

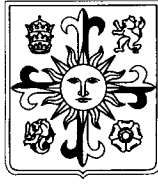
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EDITORIAL

The Plight of Flight

Bird migration refers to the regular seasonal journeys or movements undertaken by many species of birds in response to changes in food availability, habitat or weather. Driven by their natural instinct for self-preservation, these animals brave the many perils that accompany their passage from one place to another, even at times enduring long uninterrupted flights just to find greater opportunities for survival. For instance, Bar-tailed Godwits migrating north from New Zealand are known to have the longest known non-stop migration of any species, up to 10,200 km (6,300 mi). These and other such travelers have to face not only the threat of predators taking advantage of the concentration of birds during migration, but also the danger of being prone at stopover sites to parasites and pathogens requiring a heightened immune response. Some also become victims of drift migration, that is, being blown off course by the winds at the time they are in flight. Unfriendly human activities only make matters worse: hunting along the migratory route; structures such as power lines, wind farms and offshore oil-rigs; habitat destruction by land use changes.

This is perhaps one of the many instances where we find striking parallelisms of human experience with that of the animals. Just as migratory birds are prompted to take their course by necessity of food supply, human migrants are similarly compelled to brave the challenges of movement and time-distance separation by the necessity of providing a better life for their loved ones. And just as the avian travelers become unwilling targets of both natural and man-made hazards, the human counterparts face comparable risks that threaten, as Msgr. Formoso asserts in his article, the family, marriage, faith, children and even the priesthood. That is why the Church

has considered the concern of migrants to be fundamentally spiritual and pastoral, and not simply a matter of existential survival. Some of these concerns are dealt with in the articles contained in this issue.

The Lord entrusted the care of the poor to his disciples not only as a means to receive treasures in heaven later on (Lk 18:22), but as a present manifestation of Christ's commandment to love (Mk 12:31). It is, thus, a Christian's essential vocation to participate in the Lord's mission of charity to the least of his brothers. Mother Teresa of Calcutta sees this poverty as more than the categories of physical or material satisfaction, but as a basic human hunger for love: "*Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat...*" In the same spirit, Timothy Radcliffe says, "*Sometimes people can hunger for more than bread. It is possible that our children, our husband, our wife, do not hunger for bread, do not need clothes, do not lack a house. But are we equally sure that none of them feels alone, abandoned, neglected, needing some affection? That too is poverty.*" Migrants have a special place in the scriptures and in the Church not just because they are to some extent foreigners, but because they are human beings, though with a unique circumstance they find themselves in. It is also for this reason that we are called to recognize and address this need in the spirit of selfless charity that transcends the boundaries of territory and at times even of religious beliefs.

Many of the larger birds fly in flocks, often in a V-formation, thus reducing the energy needed for the flight, and enabling them to move faster than when they were flying solitarily. It is in the same solidarity that the Lord calls us to recognize our neighbor in the person of our brother migrants. It is also in the same singularity of spirit that we respond in our own way to follow the Good Samaritan's example to his neighbor, and persevere in the Lord's admonition to "*go and do the same.*" (Lk 10:37) ■

FEATURES

Pastoral Care of Migrants in the 1983 Code of Canon Law

MSGR. GARY NOEL S. FORMOSO

"You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt." (Lev. 19:33-34)

I. INTRODUCTION

The pastoral care of migrants is a very complicated topic to discuss, but it is a real and urgent issue in the Church. With the growing number of migrants every year, the problems become more and more complicated both for the country of origin and the country of reception.

When we talk about pastoral care, we primarily include everything that a pastor needs to do for his flock as a pastor of souls. Accordingly, "The parish priest (*parochus*) is the proper pastor (*pastor*) of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of **teaching, sanctifying, and governing**, also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law."¹ It is

therefore a duty laid on the clergy at their ordination, and reaffirmed when they are appointed to a parish. It is often shared with the laity and seen as an extension of the local bishop's care of that parish. Hierarchically, pastoral care is the duty of the bishop, and this is shared by the pastors including the chaplains who are more directly assigned to a particular group like the migrants. It is not just a matter of celebrating the sacraments during Sundays, but also the integral work of evangelization and salvation.

Migration is also a very complicated subject. It is understood as the mobilization of a person from one place to another, or from one country to another. It may occur as a result of several factors, which experts qualify as "theories" (demographic, economic and social).

