day and Beyond

70. When does the voting start and end on Election Day?

The voting starts at 7:00 o'clock in the morning and ends at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, except when there are voters within 30 meters in front of the polling place who have not yet voted.

71. What do I do on Election day?

Go out and vote (the earlier the better).

Be patient in looking for the precinct where you are listed. (Maps are usually posted or voters' assistance desks are usually set up at the entrance of the school where voting is held.)

Make sure you have everything you need to vote (Voters' ID or proof of registration, pen, etc.)

72. What is new in the coming elections?

If the Comelec can implement the automation of the May 11, 1998 elections, there will be six new features of the coming elections:

- **First, I have to accomplish two kinds of ballots, one for the national positions and the other for the local positions.**
- **Second, there will be two ballot boxes.**
- **Third, since the election ballots for the national positions are for automated counting, a machine will do the reading and counting of these ballots.**
- **Fourth, there will be a fourth member of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) aside from the usual three members, accompanied by a Comelec representative who is authored to operate the counting machine.**
- **Fifth, both are to conduct the counting and recording of votes of the national ballots in the designated counting centers.**
- **Sixth, aside from the usual offices that I must vote for, there is one added to it for the party-list representatives. I have to vote a party for the party-list representation.**

73. Is cheating probable with computerized elections?

According to computer experts it is highly improbable that cheating can take place with automated elections. They explain

that it would be difficult to tamper with the computer program as it is lodged within the chip of the computer itself and not in some hard disk that can be tapped or altered. (Statement of: Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines).

However, as the CBCP points out, people who have attempted to subvert the will of the people through electoral fraud do not lack imagination and genius. It is therefore necessary to be very vigilant, especially as the new automated system is introduced nationwide.

74. Who composes the board of election inspectors?

Sec. 164 of the OEC provides that the board of election inspectors is composed of:

- One chairperson - usually a teacher
- 2 members - representing the two major political parties

However, for purposes of the May 11, 1998 elections:

- There shall be special members of the BEI composed of a fourth member in each precinct and a COMELEC representative who is authorized to operate the counting machine. Both shall conduct the counting and recording of votes of the national ballots in the designated counting centers. (R.A. 8436, Sec. 2.7)

75. What are the duties and functions of the special members of the board of inspectors on May 11, 1998?

Sec. 4 of R.A. 8436 defines the duties and functions of the special members as follows:

- During the conduct of the voting in the polling place, the fourth member shall:
 - accomplish the minutes of voting for the automated election system in the precinct; and
 - ensure that the national ballots are placed inside the appropriate ballot box;
- On the close of the polls, the fourth member shall bring the ballot box containing the national ballots to the designated counting center;
- Before the counting of votes, the fourth member shall verify if the number of national ballots tallies with the data in the minutes of the voting;
- During the counting of votes, the fourth member and the COMELEC authorized representative shall jointly accomplish the minutes of counting for the automated election system in the precinct;

- **After the counting of votes, the fourth member and the COMELEC authorized representative shall jointly:**
 - Certify the results of the counting of national ballots from the precinct; and
 - Bring the ballot box containing the counted national ballots together with the minutes of voting and counting, and other election documents and paraphernalia to the city or municipal treasurer for safekeeping.
- **During the May 11 election, the Fourth Member shall announce the results of the counting. (Sec. 18. RA 8436)**

76. *What is the procedure for obtaining and preparing the ballots?*

The ballots are obtained and prepared as follows:

- * **When I locate my precinct, I fall in line to approach the chairperson of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI).**
- * **I present him my proper identification: my Voter's ID or equivalent.**
- * **Once the BEI has ascertained my identity, the chairperson announces my name loud enough to be heard in the polling place.**
- * **I now affix my signature on the voting record. The chairperson, entering the number of the ballot in the record, gives me two ballots, one for manual election of local officials and the other for computerized election of national officials. Note: the latter will come with a "secrecy folder."**
- * **I then proceed to one of the empty voting booths and there fill out both ballots within 20 minutes.**
 - **On the ballot for local public office, I write down the names of the candidates I choose.**
 - **On the ballot for national public office, I blacken the oval before the names of the candidates I choose. (Cf. next question.)**
- * **After accomplishing my ballots, I fold the ballot for local officials. But I insert the unfolded ballot for national officials in its "secrecy folder."**
- * **I then bring both ballots to the chairperson. He/She verifies the number of the folded ballot without unfolding it, then signs it. He/She accepts the computerized ballot and signs it.**
- * **I then affix my thumbmark on the corresponding space in the voting record.**
- * **The chairperson marks my right forefinger with indelible ink.**
- * **I affix my signature on the ballot in the space provided.**
- * **I personally drop my ballots in their corresponding ballot boxes.**
- * **I leave the precinct.**

77. *How should the National Ballot (automated) be accomplished?*

In the polling booth, I must fill out my ballot secretly in the following manner:

- I blacken the oval before the name of the candidates for whom I wish to vote.
- I must do this using only the special marking pencil provided me.
- I must blacken the oval, not merely place a check or cross on it.
- I must not make any mark on any other part of the ballot.
- I will not vote for more than the authorized number as indicated below the position to be voted for. Otherwise, the vote for the said position will not be counted.
- After voting, I will NOT fold the computerized ballot. Instead, I insert it in its "secrecy folder" before returning it to the chairperson of the BEL.

78. *What should I remember when I am filling out my ballots?*

I must remember that I am filling out two kinds of ballots. On the National Ballot (automated), I will blacken the ovals before the names of my choice for the following positions:

- One President
- One Vice-President
- Twelve Senators (or fewer)
- One Party-List Representative to Congress
- On the Local Ballot (manual), I will write out names of the candidates of my choice for the following positions:
 - One Congressman
 - One Governor
 - One Vice-Governor
 - Eight Provincial Board Members (*Sanggunian Panlalawigan*) or fewer
 - One Mayor
 - One Vice-Mayor
 - Eight Municipal/City Councilors

79. *How can illiterate and disabled persons vote?*

Illiterate and disabled persons can vote through the assistance of a relative or through any person of confidence who belongs to the same household or through the help of any member of the Board of Election Inspectors.

The person assisting an illiterate or disabled person executes a sworn undertaking that he/she will only mark or write the names on the ballots of candidates chosen by the illiterate or disabled voter, and that he/she must not have assisted a voter more than three times, unless the assisting person is a member of the BEL. Furthermore, the relative must be within the fourth civil degree of affinity or consanguinity. (OEC. Sec. 196)

80. Who are persons disqualified from voting?

Besides those who are not validly registered, the Omnibus Election Code disqualifies the following from voting:

- **Persons who have been sentenced by final judgement to imprisonment for not less than one year and who have not been pardoned or granted amnesty, provided the persons have not reacquired the right to vote upon expiration of five years after service of sentence.**
- **Persons who have been adjudged guilty of crimes involving disloyalty to the duly constituted government, e.g., rebellion, sedition, violation of the anti-subversion or firearms laws, provided the persons have not reacquired the right to vote upon expiration of five years after service of sentence.**
- **Persons who are insane or incompetent as declared by the competent authority.**

81. What happens after all votes are cast?

At 3:00 p.m., the voting period ends.

The ballot boxes containing votes filled out manually are prepared for counting (Cf. next question). The counting takes place in the precinct and continuously.

The computerized votes are brought for counting to the designated counting centers (Cf. below).

82. How does the counting of the manual election ballots for local officials proceed?

The manner of counting manual election ballots is as follows (Cf. Omnibus Election Code, Sec. 210):

- Ballots are unfolded by the board of election inspectors (BEI) and placed in separate piles of 100 each.
- Ballots are read by the chair of the BEI one by one, one pile at a time. All watchers should be able to read the names on the ballot being read. Immediately after each ballot is counted the chair of the BEI signs the back of each ballot and affixes each with his thumbmark.
- The poll clerk, and the third member, respectively, record each vote on the election returns on the tally board or sheet as the names for each office are read.
- Ballots are simultaneously read aloud by the chairman, recorded on the tally board, recorded by the poll clerk on the election returns.
- Sub-totals for each candidate are taken after each pile is read and recorded in the election returns and on the tally board or sheet. In case of discrepancy, a re-reading and recount will be conducted.
- After all the ballots have been read and counted and recorded in this manner, the BEI adds the sub-totals of each candidate. The aggregate sum is recorded both on the election returns and the tally board or sheet.
- Counted ballots are placed in the special envelope provided for this purpose. The envelope is closed, signed and deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.
- The tally board or sheet as accomplished and certified by the BEI is kept and preserved in the compartment for valid ballots.

83. How are the election returns prepared?

After the ballots have been counted and recorded as described above, the election returns are then completed in sextuplicate (Cf. Omnibus Election Code, Sec. 212).

- The entry of votes in words and figures for each candidate shall be closed with the signature and the clear imprint of the thumbmark of the right hands of all the members of the BEI, likewise to be affixed in full view of the public, immediately after the last vote is recorded or immediately after the name of the candidate who did not receive any vote.
- The election returns shall also show the date of the election, the polling place, the barangay and the city or municipality in which it was held, the numbers of valid, excess, marked or void ballots, and the total number of votes obtained by each candidate.