There are several forms of Migration:²

1. ***Irregular Migration.*** It refers to all international movements, which take place outside of the regulatory framework of the country of origin, of the country of reception, of both, or of the country of transit. By definition, irregular migration is the result of laws enacted to control the flow of migration. It is a misdemeanor or a crime, according to the criminal justice system of national legislation against State sovereignty. It can be legal or illegal, as it can be voluntary (with the consent of the person migrating) or by force (without his or her consent). Forced mobilization of persons and human trafficking are examples of forced migration.
2. ***"Voluntary" Migrants.*** These are those who, by personal or family decision, migrate generally with the intention of returning to their place of origin. These persons could have migrated from the provinces to the capital, in which case they are referred to as "*internal migrants*"; or migrated from some part of the country to overseas, in which case they become "*external migrants*" or "*emigrants*".
3. ***Temporary Migrants.*** These are those who migrate for a short period of time, such as seasonal workers in agriculture at sowing and harvest time. They can be regular or irregular.
4. ***Workers hired through agreements.*** These are migrants hired through an agreement or facilities to cover an additional demand. Usually, this type of work is temporary.

5. **Forced Migrants.** These are those that are forced to abandon their place of residence involuntarily, because of violence, terrorism, armed internal conflict or an international war. This trait sets them apart from traditional migrants.
6. **Refugees.** According to the United Nations Convention in relation to the Refugee Status of 1951, a refugee is a person who resides out of his or her homeland, and is unable or does not wish to return due to a “*well-founded fear based on their persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality and membership of a particular social group or political opinion*”.

The Cartagena Declaration of 1984³ widened the definition by incorporating those “*who have fled from their countries because their life, safety or freedom has been threatened by general violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order*”.

The number of refugees is growing, from 2.4 million in 1975 to 10.5 million in 1985 and 14 million in 1990. By the year 2000, the global population of refugees was of 12.1 million. More than 22 million people are under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

7. Other Kinds

a. *Asylum seekers*

b. *Displaced:*

i. *By development.* People are forced to move because of large scale development projects such as the construction of dams, airports, highways and urban housing.

ii. *By environmental conditions.* People are forced to move because of changes in the environment, that is, desertification, deforestation, degradation of the soil, flooding, etc.

- c. *Stateless*. This is due primarily to the disintegration of countries, creation of new states or change of borderlands.
- d. *Foreign Students*. Some schools offer foreign exchange programs between universities, and their number is also growing with consequent pastoral problems that the Church cannot ignore.
- e. *The traffic of and trafficking of persons*.⁴ This is commonly called modern day slavery especially among women and children. They are used as commodities in sex trades, and this is taking place all over the world.

With all these kinds of migrants, we can see the complexity of the responsibility as far as pastoral care is concerned. Not all migrants belong to the same race, color and culture. Not all migrants speak the same language. Not all of them respond positively to pastoral care. Thus, we need to adjust to individual groups according to their needs and circumstances.

II. BRIEF SITUATIONER

According to the most recent statistics on migration, there are 192 MILLION migrants globally and it is GROWING at the rate of 2.9 % annually. In the last two decades, migrants all over the world have filled in the gaps of work-force shortage in countries globally.

The Philippines is the 4th largest labor-sending country next to China, India and Mexico. We have 8.2 Million Filipinos deployed in 180 countries. Of that number, half are women, and there is a special concern about this. Women migrants rose from 35.3 million in 1960 to 94.5 Million in 2005. To top all these, our women migrants are mostly mothers!

We can more or less see, therefore, the possible problems that may erupt due to this situation: abuse of women, neglect of children, women's and children's rights violation, family issues and problems, marriage complications and the like.

Yes, our migrants are the contemporary heroes of our times. The presence of Filipino Migrant workers translates to around \$12 Billion to

\$14 Billion annual remittances buoying the economy of our country. But is this amount worth the price they have to pay?

The family is the domestic church. Whatever is happening in the family is happening in the church and the society. Thus, we should see to it that proper pastoral care is given to the migrants as well as to their families. Their salvation is indeed the supreme law in the church.

III. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION

A migrant expert of the International Labor Organization, Gloria Moreno-Fontes Chammartin pointed out, "It is not so much the absolute differences between countries that make people move but rather, when their situation and that of their families are such that they can no longer live according to the norms of safety, dignity and well-being."⁵

Indeed, people migrate due to diverse reasons, both justified or not, reasonable or not, or just a mere longing for a change. But the tremendous effects of migration have created a scenario wherein it has become a pastoral problem. We also have to consider that the most recognized and most painful social cost is the separation of children from their parents, which can be even harder for mothers.