84. How are the results of the voting in the polling place known?

After the completion of the election returns, the chairperson of the BEI shall orally and publicly announce the total number of votes received in the election in the polling place by each and every one of the candidates, stating their corresponding office.

(Cf. Omnibus Election Code, Sec. 213). These shall all be winners of local positions.

85. *What is the procedure for counting the national votes in the automated system?*

Sec. 17 and 18 of RA 8436 enumerates the manner and the steps with which the national votes shall be counted:

- The counting of votes shall be public and conducted in the designated counting center(s).
- The ballots shall be counted by the machine by precinct in the order of their arrival at the counting center. The election officer of his/her representative shall log the sequence of arrival of the ballot boxes and indicate their condition. Then the board shall, in the presence of the watchers and representatives of accredited citizens' arm and political parties/candidates, open the ballot box, retrieve the ballots and minutes of voting. It shall verify whether the number of ballots tallies with the data in the minutes.
- The election officer or any authorized official or any member of the board shall feed the valid ballots into the machine without interruption until all the ballots for the precincts are counted.
- The board shall remain at the counting center until all the official ballots for the precinct are counted and all reports are properly accomplished.
- After the ballots of the precincts have been counted, the election officer or any official authorized by the COMELEC will store the results in a data storage device and print copies of the election returns of each precinct.
- The printed election returns shall then be signed and thumbmarked by the fourth member of the BEI and by the COMELEC authorized representative and attested to by the election officer or authorized representative.
- The Chairman of the Board shall then publicly read and announce the total number of votes obtained by each candidate based on the election returns.
- Then the copies of the election returns shall be sealed and placed in the proper envelopes for distribution (to the city or municipal board of canvassers, to COMELEC, to Congress, etc.)
- After the printing of the election returns, the ballots shall be returned to the ballot box, which shall be locked, sealed and delivered to the city or municipal treasurer for safekeeping. The treasurer shall immediately provide the COMELEC and the election officer with a record of the serial numbers of the ballot boxes and the corresponding metal seals.

86. How is the canvassing of votes done? By the manual system? via the automated system?

Two Boards of Canvassers will function:

- For the purpose of the May 11 elections, there will be two (2) boards of canvassers for each city or municipality and province, one for the manual system and the other for the automated system, (source: RA 8436, Sec. 5)

Manual System: Local Votes.

- The first level of canvassing is done by the Municipal or City or District Boards of Canvassers. On this level, winning candidates for congressmen, mayor, vice-mayor, members of the *sanggunian bayan/lungsod* are proclaimed.
- The second level is the Provincial Board of Canvassers. On this level, winning candidates for governor, vice-governor and the members of the *sanggunian panlalawigan* are proclaimed (Sec. 28, RA 7166 on Synchronized Elections).

Automated System: National Votes.

- On May 11, 1998, after the results of counting of national votes in the counting centers have been stored in the data storage device and copies of the election returns have been received by those who should receive them, including the representative of the citizens' arm (Sec. 18, RA 8436),
- the data storage device is brought to the Provincial Canvassing Center by the Fourth Member of the BEI,
- accompanied by the representatives of the AFP, PNP, the citizens' arm, and, if available, representatives of the political parties or candidates (Sec. 15, RA 8436),
- and turned over to the Provincial Board of Canvassers.
- The Provincial Board of Canvassers canvasses all results coming from their respective counting centers by consolidating the data in the data storage devices and stores results in a data storage device.
- It prints a certificate of canvass of votes for the President, Vice-President, Senatorial and Party-List representation and provides copies to the:
 - Provincial Board of Canvassers
 - COMELEC
 - Chairperson of the Board
 - Citizens' Arm
 - Interested parties (upon payment)
- Results are placed in an envelope, signed and sealed and are delivered with the corresponding data storage device to the COMELEC and to the CONGRESS in Joint Session. The COMELEC acts as the National Board of Canvassers for Senators and the Party-List Representatives. The

CONGRESS acts as National Board of Canvassers for President and Vice President COMELEC canvasses the results of the Provincial Canvassing by consolidating the data in the data storage devices and proclaims the winning senators and party-list representatives (Cf. Sec. 23, RA 8436). COMELEC also canvasses and consolidates vote for the Party-List representations and proclaims the winner (Party-list System Act, Sec. 12 and 13).

- The Senate and House of Representatives in Joint Session canvasses the results of the Provincial Canvassing by consolidating the data in the data storage devices and proclaims the winning President and Vice-President (Cf. Sec. 24, RA 8436).

87. *What characterizes the culture of politics during elections in the Philippines?*

The Bishops of the Philippines describe the culture of politics during elections in the following terms:

- "Winning at any cost and by any means—this has become the paramount principle governing candidates and parties in their election bid. This translates on election day itself into vote-buying, the use of 'flying voters,' the intimidation of voters for the opposition, violence, even murder; and for turning already cast votes in one's favor, into bribery of election officials, deliberate miscounting of votes, tampering with ballots and election results. The genius and imagination required for cheating are truly stupendous and are exercised to the full—one would only wish they were used for more noble purposes than achieving undeserved victories for undeserved candidates.
- While election day violence has considerably diminished, there are still many places where voters are scared off by threats of violence, where voters' lists and even voting paraphernalia are purposely made unavailable in the precincts. Even in areas where the polls seem to be peaceful, there often is a strong undercurrent of tension because of a pervasive sense among the people that if candidates and their followers — and election officials themselves — are not watched closely, something not quite above board is going to happen. The monitoring by citizens' groups of election day activities thus becomes a necessity, even if at times highly hazardous.
- Except at the barangay level, it is not unusual for election results—even for local contests—not to be known at the end of election day. The slow tabulation of final results in one clear evil of our electoral process that somehow to date continues to be unaccepting of corrective measures" PEPP, pars. 20-22.

88. *What are voting offenses punishable by law?*

Article XIII, Section 261, z, lists voting offenses punishable by law. Some of these are:

- Failure to vote without justifiable excuse.
- Voting more than once in the same election or without having registered.
- Voting for another without the latter's knowledge and consent
- Having someone else prepare my ballots, unless I am illiterate or physically disabled.
- Schemes to discover the contents of a voter's ballots.
- Use of unofficial ballots.
- Arrest or detention of voters without justifiable cause.
- Deliberate misreading of or omission of votes by a member of the Board of Election Inspectors.
- Deliberate failure by any member of the Board of Election Inspectors to tally or record votes properly.
- Any member of the Board of Election Inspectors who makes possible casting of more votes than registered voters.
- Disruption or obstruction of the election process through false and alarming reports or false orders, directives or messages.
- Destruction, substitution or concealment of election forms, documents or ballot boxes.
- Unauthorized opening or violation of the contents of a ballot box.
- Violation of the integrity or any official ballot or election returns before or after they are used in the elections (Section 261, z, 21).
- Removal, tearing, or defacement of any certified list of candidates posted inside the voting booths during the hours of voting (Section 261, z, 22).
- Holding political conventions or meetings by any political party to nominate its official candidates earlier than the period fixed in the Code (Section 261, z, 24, cc, 1).
- Selling, furnishing, offering, buying, serving or drinking intoxicating liquor on the days fixed by law for the registration of voters in the polling places and on the day before the election and on election day (Section 261, z, 24, dd. 1).

89. *What should all citizens be vigilant against on election day?*

On election day citizens should be vigilant against such as:

- Voters bringing carbon paper.
- Voters who are not on the Voters' List yet allowed to vote.
- Voters whose right forefinger is already stained.
- Flying voters - especially as the voting period is about to end.
- Able voters in voting booths accompanied by another person.

90. *What should I do in case I see such violations of electoral integrity?*

- Report it to the non-partisan election watcher, or
- Report it to the members of the Board of Electoral Inspectors so that the suspicious persons may be challenged, or
- Report it to the Namfrel or PPC-RV.

91. *What finally should my attitude be as a Christian once the May 11, 1998 elections are over?*

Once the public officials are duly elected, Catholics are bound to give them the respect, cooperation and obedience that their public office deserves.

They are to be supported in all that they do that promotes the common good, social justice, and especially the upliftment of the poor. They should be encouraged and thanked in making the decisions that will bring to our People the just and humane social order that God wills.

I should therefore keep myself informed of the manner in which public officials conduct themselves in office, and let them know my opinions and positions that are informed by my ..Christian convictions, especially in matters of importance to all.

I should join organizations that would deepen my understanding of political affairs, make me more sensitive to the demands of the common good, make me more critical and discerning in my political judgement, and enable me to exert influence on those in public office.

But should elected officials conduct themselves immorally in office, reduce political affairs to bribery, the unbridled entrenchment of the rich in manipulative power, the continued marginalization of the poor, trample against human rights, or violate the Constitution to which they are sworn, I would act as effectively against them as my conscience demands and my resources allow.

The May 11, 1998 election takes place in the Year of the Holy Spirit as we prepare for the coming of the new millennium. In the Philippines that millennium must definitely be marked by a renewal of the political order that resonates with the values of the Kingdom of God. That renewal can happen only through the People empowered by the Holy Spirit. The forthcoming elections are crucial for our nation. More crucial for our People is unyielding People Power in the Holy Spirit.

Philippine Episcopology — Addenda-Corrigenda, 1996

CHARLES BRANSOM, JR.

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

- N. 127 **Teopisto Alberto y Valderrama** - died 2 May 1996.
- N. 146 **Antonio Mabutas y Lloren** - resigned as Archbishop of Davao 6 November 1996.
- N. 156 **Manuel S. Salvador** - died 14 July 1996 in a traffic accident.
- N. 165 **Jose' T. Sanchez** - resigned as Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy 15 June 1996.
- N. 173 **Francisco F. Claver, S.J.** - Vicar Apostolic of Bontoc-Lagawe 2 November 1995.

- N. 176 **Reginald Edward Vincent Arliss, C.P.** - died at Holyoke, Massachusetts, 26 April 1996.
- N. 183 **Federico G. Limon, S.V.D.** - died 13 June 1996.
- N. 189 **Cirilo Almario** - resigned from Malolos 20 January 1996.
- N. 198 **Fernando Capalla** - succeeded to the Metropolitan See of Davao 6 November 1996.
- N. 204 **Leonardo Legaspi y Zamora, O.P.** - Apostolic Administrator of Malolos "sede plena" from 15 November 1995 to 20 January 1996.
- N. 239 **Diosdado Talamayan y Aenlle** - Apostolic Administrator of the Prelature of Batanes and Babuyan Islands from 23 June 1995 to 25 June 1996.
- N. 243 **Juan de Dios Pueblos y Mataflorida** - Bishop of Butuan 25 November 1995.
- N. 273 **Rolando Tria Tirona y Joven, O.C.D.** - Apostolic Administrator of Malolos, sede vacante, 20 January 1996.
- N. 276 1996, 18 May, at Kawit, parish church of Saint Mary Magdalene Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Francisco C. San Diego, Bishop of San Pablo, and Msgr. Deogracias Iniguez, Bishop of Iba, consecrated Msgr. **Pedro D. Arigo**, Titular Bishop of Mactaris, Vicar Apostolic of Palawan, born at Malate (Imus) 8 November 1938; priest 22 December 1963; named 23 February 1996.

- N. 277 1996, 7 June, at Quezon City, Metro Manila, Church of Santo Domingo Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Leonardo Legaspi y Zamora, Archbishop of Caceres and Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan y Aenelle, Archbishop of Tuguegarao, consecrated Fray **Jose P. Salazar, O.P.**, Bishop-Prelate of Batanes and Babuyan Islands, born at Manila 13 March 1937; priest 9 May 1968; named 25 April 1996.
- N. 278 1996, 31 August, at Cagayan de Oro, Saint Augustine's Cathedral Msgr. Gian Vincenzo Moreni, Titular Archbishop of Tunis in Mauretania, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Jesus B. Tuquib, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, and Msgr. Federico O. Escaler, Titular Bishop of Girus Tarasii, Prelate of Ipil, consecrated Msgr. **Antonio Javellana Ledesma, S.J.**, Coadjutor Bishop-Prelate of Ipil, born at Iloilo City (Jaro) 28 March 1943; priest 16 April 1973; named 13 June 1996.

Philippine Episcopology — Addenda-Corrigenda, 1997

CHARLES BRANSOM, JR.

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

- N. 122 **Wilhelm Josef Duschak, S.V.D.** - died at Steyl, Holland, 5 May 1997.
- N. 127 **Teopisto Alberto y Valderama** - died 2 May 1996.
- N. 134 **Gregorio Espiga e Infante, O.A.R.** - Prefect Apostolic of Palawan 8 July 1953; died at Manila 15 April 1997.
- N. 146 **Antonio Mabutas y Lloren** - resigned as Archbishop of Davao 6 November 1996.
- N. 154 **José Maria Querexeta Mendizabal, C.M.F.** - died 26 September 1997 at Zaragoza, Spain.

- N. 156 **Manuel S. Salvador** - died 14 July 1996 in a traffic accident.
- N. 165 **Jose T. Sanchez** - resigned as Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy 15 June 1996.
- N. 167 **Francisco Cruces y Raval** - died 4 October 1997.
- N. 168 **Vicente Ataviado y Tumulad** - died 4 March 1997.
- N. 173 **Francisco F. Claver, S.J.** - Vicar Apostolic of Bontoc-Lagawe 2 November 1995.
- N. 174 **Antonino Nepomuceno, O.M.I.** - killed in an airplane crash 14 February 1997 shortly after taking off from Jolo, where he had participated in the funeral of Bishop Benjamin de Jesus.
- N. 176 **Reginald Edward Vincent Arliss, C.P.** - died at Holyoke, Massachusetts, 26 April 1996.
- N. 181 **Emiliano Kulhi Madangeng** - died during the night of 5/6 May 1997.
- N. 183 **Federico G. Limon, S.V.D.** - died 13 June 1996.
- N. 189 **Cirilo Almario** - resigned from Malolos 20 January 1996.
- N. 198 **Fernando Capalla** - succeeded to the Metropolitan See of Davao 6 November 1996.
- N. 202 **Federico O. Escaler, S.J.** - resigned as Prelate of Ipil 28 June 1997.

- N. 204 **Leonardo Legaspi y Zamora, O.P.** - Apostolic Administrator of Malolos "sede plena" from 15 November 1995 to 20 January 1996.
- N. 239 **Diosdado Talamayan y Aenlle** - Apostolic Administrator of the Prelature of Batanes and Babuyan Islands from 23 June 1995 to 25 June 1996.
- N. 243 **Juan de Dios Pueblos y Matalflorida** - Bishop of Butuan 25 November 1995.
- N. 258 **Vicente Salgado y Garrucho** - resigned 30 January 1997.
- N. 265 **Benjamin de Jesus, O.M.I.** - shot to death at Jolo, in front of the Cathedral, 4 February 1997.
- N. 273 **Rolando Tria Tirona y Joven, O.C.D.** - Apostolic Administrator of Malolos, sede vacante, 20 January 1996; Bishop of Malolos 14 December 1996.
- N. 276 1996, 18 May, at Kawit, parish church of Saint Mary Magdalene Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Francisco C. San Diego, Bishop of San Pablo, and Msgr. Deogracias Iniguez, Bishop of Iba, consecrated Msgr. **Pedro D. Arigo**, Titular Bishop of Mactaris, Vicar Apostolic of Palawan, born at Malate (Imus) 8 November 1938; priest 22 December 1963; named 23 February 1996.
- N. 277 1996, 7 June, at Quezon City, Metro Manila, Church of Santo Domingo Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Leonardo Legaspi y Zamora, Archbishop of Caceres and Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan y Aenelle, Archbishop of

Tuguegarao, consecrated Fray **Jose P. Salazar**, O.P., Bishop-Prelate of Batanes and Babuyan Islands, born at Manila 13 March 1937; priest 9 May 1968; named 25 April 1996.

N. 278 1996, 31 August, at Cagayan de Oro, Saint Augustine's Cathedral Msgr. Gian Vincenzo Moreni, Titular Archbishop of Turrus in Mauretania, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Jesus B. Tuquib, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, and Msgr. Federico O. Escaler, Titular Bishop of Girus Tarasii, Prelate of Ipil, consecrated Msgr. **Antonio Javellana Ledesma, S.J.**, Coadjutor Bishop-Prelate of Ipil, born at Iloilo City (Jaro) 28 March 1943; priest 16 April 1973; named 13 June 1996; succeeded to the Prelature of Ipil 28 June 1997.

N. 279 1997, 17 March, at Tuguegarao, Cathedral of Saint Peter Msgr. Gian Vincenzo Moreni, Titular Archbishop of Turrus in Mauretania, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan y Aenlle, Archbishop of Tuguegarao, and by Msgr. Miguel Purugganan y Gatan, Bishop of Ilagan, consecrated Msgr. **Sergio Utleg y Lasam**, Coadjutor Bishop of Ilagan, born at Solano (Tuguegarao) 11 September 1943; priest 30 March 1968; named 10 February 1997.

N. 280 1997, 31 March, at Manila, Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Teodoro Buhain, Titular Bishop of Bacanaria and Auxiliary of Manila, and by Msgr. Teodoro Bacani, Titular Bishop of Gauriana and Auxiliary of Manila consecrated Msgr. **Jesse Mercado y Eugenio**, Titular Bishop of Talaptula,

Auxiliary of Manila, born at Caloocan City (Manila) 6 March 1951; priest 19 March 1977; named 25 February 1997.