Going back to the fact that most migrants are women in our country, a large part of whom are hired for domestic services. These are very vulnerable jobs, given the impossibility to draw a line between working and non-working hours while in the employer's house. In many countries, domestic services are not ruled by labor laws like other kinds of jobs. There are still parts of the world where women's rights need to be defended. Thus a migrant woman's rights have to be safeguarded twice.

Many women also have reportedly experienced downward occupational mobility, deskilling and reorientation away from paid work. As a result, too many women experience extreme exploitation and abuse in situations of trafficking, bondage and slavery.

Domestic problems also erupt because of migration: infidelity among couples; separation of spouses; abortion; neglected children, ergo juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, prostitution and the like. We

can identify a problem, and definitely connect it as one of the effects of migration.

On the part of the migrants, difficulties also abound: loneliness, separation anxiety, jealousy, etc. -- things that can destroy a family.

When people migrate without proper documents, they sacrifice their lives just to enter a territory. There are stories of people walking through deserts and forests in the middle of the night just to enter a border of a country. People pay thousands of money just to get a travel permit and try to look for a greener pasture elsewhere. Reality bites; not everybody is lucky!

And so when a person is in need and is in a strange country, where he or she does not understand the language and much less know its culture and legislation, he or she is in a very vulnerable situation. Even in the country of arrival, where one has high hopes for a better life, he or she can easily fall victim again to the abuse of human rights. Moreover, when survival is at stake, it is easy to give up one's labor rights, especially when no one helps to defend him or her. Migrants and refugees are in fact easy prey to exploitation, and in extreme cases also to human trafficking. They are often victims of violence, which may not always be physical, but very often psychological and moral as in cases of marginalization, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. They are often made "scapegoats" for local unemployment or criminal activities.

Today, there is also a growing phenomenon of migrant students. With the foreign exchange programs of universities, there are also growing pastoral problems connected to them.

There is, in addition, a growing problem among local churches in the Philippines. Priests who are sent abroad, especially in the United States, don't come back to serve their diocese, or are not willing to go back to their dioceses after the end of their tenure as chaplains for our migrants. Some permanently apply for incardination abroad, and excardination from their dioceses. While some do it because of their missionary zeal, others, sad to say, consider the first world countries as greener pastures. A problem therefore is effected -- we are losing our good priests from the Philippines. It is, however, a reality that we still need priests in our country. Guidelines, contracts and proper selection, therefore, are a must when we send priests

to work abroad as chaplains to our migrants. One more thing, problems connected to the priesthood should also be addressed. Proper preparation is needed for priests -- both physically, culturally and psychologically.

Given these problems, the Church is indeed challenged to respond to the signs of the times. The family, marriage, faith, children and even the priesthood are sometimes threatened, and so we are called to do something about them.

IV. THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH: PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS

A. According to Church Documents

The migrations of the last two centuries represent a challenge to the pastoral care of the Church, which was organized on the basis of stable territorial parishes. Previously, members of the clergy accompanied groups setting off abroad to colonize new lands, but from the middle of the 19th century on, the pastoral care of migrants was entrusted more and more frequently to missionary Congregations.⁶

Then in 1914 the Decree *Ethnografica studia* dealt for the first time with the question of clergy involved in the care of migrants. It stressed the responsibility of the local Church to assist immigrants, and suggested that the local clergy be given specific preparation for this, linguistically, culturally and pastorally. A little later, following the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law, the Decree *Magni semper* of 1918 gave the Consistorial Congregation competence for matters concerning the authorization of clergy for assistance to migrants.

Following the Second World War the migration phenomenon became even more dramatic not only as a result of the devastation caused by the conflict, but also by the worsening of the phenomenon of refugees (especially from what was termed the Eastern Countries), many of whom belonged to various Eastern Catholic Churches.

There are other documents treating on the issue of migration in the Church.