- N. 281 1997, 6 August, at Tagum, Christ the King Cathedral Msgr. Gian Vincenzo Moreni, Titular Archbishop of Tunis in Mauretania, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Philip Francis Smith, Archbishop of Cotabato, and by Msgr. Wilfredo Manlapaz, Bishop of Tagum, consecrated Msgr. **Romulo Valles**, Bishop of Kidapawan, born at Maribojoc (Tagum) 10 July 1951; priest 6 April 1976; named 24 June 1997.
- N. 282 1997, 21 August, at Cebu City, Cathedral Cardinal Ricardo J. Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, assisted by Msgr. Miguel C. Cinches, Bishop of Surigao, and by Msgr. Leopoldo Tumalak y Sumaylo, Bishop of Tagbilaran, consecrated Msgr. **Arturo Bastes y Mandin, S.V.D.**, Bishop of Romblon, born at Loboc (Tagbilaran) 1 April 1944; priest 28 November 1970; named 3 July 1997.

Cases & Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, OP

REVIVAL OF SACRAMENTS

Some years ago I finished my studies for priesthood. Thanks to God I had no major difficulty in my ecclesiastical studies. However, there were some topics in Theology which I did not grasp very well, like the revival of Sacraments when they are received without granting the recipient the graces they should produce in the soul. Would it be too much for you to explain how this revival takes place? I will be very much grateful, since it will surely help me to carry out more faithfully my pastoral ministry.

A Priest

After consulting some Manuals on Sacramental Theology we can offer our readers a summary of our research, making it clear that the Church has not yet made any official declaration on this topic. Theologians are very much divided in their views. The following is simply what seems to us the most common and probable opinion on sacramental revival.

Clarification. All sacraments confer *ex opere operato*, by their very nature divine grace to those who receive them worthily. However, if there would be an *impediment* or *obstacle*, either in the minister or in the recipient, the sacramental effect may be

hindered. Such an *obstacle* or *impediment* can affect either the validity or the licitness of the sacrament, and the reception of the sacramental grace may be hindered too. On the part of the minister this happens when the person administering the sacrament lacks the necessary power to perform the sacramental rite or, possessing such power, has no intention to administer the sacrament, or is in the state of mortal sin. In the first two situations the administration of the sacrament is *invalid*, in the third it is only *illicit*. On the part of the recipient, the *obstacle* or *impediment* consists in the lack of intention to receive the sacraments, in which case its reception is *invalid* and *sacrilegious*; or in the lack of the right disposition required by the sacrament. This lack of right disposition can be either *voluntary*, rendering the reception *valid*, but *sacrilegious*; or *involuntary*, rendering the reception *valid* and *not sacrilegious*, although not fruitful as it could be.

Notion of Sacramental Revival. Sacramental Revival can be defined as the sacramental conferment of divine grace, which was hindered at the *valid* reception of the sacrament due to an existing obstacle, taking its place, however, once the obstacle is removed. This happens, for instance, when a person gives his/her mutual marital consent according to the Church's law, but is in mortal sin. He or she is validly married, but does not receive the sacramental grace due to the obstacle of mortal sin. When the existing obstacle is removed through the sacrament of Penance, the sacramental grace of the valid marriage is granted to him/her. The same thing happens when an adult receives baptism with the right intention of becoming a Christian, but does not repent, at least with attrition, of the sins committed by him/her before being baptized. Baptism is valid, imprinting in the soul the baptismal character, but it does not confer divine grace to him/her and consequently it does not erase the original sin and other personal sins committed before his/her baptism. Once this lack of repentance, existing during the reception of baptism, is removed by an act of contrition or attrition, or by a good sacramental

confession, the sacramental grace of baptism is granted to him/her with the remission of sins not remitted when he/she was baptized. (Cfr. Prummer, *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, III, nn. 33, 4; 42, a); 109).

Sacramental elements. In each sacrament a threefold element should be distinguished, namely: (a) the sacramental *sign* alone; (b) the sacramental *grace* alone; and (c) the signifying sacramental *sign* with the sacramental *grace* together.

(a) *The sacramental sign alone* is the exterior visible sign of each sacrament, like the absolution or washing with water in baptism, the anointing with oil of the sick, the imposition of hands in sacred orders, etc. This visible sign has a spiritual meaning.

(b) *The sacramental grace* is the effect of the sacrament signified by the exterior visible sign. Each sacrament produces a peculiar divine grace in the worthy recipient.

(c) *The signifying sign and the signified sacramental grace together.* In the sacraments that imprint character, this third element is the character itself.

Opinions on the Sacramental Revival. Theologians are very much divided in determining which sacrament may revive. Some hold the opinion that all sacraments revive once the obstacle existing at the moment of their reception disappears; others, however, reject the revival of all sacraments. There are some who affirm that only those sacraments imprinting character may revive; others believe that only baptism revives. There are some who say that all sacraments revive, except the Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance. Still others defend the revival of all sacraments, except Penance; and there are those who deny the revival of the Holy Eucharist only.

In view of such diversity of opinions, it is hard to affirm with certainty when sacramental revival happens. No official

declaration of the Church has been pronounced. In this essay we adhere to the opinion which seems more common and probable.

We can say, therefore, that:

1. Sacraments *invalidly* received will never revive, even when the obstacle existing at their valid reception disappears. This conclusion is admitted by almost all theologians. Obviously a sacrament which never really existed can never revive. This happens, for instance, when sacraments are invalidly received for lack of intention either in the minister or in the recipient.

2. Sacraments that are *validly* administered but received *with an obstacle* incompatible with sacramental grace, may revive. Sacraments by their very nature produce divine grace, unless there exists an obstacle hindering its reception. Most theologians admit this conclusion. They explain this by the example of fire which by its very nature burns. But wet timber hinders to produce its effect; only when the humidity of timber disappears, the flame easily consumes it.

3. Sacraments that *imprint character* revive once the obstacle to the reception of sacramental grace disappears. The reason is that the sacraments by their very nature produce their sacramental effects totally, not partially, if there exists no obstacle to their complete efficacy. Character, considered as a proper and peculiar effect of Baptism, Confirmation and Sacred Orders, requires that sacramental grace, common effect of all sacraments, be produced also when the obstacle, present at the moment of reception of the sacrament, ceases to exist.

Moreover, the impossibility of receiving again these sacraments in one's life due to their indelible character calls for their revival, too, considering the merciful Providence of God, who will not surely leave those who have received these sacraments to be

without sacramental grace. This is most true for Baptism which is necessary for salvation, and Priesthood necessary too for a worthy fulfillment of ministry.

St. Thomas Aquinas expressly admits (III, 69, 10 and 2 um) the sacramental revival in the case of *Baptism*, based on its character. If Baptism would not revive how may original sin be remitted? Baptism cannot be repeated and the sacrament of Penance remits only personal sins, not original sin.

The same can be applied to *Confirmation* and *Sacred Orders*. Their revival seems to conform with Divine Mercy. Both sacraments may not be repeated. Those who received Confirmation without sacramental grace would remain deprived of the sacramental help to resist temptations. Likewise, those who received Sacred Orders with an obstacle would be deprived of the sacramental grace to carry out faithfully their sacred ministry.

4. The sacraments of *Anointing of the Sick and Marriage* may revive, too, once the obstacle of sin, present at their reception, disappears.

The Sacrament of *Anointing* gives the sick person spiritual comfort signified by the anointing and the words used in its administration, signifying also the sacramental grace which erases sin and heals the wounds and remnants of sin. Now, the reception of the Anointing of the Sick is restricted. Its repetition is not optional, but regulated by the Church's law. This means that persons anointed with an obstacle would be frequently deprived of the sacramental grace, if the revival would not take place once the obstacle to its salutary effect disappears.

The reception of the sacrament of *Marriage* cannot also be repeated as long as the marital bond subsists. St. Thomas (Supplement, 49, ad 5 um) points out the similarity of marriage with those sacraments imprinting character by reason of the

indissolubility of the marital bond. The revival of marriage is necessary as in the sacraments imprinting character; otherwise those validly married with an obstacle to the sacramental grace would be deprived of the grace needed for the right fulfillment of their conjugal duties during their whole married life.

5. *Holy Communion* and the sacrament of *Penance*, however, cannot revive, because, once they have been fruitlessly received, nothing remains out of which their revival might be effected. In Holy Communion, once the sacramental species have been consumed by the sacrilegious communicant, nothing remains as a basis upon which a revival might be effected. In the sacrament of Penance, if the penitent feels sorry for his sins, and is absolved, he receives the sacramental grace; if he, however, does not feel sorry for the sins committed or does not confess them when necessary, the sacrament is invalid, leaving nothing on which its revival might be based and sustained.

Conditions to be fulfilled for the revival. Admitting the possibility of revival of some sacraments, what conditions are required in order to receive the divine grace through the sacramental revival?

1. It should be admitted as a principle *for any revival*, that the disposition required for a fruitful reception of the sacrament should be present at the moment when the sacrament revives.

2. When the reception of the sacrament is *valid*, but *sacrilegious*, the sacrament does not revive until the state of grace is recovered through sacramental absolution or through an act of perfect contrition with a resolution to make a good confession, as soon as possible.

3. When *after the valid*, but fruitless sacramental reception, the person concerned *committed a mortal sin*, the sacrament does not revive until the state of grace is recovered through the

sacrament of Penance or an act of perfect contrition with the resolution to make a good confession, as soon as possible.

4. When a *sacrament of the living* does not grant divine grace because of the recipient's inadvertence of an existing obstacle during its reception, it will not revive until the state of grace is recovered through the sacrament of Confession. This can happen when a faithful, in making his confession, inadvertently does not have at least sufficient attrition, being thus invalidly absolved and receives the sacrament of Confirmation in mortal sin. The Confirmation will be valid, but it will not confer him the sacramental grace.

5. When the sacraments of *Baptism* and *Anointing of the sick* are validly received, but without granting divine grace due to an existing impediment of which the recipient was unaware, it seems that an act of attrition is enough for their revival (cfr. Prummer, *ibid.*, n. 43, 4).

We reiterate the warning: There has been no pronouncement issued by the Church on this matter, as far as we know.

Homiletic and Bibliarasal Pointers

May • June 1998

EFREN RIVERA, OP

May 3, 1998

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR C

JOHN 10:27-30

LIFE-GIVING SHEPHERD

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Year after year the liturgy of the Fourth Sunday of Easter invites us to think of Jesus as our Good Shepherd who gave his life for us. Year C takes the Gospel reading from the second part of John chapter 10, where Jesus is in a situation of confrontation with Jewish leaders. The liturgy, however, disregards the confrontation. For its purposes, it is enough for us to gain a deeper understanding of our relationship to our Good Shepherd.

Focus Points. (1) V. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me... Jesus is the Good Shepherd of people who "belong" to him. These are the people he "knows". He has chosen them, he loves them (and, in the post-resurrection

situation, he gives them his Holy Spirit). They reciprocate by following him. This presupposes that they also know him.

(2) V. 28. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one shall snatch them out of my hand. As explained in Jn 17:3 eternal life is knowing the only true God and the one whom he sent, Jesus Christ. Since Jesus (with the help of the Holy Spirit) gives this knowledge, he gives eternal life. It is a reality that people can experience on earth, but its perfection will be in heaven. Jesus gives the assurance that people who know him, reciprocate his love and follow him in the present life, will be with him also in the next life, that is to say, "they will never perish" They will walk with him through the "dark valley" of death but they need not "fear evil" because Jesus will be "be at their side" with his "rod and staff that will give them courage" (see Ps 23:4). With Jesus they will be victorious over death and live forever.

(3) V. 29-30. My father is greater than all, in what he has given me, and there is no snatching out of his hand. The father and I are one. If we go on and read v. 31, it is clear that the Jews understood the statement in v. 30 as a claim to divinity, as indeed it is. However, what is emphasized is not the "ontological" unity of the Son and the Father but the unity of Jesus and God (and the Holy Spirit) in working for the salvation of people.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. In Rom 8:9, St. Paul says, "If anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." Moreover, in Rm 8:14 he says, "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." The Holy Spirit is our "other" Good Shepherd just as

he is our "other" Paraclete (see Jn 14:16), Jesus being in the first place the Good Shepherd and Paraclete.

./ Pointer for sharing: Do you have experiences that show that you were "led" by Christ or by the Holy Spirit? Share your answer with your small group.

2. We are alive when we experience something. It is not speculative knowledge but knowledge-that-is-the-fruit-of-experience that Jesus equates with life. We experience eternal life when, through his Holy Spirit, Jesus makes us aware of his presence...when we know that we are doing something *with Jesus* and not only for Jesus.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Do you have any recent experience that can qualify as an experience of "eternal life" understood as explained above? Share your answer with your small group.

3. The whole Trinity looks after our salvation. It is the Holy Spirit who guards us so that we would not be snatched (by the devil) from intimate life with Jesus Christ and with the Father.

3.1 Pointer for sharing: Did you ever have a nightmare in which you were being snatched from Christ or from God by the devil? Share your answer with your small group.

Childhood Nightmare

I am now sixty-one years old but I can still vividly remember a nightmare I had when I was perhaps five or six years old.

I was running a very high fever and I was under a mosquito net. Suddenly, an army of black people as small as ants were walking all over me and tying me with ropes. It was like that story about Lilliput in Gulliver's Travels when diminutive people put threads all over the hero and held him motionless. Only, in

my case, the little black people were pulling me away. For some reason I knew they were going to bring me to hell. I screamed and woke up.

That was the turning point in my fever. It subsided. I survived. Until now I am very grateful to the Lord that those small black people were not able to carry me off to hell.

PS. This being the year of the Holy Spirit I realize that I owe my salvation not only to Jesus Christ and to the Father, but also to the Holy Spirit. He is my "other" Good Shepherd!

May 10, 1998

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR C

(Gospel: Beginning of the Farewell Discourse of Jesus after the Last Supper)

JOHN 13:31-35
NEW STANDARD OF LOVE

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Today is less than 25 days before Pentecost — hence the Easter season is half over. Fittingly, today and next Sunday, as a medium range preparation for the celebration of Ascension and Pentecost, the liturgy provides us with Gospel Readings taken from the Farewell Discourse of Jesus in the Gospel according to John.

Focus Points. (1) V. 31 Once Judas had left (the cenacle), Jesus said: "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. This statement is enigmatic until we realize that it is the Holy Spirit who, working secretly, glorifies both Jesus and the Father. How? The Spirit moves Jesus to accept his death on the cross for the salvation of humankind. He accepts it and offers it to the Father as his ultimate act of obedience. It is like the moment of the signing of a contract. It is the turning point

that Jesus, in the Synoptics, will mark with the institution of the Eucharist.

(2) **V. 33** My children, I am not to be with you much longer. You will look for me, but I say to you now what I once said to the Jews: 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' "Children" is an endearing word for "disciples", see v. 35. Jesus tells his dearest friends that soon, he is going to die. His words are clear enough, but the thought was so preposterous to the disciples that they turned a deaf ear.

(3) **V. 34-35** I give you a new commandment: Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other. This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love for one another. What makes the Christian commandment of love new is not love *per se* but the new standard of love in v. 34 c-d: "such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for one another."

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. The glorification of Jesus is a work that the Father accomplishes through the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament it is the Father who raised Jesus to life. (In catechetical instruction we usually say that Jesus, by the power of his divinity, rose from the dead. This is like saying that he raised himself from the dead). However, this gets to be known by the disciples through apparitions. It is the Spirit who gave Jesus a body that can pass through locked doors and yet could be touched, for example, by Thomas the Apostle, and can suddenly appear and disappear. Moreover, the glorification of Jesus on earth continues through the work of the Church. This work is guided by the Holy Spirit.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: What was the first glorification of Jesus that you witnessed? Share your answer*with your **small** group.

2. Jesus is at the same time present to us **and not** present to us. This is not a contradiction because each time a **different** aspect is considered. Jesus is physically absent. Spiritually, he is present. For this spiritual presence to be relevant to us, we have to make an effort. We have to focus our attention. For unbelievers, this effort is just a work of the imagination. For believers, it is a reaching out to another world — **IT IS TRANSCENDENTAL** — an effort for which one needs the help of the Holy Spirit.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Do you find it easy or difficult to put yourself in the presence of Jesus? In either case, what could be the reason? Share your answer with your small group.

3. It is possible for us to reach the new standard of loving as Jesus loved only through the help of the Holy Spirit.

3.1 Pointer for sharing: Have there been times when you found it impossible to love as Jesus loved? What did you do? Share your answer with your small group.

Measuring Post

We are six brothers and sisters in the family. When we were young, we had a "measuring post" at home. It had little scratches and marks and dates and initials to mark our growth in height, especially on our birthdays. We would check ourselves against our brothers and sisters and ask, "How much have I grown?"

Anyone can realize the advantage and interest of such a record. It us children stand, walk and sit tall and straight. It made us want to eat health foods. It made us realize the

importance of rest. It made us eager to show progress in bodily growth.

Jesus Christ has provided us, his brothers and sisters, with a "measuring post" — his new commandment of love. It is good to measure ourselves at this post "til we form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature" (Eph 4:13).

May 17, 1998

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR C

JOHN 14:23-29

TRINITARIAN INDWELLING

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Paraclete," which means "Advocate" or "Counsellor." Some people may have difficulty in grasping what this really means. Understandably, most people prefer to think of the Holy Spirit as "Love".

Focus Points. (1) V. 23 "Anyone who loves me will be true to my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him and make out dwelling place with him." If "love" in this verse is understood as indicative of the Holy Spirit, we have a text about the Trinitarian indwelling in the disciple who loves Jesus and keeps his commandments.