As early as 1870, the immigration phenomenon became massive, and the church as an institution began to worry. Pope Leo XIII, in the letter

Quam Aerumnosa dated December 10, 1988, addressed to the Bishops of America, commended to them the needy European immigrants. The Pope acknowledged that immigration is an affliction, that many immigrants who wanted to solve their political and economic problems have succumbed to situations worse than those experienced in their country of origin, and that, added to material poverty, there was spiritual misery. They were exploited and were the victims of constant deceit by sects and criminal organizations. In the face of these situations, Pope Leo XIII founded by Apostolic Letter the Apostolic School for candidates to priesthood, with headquarters in Piacenza, and under the care of its Bishop, Monseignor John Baptist Scalabrini, today considered the patron saint of the migrants.

Hereunder is a synthesis of some documents issued by the Church, presented with the purpose of creating a conscience and to raise awareness among its ministers, governments and the people of God:

Apostolic Constitution “*Exul Familia*.”⁷ This is the first important document issued by the church on the subject of migrations. It has two parts:

1. *Maternal concern of the Church for immigrants.* This chapter presents a historical synthesis of the works accomplished by the Church in this field.
2. *Norms regarding the spiritual care for immigrants.* It creates pontifical structure for the pastoral care of immigrants, under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation.

Motu Proprio “Pastoralis Migratorum Cura.”⁸ The revision of the norms set forth in the Apostolic Constitution *Exul Familia* was authorized. The document enunciates seven specific actions to the Episcopal Conferences:

1. Follow closely the main problems of migrations.
2. Select the priests, prepare them for that particular ministry, and introduce them to the immigrants, so that they receive them as their chaplains.
3. Institute, if considered appropriate, a priest school for the migrants.

4. Request the participation of the men and women of religious orders and of lay persons to participate in this initiative.
5. Organize regular meetings, at international and continental level, to define and coordinate pastoral assistance.
6. Promote contacts with national and international organizations and other institutions, so that the rights of the migrants are protected.
7. Send an annual report to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops, with the data, suggestions and wishes, so as to report on the difficulties faced by the pastoral action (No. 23).

Motu Proprio “Apostolicae Caritatis.”⁹ The main purpose of this document was to provide stability to the pastoral care of the migrants, establishing the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migration and Tourism, known today as the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant People. Its purpose is to interweave, in a firm, fruitful and efficient manner all the organizations established for the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility: The Pastoral Care of the Migrants, as the Apostolate of the Air, the Apostolate of the Sea, the Apostolate of the Nomads and the Pastoral of Tourism.

Instruction “*Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi.*”¹⁰ The latest among other documents treating on Migration, it includes juridical pastoral regulations to protect the rights of migrants and produce an effective pastoral care for them. The document also exhorts the Lay Faithful, chaplains and missionaries, Men and Women Religious, Church Authorities, The Episcopal Conferences and Corresponding hierarchical Structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant people to work together for the good of the migrants. It intends to be an ecclesiastical answer to the new pastoral needs of migrants, underlying the feeling of apprehension that migration usually produces on individuals, particularly on women and children, without forgetting families.

B. According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law

The 1983 Code of Canon Law, in confirmation and application of Vatican II’s wishes and spirit, requests parish priests to be especially

attentive towards persons who are far from their own country¹¹, and stresses the desirability and obligation, whenever possible, of arranging specific pastoral care for them.¹² Like the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches, it envisages the establishment of personal parishes¹³ as well as missions for the spiritual care of the faithful¹⁴ and even the creation of specific pastoral figures such as episcopal vicars¹⁵ and chaplains for migrants.¹⁶

Again to implement the Council's recommendations,¹⁷ the new Code also foresees the institution of other specific pastoral structures as provided for in the legislation and practice of the Church. There are also provisions found in the Code of Eastern Churches as far as the migrants are concerned.¹⁸ The aforementioned Code provides for the constitution of Churches *sui iuris*, calls for the promotion and observance of the rites of the Eastern Churches as patrimony of the universal Church of Christ and establishes precise norms concerning liturgical and disciplinary laws connected to migrants and their proper care due to them.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, migration is one of the signs of our times that need to be addressed by both the Church and the State. There are complicated issues and problems that spring from migration both from the originating country and the receiving country. The institutions of Marriage and the Family are affected by the rising movement of people from one country to the other, especially with the fact that most migrants are women and mostly mothers. There are of course positive effects on our economy when our migrants do well in other countries, but not everybody experience the same fate. Some are maltreated, abused and even killed in other countries. Many families suffer broken marriages and relationships. Many children are neglected and grow without fathers or mothers to guide them.