(2) V. 26 The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will instruct you in everything and remind you of all that I told you." The Greek word, *parakletos* can be anglicized as "Paraclete" or translated as "Advocate" or "Counsellor." The Holy Spirit will do his work for the disciples both individually and collectively. His assistance to the apostolic "college" will be given in specially significant moments, those

that have the character of turning points of the Church's history, as the decision to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and the decision to treat Jews and Gentiles equally.

(3) V. 27 'Peace' is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you; I do not give it to you as the world gives peace. Do not be distressed or fearful. Christian peace translates into serenity of mind for today, and courage in the heart to face the challenges of tomorrow.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. We still find people who profess surprise when they are told that God is near to them and can be found in their innermost being. They have been brought up with the idea that God is far away, up there in the skies, "in heaven," looking at them from a distance and they can meet him only after death. It is about time that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we make it common knowledge among Christians that the whole Trinity dwells in them if they love Jesus and keep his commandments.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: When did you first learn about the indwelling of the Trinity in your innermost self? Share your answer with your small group.

2. The full revelation of God and his plan of salvation for humankind was given to us through the person, deeds and words of Jesus. **REVELATION IS ALREADY COMPLETE.** However, the Church, cannot, at any given moment, "remember everything." This will be done in the course of time, as the need arises. This will be the work of the Holy Spirit. Besides, there will also be the task of applying revelation to changing times and circumstances — what theologians call "inculturation" This, too, has to be done with the help of the Holy Spirit.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Have you experienced being reminded by the Holy Spirit of an important teaching that you needed? Share your answer with your small group.

3. Jewish "shalom"— the sum total of all the Lord's blessings to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — is already such a great thing. What else can be added to it? The answer is that Jewish "shalom" did not include the gift of the Holy Spirit — at least not in the way Christ could bestow this gift after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit is the supreme gift that comes with the Peace that Christ alone can bestow.

3.1 Pointer for sharing: Have you experienced that Peace whereby the Holy Spirit helped you maintain serenity in your mind and courage in your heart? Share your answer with your small group.

Parable of the Alarm Clock

Tom was one of those who sleep heavily in the morning. He would never have got to school if his mother had not called him and made sure he was really up. When he graduated he went to the big city to get a job, and he lived in a boarding house. His father's parting gift was an alarm clock.

Tom said, "That's fine. I shall be able to get up now."

In his new room he put the clock on his bedroom table, but the first night he forgot to set the alarm. Next morning, he overslept and was an hour late for work. The very same thing happened the next night, and the next. His employer told him, "This won't do. I'm giving you a warning. If this happens again, you'll be dismissed."

Tom didn't want this to happen, so that night he remembered to set his alarm clock. Next morning it woke him up, but he

thought he would have another five minutes in bed; he dozed off again, and, luckily, woke just in time to rush off to work without any breakfast.

"What a fool I am" he thought. "I've got an alarm clock, but it's no use unless it's used" So he made up his mind to set the alarm every night before undressing, and every morning to get out of bed as soon as it wakened him. He stuck to this and it worked.

The Holy Spirit — in fact the Holy Trinity dwelling within us — can work only when we cooperate.

Adapted from Drinkwater and Frank Mihalic

May 24, 1998

ASCENSION, YEAR C

LUKE 24: 46-53
OUR GREATEST BLESSING

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Luke alone, in his gospel, provides us with some details of Christ's Ascension, and even so these details are few. What is important is that Christ, though now invisible, continues to lead mankind to salvation through the Church, the community of his disciples.

Focus Points. (1) V. 47-48 In his name penance for the remission of sins is to be preached to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of this. People must repent of their sins so that they could be reconciled with God, thus availing themselves of the redemption accomplished for them by Jesus Christ. For this to happen, they must first hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. To preach it is the mission of the Church,

whose core consists of the *witnesses* who were with Jesus throughout his ministry.

(2) **V. 49** See, I send down upon you the promise of my Father. Remain here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "*the promise of my Father*" and "*the power from on high.*"

(3) **V. 50-53** Then he led them out near Bethany, and with hands upraised, blessed them. As he blessed, he left them, and was taken up to heaven. They fell down to do him reverence, then returned to Jerusalem filled with joy. There they were to be found in the temple constantly, speaking the praises of God. This description recalls the "ascension" of the ancient prophet Elijah who was "*taken up to heaven*" by a flaming chariot and flaming horses (see 2 Kgs 2:11). However, the contrasts between the two events are even more striking than any similarity. To start with, the ascension of Jesus happened in the mountainous region of Bethany, not close to the Jordan river, where Elijah's ascension took place. Then, Jesus had a group of disciples to witness his ascension, whereas Elijah only had Elisha. A third point is the blessing given by Jesus, something that Elijah did not do. Fourthly, as a reaction to the ascension, the disciples of Christ "*fell down to do him reverence, then returned to Jerusalem filled with joy*" In contrast, Elisha's homage to his master consists of words, and he tore his garments in two, a symbolic action expressing grief. Most of all, there was no flaming chariot and flaming horses in the ascension of Jesus. The flame will come later, and instead of bearing Jesus up, it will come to rest upon the disciples (see Acts 2:3). Moreover, the whirlwind (2 Kgs 2:11) will be noted at Pentecost (Acts 2:2) not at the Ascension.

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

1. When St. Dominic founded the "Order of Preachers" in the thirteenth century to proclaim the Gospel to people, it was known as an "Order of Penance" Dominic hit the nail on the head when he insisted that penitence is to be undertaken by preachers and their preaching, at least initially, must take the form of an invitation to penance. The Catholic Church Catechism says that even the ministers of the Church need to repent for their sins. The Church is holy not because its members are blameless but because it has the power to forgive sins (see CCC n. 827).

1.1 Pointer for sharing: Who are the great preachers you have known? Who among them were holy persons — saints? Share your answer with your small group.

2. We observe Ascension and Pentecost as two separate feasts but in reality they are very closely connected. Ascension simply marks the end of Jesus's earthly ministry and the beginning of his heavenly ministry, which he exercises mainly by guiding his Church through the Holy Spirit.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Do you exercise any apostolate or ministry in the Church? Do you see it as a participation in the "promise of the Father" and the "power from on high"? Share your answer with your small group.

3. The "BLESSING" that Jesus gave us (or his disciples) at his Ascension, and by extension on Pentecost, is the greatest blessing we have ever received from him. In the Bible, a blessing empowers a person. We have been empowered by Christ to take his place to minister to our sisters and brothers for their salvation.

3.1 *Pointer for sharing:* Do you feel "empowered" by Christ? Share your answer with your small group.

Great Preachers

I count myself fortunate for having known some great and holy preachers such as Fulton Sheen and Patrick Peyton. Perhaps I should also include John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. However, the greatest, to me, was a woman: Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

I was once waiting for a plane connection from Bangkok to Manila, very early in the morning. I had to wait for three hours and at first I was the only person in the huge waiting lounge. Then, Mo. Teresa was ushered in by a big Indian man, who immediately left her. So I approached Mo. Teresa, whom I had previously met at the University of Santo Tomas. I struck up a conversation and learned that she had to wait for the same plane as I, and she was told that it will be delayed for about two hours.

In a short while, the big Indian man came back and told Mo. Teresa that the VIP lounge was ready for her. So, I started to take my leave because I was just an ordinary passenger and not a VIP. But Mo. Teresa insisted that I join her.

We had more than four hours of waiting before us, and so we talked about many things. After a while Mo. Teresa asked to be excused to say some prayers; When she finished, I asked to see her prayer book, and she said she had an extra copy which she was going to give to me. I perused it and noticed that it consisted of very ordinary, traditional Catholic prayers and hymns. Mo; Teresa remarked that her Sisters went through the whole book every day, especially during their daily Holy Hour. She invited me to join her and her Sisters for Holy Hour at their Tayuman residence in Manila and said I could bring my Catholic Bible Ministry School students.

Once back in Manila, I relayed the good news to my students. At the appointed day and hour, we were there in force at the house of the Missionaries of Charity because the future Lay Ministers of the Word were thrilled at the prospect of a close encounter with a "living saint."

We were all very impressed by the atmosphere of the convent. It was a penitential atmosphere which at the same time exuded peace and quiet joy. The Sisters, including Mo. Teresa, went about barefooted. All of them had gone through a very demanding day, at the end of which they partook of a very spartan meal and they still had time for a Holy Hour.

After the Holy Hour Mo. Teresa joined us so she could share some of her thoughts with us. We felt at home with her and she did not mind our taking pictures.

I don't recall much of what Mo. Teresa said. It was her person and austere way of living that, for me, was the greatest sermon.

May 31, 1998
PENTECOST, YEAR C

JOHN 20:19-23
SPIRIT OF PEACE AND FORGIVENESS

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Since the Acts of the Apostles and not any of the four Gospels tell us about the occurrence that we celebrate on Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, the time reference of the liturgy's Gospel Readings for this feast is to the period when Jesus had not yet ascended to his father. This is a little matter, since the important teaching is that **THE RISEN AND GLORIFIED SAVIOR IS THE**

ONE WHO BESTOWS THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE CHURCH IN A WAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT HAD NEVER BEEN BESTOWED BEFORE ON ANY GROUP OR PROPHET EXCEPT JESUS HIMSELF.

Focus Points. (1) V. 19 On the evening of that first day of the week, even though the disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood before them. "Peace be with you," he said. "Shalom" is a common Jewish greeting but Jesus gives it a new meaning. For the Jews, it encapsulated all God's blessings to Abraham and his descendants. From Resurrection day thereafter, for Jesus and his disciples, it means the fruits of the redemption gained by Jesus for all humankind by his passion, death and resurrection.

(2) V. 21-23 "Peace be with you," he said again. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them; if you hold them bound, they are held bound." The giving of the Holy Spirit is connected by John to 1) Peace, 2) Mission, 3) the power to forgive or bind. These are internal and invisible values. In Luke's Pentecostal giving of the Holy Spirit emphasis is on the charismatic gifts that make the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, so to say, palpable.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. People, especially those exposed to mass media, tend to trivialize everything, and so it is not surprising that such a meaningful Jewish word as "shalom" has also been trivialized. Jesus, for his part, deepens the meaning of this word and makes it part of the vocabulary of the "new world" or "new life" he has inaugurated through his Resurrection.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: What do you think of the franciscan prayer, "Make me a channel of your peace"? Has it exercised any influence in your life? Share your answer with your small group.

2. In our days, Pope John Paul II has been very strong in pointing out the intimate connections between Peace, Mission and Forgiveness, as works of the Holy Spirit blowing in a special way in the Church.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: It is true that "the Spirit blows where it wills" and all religions and cultures have experienced some kind of renewal or revival. But in a special way, the Spirit has been blowing in the Church. Have you experienced this? Share your answer with your small group.

Good-will Ambassador

On his appointment as a UNESCO goodwill ambassador, cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, a former Russian exile, said: "I have gone through many disappointments and misfortunes but this has made me a happy man... I have forgiven those who have hurt me."

Perspectives
Newsweek March 23, 1998

June 7, 1998
TRINITY, YEAR C

JOHN 16:12-15
THE SPIRIT BELONGS TO THE FATHER
AND TO JESUS

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

The Holy Spirit is the mysterious Link that unites the Father and the Son in the life of the Holy Trinity. This Trinitarian Life is the supreme dynamic truth — containing all others — that all people should strive to grasp fully (in the measure possible to creatures) and share in.

Focus Points. (1) V. 13 When he conies, however, being the Spirit of truth he will guide you to all truth. Through his person or life, his deeds and words, Jesus had already revealed all truth to his disciples. After a manner of speaking, he had created a DEPOSIT OF CATHOLIC (I.E. UNIVERSAL, TOTAL, FULLY ENCOMPASSING) TRUTH. The disciples in his company and all disciples who will join his Church in the future, cannot, however, always have the truths in this "deposit" before them. The Holy Spirit will have to recall them to their minds as needs arise. Moreover, the Spirit will guide the "homogenous" development of this deposit, as the need will arise to INCULTURATE the revealed teachings in different parts of the world so that all people could be led to all truth.

(2) V. 15 All that the Father has belongs to me. That is why I said that what he (the Paraclete) will announce to you he will have from me. This verse makes the passage Trinitarian. Let us notice that the Trinity is expressed in the Bible

not in "ontological" or philosophical terms but in what they do for human salvation.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. Some of the lay faithful manifest a sense of inferiority when fundamentalist Christians claim they have the "Full Gospel" of Jesus Christ. Yet, this has been the claim of the Catholic Church since its foundation, and precisely one reason why our Church is called "Catholic" is that it does not choose from the teachings of Jesus but embraces them fully, and it is aware that it has been gifted by Christ with the Holy Spirit that will lead it to "all truth."

1.1 Pointer for sharing: With the publication of the post-Vatican II "Catholic Church Catechism" we now have a modern manual that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, will lead us to ALL TRUTH. What is your experience in studying this catechism? Share your answer with your small group.

2. The Trinity is a Mystery not so much because it is a puzzle but because the Father, Son and Holy Spirit work in a hidden or mysterious way to bring the human race to salvation.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Has your knowledge of the Trinity helped you to be a better person? Share your answer with your small group.

Unbelievable!

A wealthy American businessman in a mid-western town had signs printed and placed all over the town. They stated that if any man in the town who owed debts, would come to his office on a certain day between nine and twelve in the morning, he would pay the debts.

Naturally, that promise was the talk of the town. Very few believed it. They thought there was a catch somewhere.

The day came. The businessman sat in his office at nine. By ten, no one had come. At eleven a man was seen walking up and down outside, glancing occasionally at the office door. Finally, he opened it, put his head in, and asked, "Is it true that you will pay any man's debt?"

"That's right," the rich man replied. "Are you in debt?"

"I certainly am," the caller answered.

"Do you have along the bills or statements to prove it?"

The visitor produced the documents and the businessman wrote out a cheque covering all of them. Before twelve o'clock two other men came, and also had their debts paid.

People outside could not believe it... but there was no time left for them to have their bills paid.

If people don't believe the goodness of man, how can they believe in the goodness of a mysterious, Triune God?

Tonne and Frank Mihalic

June 14, 1998
CORPUS CHRISTI

LUKE 9:11-17
FOOD PRODUCED BY A MYSTERIOUS POWER

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

The "Spirit of Jesus," the Holy Spirit, was at work both at the multiplication of loaves and fishes to feed around fifteen

thousand people (counting men, women and children), and at the Last Supper when Jesus changed bread and wine into his Body and Blood.

Focus Points. (1) V. 11 Jesus spoke to the crowds of the reign of God, and he healed all who were in need of healing. Jesus spoke about the reign of God and healed people before giving them something to eat. This seems to be a prioritization of the needs of the people to whom Jesus directs his ministry.

(2) V. 13-14 "Why do you not give them something to eat yourselves?" They replied, "We have nothing but five loaves and two fish. Or shall we ourselves go and buy food for all these people?" (There were about five thousand men.) The disciples thought that Jesus was so engrossed in his teaching and healing that he paid no attention to the need of the people for food, and so they came to remind him about this. Jesus shows that he does care about feeding the people but he challenges his disciples to take this as their duty. They excused themselves, however, protesting that they are quite incapable of doing such a tremendous task compared to their few resources. As we would say today, they didn't believe in such miracles (although right before their eyes Jesus was doing miracles of healing). Jesus' rule was, "Ask, and you shall receive." However, out of compassion for the crowds, he did not wait for them to ask for food before he started doing something about their problem. Moreover, he probably wanted to give a "sign" of his messiahship and the opportunity was excellent.

(3) V. 16-17. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven, pronounced a blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to his disciples for distribution to the crowd. They all ate until they had enough. What they had left, over and above, filled twelve baskets. A mysterious power, the Holy Spirit, was at work when Jesus started breaking the loaves and the fishes. It was then that these materials

started to multiply. There is no need to think that all of a sudden there was a heap of bread and fishes in front of Jesus. The broken loaves and fishes were placed in baskets and the apostles continued to break them as they distributed them to the people, and the materials continued to multiply mysteriously (by the power of the Holy Spirit). <> It may be good at this point to remember the words of a song: "There is *enough* for everyone's need, but not for anyone's greed." That is the rule of thumb for the practice of social justice.

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. We should prioritize our needs and give highest priority to our need to be instructed about the reign of God.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: Have you felt the need to be instructed about the reign of God? What did you do about it? Share your answer with your small group.

2. We should read the Gospel narrative seeking for an application to our own situation today. One of the important lessons is that, in an emergency situation, it is the duty of church leaders to provide material food for the people. A second lesson is that, in such a situation, church leaders should not hesitate to sacrifice their few resources. Their generosity will call forth the generosity of other people. A third lesson is that, after we have done all in our power to do, we should pray to the Lord for a miracle. A miracle did happen in the Gospel Reading for today.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Has Christian life in your community stagnated because of the failure of the community to attend to the material needs of its poorer members? Share your answer with your small group.

3. Traditionally, the multiplication of loaves and fish have been taken as a symbol of the Eucharist (although there was no fish at the Last Supper). The evident basis for this is the similarity of the gestures of Jesus at the two events: He took (the bread and fish / the bread)... raised his eyes to heaven, pronounced a blessing over them...broke them...gave them to his disciples... This traditional linkage of Jesus' compassion for the hungry and his Last Supper Eucharist should remind us that, every time we celebrate Mass we should also do something for the poor, like making a collection of funds for their upliftment. <> We should also think of the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit at work both at the multiplication of loaves and fish and at the Last Supper, when the bread and wine was changed to the body and blood of Christ. At Holy Mass, the priest prays: "Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Euch. Prayer II; see also E.P. III and TV).

3.1 Pointers for sharing: a) Did you ever wonder why Jesus chose a meal to convey his deep love for all of us, rich and poor alike? <> b) During the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, do you follow the words of the priest and think of the Holy Spirit as the Power that will change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ? <> Share your answer with your small group.