We cannot ignore the growing problems in Migration. It is our responsibility as a church to look after our flock wherever they are. We also have to leave our mark as a universal Church, willing to accept anybody regardless of race and color. And so we must be serious in the pastoral care due to our migrant brothers and sisters. Chaplains who are assigned to them must be prepared to handle the situations of migrants to further

confirm the Church's catholicity and missionary call. We as a people should also support the missionary activities of the Church. The documents of the Church are calling on all her members to be "welcoming" and caring towards everybody, especially our migrant brothers and sisters.

As a form of recommendation, we should really prepare for the escalating number of migrants and the need to care for them in all levels. Families should be catechized, formed and prepared to handle the effects of migration. Chaplains should also be given time to adjust and adapt themselves to the language, culture and way of life of people elsewhere. Seminaries should therefore include in their formation, possible skills training for future mission to the migrants.

To end we should always bear in mind that: "The Church, in her vocation as servant of humanity, brings not only the message but also the realization of universal peace even by means of the migratory waves of millions of people. Migrants can be a hidden providential builder of such a universal fraternity, and can serve as an inspiration to the establishment of peaceful relationship between human beings, who are all members of the ONE FAMILY OF GOD."¹⁹ ■

NOTES:

¹ Can. 519

² P. Alcides Salinas Sosa, *Two Processes, One Same Story, Migration and the Church*, UNCHR Published by the Inter Parliamentary Unit with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, p. 6.

³ Ibid. p. 7

⁴ Susana Chiarotti, "*Trafficking in Women : Connections and Disconnections among Gender, Migrations and Human Rights*" p.6

⁵ Estella Torres, "*Revisiting Migration*", <http://Businessmirror.com.ph>

⁶ Valentin Demetrio, "*Theological Reflection- Pastoral on Migration*" CELAM, 2006

⁷ Published by Pius XII on August 1,1952

⁸ *A Motu Proprio* published by Paul VI on August 15, 1969

⁹ A *Motu Proprio* published by Paul VI, on March 19, 1970

¹⁰ Published by Benedict XVI on May 3, 2004

¹¹ Can. 529, §1

¹² Can. 568

¹³ CIC Can. 518 and CCEO Can. 280, §1

¹⁴ Can. 516

¹⁵ Can. 476

¹⁶ Can. 568

¹⁷ (cf. *PO* 10; *AG* 20, note 4; *AG* 27, note 28)

¹⁸ CCEO Cann. 27-28, 39-41, 148, 311, 150, 192 par. 1, 193 par. 1 and 2, 280 par. 1

¹⁹ *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* n. 103

Pastoral Reflections on Migrations

MSGR. RUPERTO CRUZ SANTOS

Saint Peter in his first letter written from Rome advises us saying, “Beloved, while you are strangers and exiles, I urge you not to indulge in selfish passions which wage war on the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). Saint Paul also tells us that, “Our citizenship is in heaven, from where we await the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord” (Philippians 3:20).

Our Church is a pilgrim Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 48). We, the Church, are on a journey, a pilgrimage. All of us are on the move, migrating to a better place, our true home- heaven. We live in this world but it is not our permanent home. Earth is not our real destination. Heaven is. In the letter to the Hebrews, we are challenged to aspire “to a better city, that is, a supernatural one” (Hebrews 11:16). We must take the road that will lead us to heaven. We must travel the right path that will bring us to the Father.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD IS A MIGRANT

Jesus is a migrant. Saint John describes the coming of Jesus by saying, “He was already in the world, and through him the world was made, the very world that did not know him. He came to his own, yet his own people did not receive him...” (John 1:10 ff). From heaven, Jesus came to us. Saint Paul testifies that, “when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son. He came born of woman and subject to the Law, in

order to redeem the subjects of the Law, that we may be given our full rights of sons and daughters of God” (Galatians 4:5-6). The birth of Jesus was announced in Nazareth (Luke 1:26). He was born in Bethlehem, a foreign land (Luke 2:6). To begin His public ministry, Jesus preached and performed miraculous deeds in different territories such as Tyre (Mark 7:24) and Sidon (Matthew 15:21), around the Decapolis regions (Mark 7, 31), in Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10), in Bethany (Mark 14:31) and finally in Jerusalem (John 12:12) for the fulfilment of the saving plan of the Father. When the salvation of mankind was achieved and what was written by the Prophets that the “Messiah had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead” (Matthew 24:46) was realized, Jesus returned to the Father. Saint Luke writes that, “Jesus led them almost as far as Bethany; then he lifted up his hands and blessed them, he withdrew and was taken up to heaven” (Luke 24:50-51; Mark 16:19).