Take and Give

It is interesting to note that Jesus multiplied bread and fishes in a place near the Sea of Galilee rather than a place near the Dead Sea. These two seas in Palestine are very different, although the same river, the Jordan, flows into both of them.

The Sea of Galilee is a large lake with clean fresh water. Fish and people swim in it. It is surrounded by green fields and gardens. Galilee is a scenic region largely because of this lake.

The Dead Sea lives up to its name. Everything about it is dead. The water is so salty that if you accidentally splash it into your eyes you will need medical treatment. This sea has no fish nor aquatic plants. Nothing grows along its banks. No one wants to live anywhere near its unpleasant smell.

What makes the difference between these two bodies of water in the same geographical area? Just this: one receives and gives; the other receives and keeps. The Jordan river flows into the top of the Sea of Galilee and out the bottom. The lake uses the water and then passes it on for others to use. By contrast, the Jordan rivers flows into the Dead Sea and never gets out again because it is way down below the level of the Red Sea, which could have been its natural outlet. The Dead Sea selfishly keeps the water it receives. This makes it dead. It gets and never gives.

The unnamed source of the five loaves of bread and two fish from which Jesus produced enough to feed about fifteen thousand people (counting the women and children) is like the Sea of Galilee. He gave what he had. Then Jesus made sure that there was enough for all.

June 21, 1998

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

LUKE 9:18-24
PRAYERFUL MESSIAH

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

Luke presents Jesus to us as a man who prays when faced with decisive moments in his life. One such moment is presented to us in today's Gospel Reading.

Focus Points. (1) 18 One day when Jesus was praying in seclusion and his disciples were with him, he put the

question to them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" In his prayer Jesus gets in touch with his inner self as well as with the Father and the Spirit who dwell in him (see Jn 14:10-11; 16-17). He probably spent the night in prayer, and early in the morning he posed a question to his disciples to start the final episode in the first part of his ministry which was spent in instructing the crowds and showing them his compassion, mainly in Galilee.

(2) V. 20-21 "But you — who do you say that I am?" he asked them. Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God." He strictly forbade them to tell this to anyone. The disciples were expected to know better than the crowds because, as disciples, they shared the life of the Master day and night. Still, they did not answer the question in unison .but through a spokesman, Peter. Possibly, the disciples' belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, up to this point, varied in degrees of firmness. Peter, moved by the Holy Spirit as a result of Christ's prayer, steps forward to do the task of firming up the other disciples' belief — something that Jesus will expressly assign to him later : "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. You in turn must strengthen your brothers" (Lk 22:32)

(3) V. 22 "The Son of Man," he said, "must first endure many sufferings, be rejected by the elders, the high priests and the scribes, and be put to death, and then be raised up on the third day." V. 23-24 Jesus said to all: "whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." Christ's prediction of his passion and death was meant for his disciples, while his invitation to cross-carrying was directed to all. The two pronouncements are juxtaposed by Luke (Matthew and Mark separates them with the episode of Peter's remonstrations, see Mt 16:22-23; Mk 8:32-33) to indicate that Jesus leads

his followers by giving them his personal example. His followers can do what he requires them to do because he has led the way. <> We should notice that in the light of Luke's juxtaposition, saving one's life after losing it for the sake of Jesus is parallel to Christ's resurrection on the third day. We save our lives by participating in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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

1. Jesus is never the victim of circumstances. He takes charge of his life. Today's gospel shows that he was the one who posed questions to his disciples, and not the other way around. Jesus is able to take charge of his life because before he makes any important move, he spends the night in prayer, that is, he gets in touch with his inner self, with his Father, and with his Holy Spirit.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: Were there important moments in your life that you prepared for by spending the night in prayer? Share your answer with your small group.

2. It is the Holy Spirit who stirs up sentiments of faith, hope and charity in our hearts. It is also the Holy Spirit who moves leaders to do their part as our leaders. Both internally and through spirit-filled leaders, we are led to do the right thing at the right time.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Were there crucial times in your life when your inner sentiments were voiced out by a leader? Share your answer with your small group.

3. Some people merely exist. They do not really live because their life has no meaning. It is the Holy Spirit moving in us, urging us to imitate Jesus in serving others, that gives meaning to our life.

3.1 Pointer for sharing: Do you think of Christian life negatively — don't do this... don't do that; or, suffer this and suffer that — or positively, as a life of service to others in imitation of Jesus Christ? Share your answer with your small group.

The Legend of the Candle

One evening a man took a small candle from a box, lit it and began to climb a long winding stairway.

"Where are we going?" asked the candle.

"We're going up higher than the house to show ships the way to the harbor."

"But no ship in the harbor could ever see my light," said the candle. "It is so very small."

"If your light is small," the man said, "just keep burning brightly and leave the rest to me."

When they reached the top of the long steps, they came to a large lamp. The man then took the little candle and lit the lamp. Soon the great polished reflectors behind the lamp sent beams of light out across miles of sea. The little flame from the candle could work wonders after all!

Peter's confession of faith, consisting of only four words, was like the little flame of the small candle.

Adapted from Purnell Bailey and Frank Mihalic

June 28, 1998

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

**LUKE 9:51-62
FIRMLY RESOLVED**

A. STUDY OF THE TEXT / BIBLIARASAL STEP 3

The Holy Spirit firms up Jesus' decision to give his life for the salvation of the human race by undergoing passion, death on the cross, and resurrection.

Focus Points. (1) V. 51-53 As the time approached when he was to be taken from this world, he firmly resolved to proceed toward Jerusalem, and sent messengers on ahead of him. These entered a Samaritan town to prepare his passing through, but the Samaritans would not welcome him because he was on his way to Jerusalem. Literally, in Greek, Luke says that "the days of Jesus were being completed for his assumption..." More simply we could say that Jesus was preparing for his KAIROS (to borrow a pauline term in Rm 13:11, 2 Cor 6:2). The New Jerusalem Bible says: "The "time" is the eschatological era or 'Last Days', introduced by Christ's death and resurrection and co-extensive with the age of the Church on earth, the age of salvation" o The firm resolution shown by Jesus here is the same as that which he showed when tempted by satan (see Lk 4:1-13). It is a resolution firmed up by communion with the Holy Spirit in prayer.

(2) Y. 54-56 When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, would you not have us call down fire from heaven to destroy them?" He turned toward them only to reprimand them. Then they set off for another town. Jesus is the New Elijah (see the liturgy's First Reading from 1 Kgs 19:16-21; and see also 2 Kgs 1:10) but because he was meek

and humble of heart his thoughts were far from those of James and John. The refusal of the Samaritan town to show hospitality and the reaction of James and John can be considered one of the "temptations" that Jesus experienced together with his disciples, see Lk 22:28.

(3) V. 57-62. ⁵⁸ "The foxes have lairs, the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." V. 60 Let the dead bury their dead; come away and proclaim the kingdom of God." V. 62 "Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God." Jesus sometimes leaves it totally up to people to decide whether they will be his disciples or not, as in verses 57-58 of the passage, since he limits himself to observing that his way of life entails certain hardships. Sometimes however, as in verses 59-60, he presses people to become evangelists. In the third example (verses 61-62), he clarifies that when the KAIROS or appointed time of the Kingdom comes, his followers cannot excuse themselves with "ifs" and "buts."

B. REFLECTION POINTS

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

1. A firm resolution to undertake one's destiny in life has to be prepared for with long hours of reflection and prayer. Leaders, more than simple followers, must engage in such quiet times.

1.1 Pointer for sharing: Have your quiet times of prayer helped you make the right decisions in your life? Share your answer with your small group.

2. At this stage in their career, James and John had not yet attained the same "vibes" as those of Jesus. They will need the help of the Holy Spirit to get tuned up.

2.1 Pointer for sharing: Were there times when you wanted to do something for Jesus but it turned out to be the wrong thing? Share your answer with your small group.

3. One cannot expect all the followers of Jesus to find themselves in the same situation with regard to vocation. To make the right decision, one can adopt some guidelines, but most of all, one has to get the help of the Holy Spirit.

3.1 Pointer for sharing: Do you think you are following the right vocation? Share your answer with your small group.

Vocation Test

There was a young man who had finished an A.B. course but did not really know what he wanted to do in life. His aunt thought that she had the right trick that will make him decide. She invited him to her house and when he arrived, she quickly excused herself. She said her neighbor had an emergency and she had to help her. The young man was left all alone in the living room, at the middle of which was a table with a Bible, a lap-top computer with a spreadsheet on the screen, and a book entitled, "The Great Power at the Bar and Bench."

The aunt did not really have to attend to any emergency but she just wanted the young man to be all alone and decide what to do with those materials on the table. Depending on what will catch his interest, she will know whether he will be a priest, a businessman, or a lawyer.

When she returned, she found the young man reading "The Great Power..." checking up a quotation in the Bible, and changing the spreadsheet in the computer with a game of solitaire. "Oh, my gosh!" she exclaimed. "He's going to be a politician!"