Before ascending to heaven and to be once again with the Father, Jesus gave us a task to fulfil. He ordered us, “Go, therefore, make disciples from all nations. Baptize them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to fulfil all that I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of this world” (Matthew 28:19-20).

MAN IS A MIGRANT

Man is always moving, in search of greener pastures. He leaves his own home in order to find work and so help his loved ones. He will risk everything in order to send something for them. He will work endlessly so that he can provide for the needs of his family. Man migrates for his own and for his loved ones’ welfare.

Migration is defined as “an actual movement or willingness to move at any given opportunity” (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences). It comes from the Latin word “*migrare*,” meaning a change of residency, or a change of place. Migration means that a person goes to another place or country and remains there for a certain time and for a certain purpose. Migration is a movement from one place to another for the reason of living or working. Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Laborem Exercens* affirms that “man has the right to leave his native land for various reasons – and also the right to return- in order to

seek better conditions of life in another country” (23). Modern societies encourage migration. The demand for low-wage labour, the reality of the globalisation of the international market, the need to compensate an aging population and deflecting the work force plus the adaptation to the feminist viewpoint that woman must succeed in her chosen career are factors that gave impetus to migration.

Migrants stimulate economic growth through foreign remittances. They also generate domestic employment in their respective countries. In so doing, they improve the lives of their loved ones. Those whom they have left behind can go to schools, build houses, and buy properties. They are allowed secure and stable lives. But there is a price to pay for all these benefits. Migrants have to bear the pain of separation and loneliness. They have to endure bitter weather conditions, language barriers and cultural shock. Some undergo dehumanising conditions, experience cruel treatment and racial discrimination. Yet they patiently endure everything. Why? Love is the answer. What they do and what they give are expressions of how much they love, how much they care for their loved ones who are, for them, truly valuable.

Migrants perform various household chores: caring for the aged; cooking, cleaning and keeping the house; driving and running errands for their employers. They do all these things with love and out of love. More than that, they are concerned with the well being of their employers. Thus, they work with honesty. They speak with respect. They do their duties responsibly. They look upon them as they would their own family. How the migrants serve is a clear manifestation of how much they love their employers and of how much grateful they are to them. But there are other aspects to the service of migrants. Migrants are not only workers. Migrants are also missionaries. They are also martyrs.

Migrants as Missionaries

With the sacraments of Baptism and by the charism of the Holy Spirit all the baptized persons are missionaries. They are missionaries by their witnessing of life, that is, the witnessing that exemplifies and strengthens the unity and charity of one’s faith in the one, true God. Vatican II points out that, “One is called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling

their own particular duties. Thus especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity, they manifest Christ to others. It is their special task to illuminate and order all temporal matters in which they are closely involved in a such a way that these are always carried out and develop in Christ's way and to the praise of the Creator and Redeemer" (*Lumen Gentium*, 31). The Instruction on the pastoral care of people who migrate prepared by the Sacred Congregation for the Bishops attests that "Migrations, which promote human understanding and cooperation on the part of all, give witness to and promote the unity of the human family, and confirm that communion of brotherhood among peoples in which each family is at the same time a giver and a receiver" (6).

Our Church is a missionary Church. She calls all her faithful to share in her missionary task. The decree on the Church's missionary activity, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, describes that "all Christians by example of their lives and the witness of the word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new person which they put on in baptism, and to reveal the power of the Holy Spirit by whom they were strengthened at confirmation, so that others seeing their good works, might glorify the Father and more perfectly perceive true meaning of human life and the universal solidarity of humankind" (11). Migrants, wherever and whatever field of work they are in, are openly encouraged by the Vatican II decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* to be missionaries. The decree says that, "Everyone who works in foreign countries and brings them aid must remember that relations among people should be a real familiar interchange in which both parties give and at the same time receive. Those who travel abroad on international activities, on business or in holidays, should keep in mind that no matter where they may be they are the travelling messengers of Christ, and should conduct themselves as such" (14).

The Holy Father in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* says, "In many Asian countries, lay people are already serving as true missionaries, reaching out to fellow Asians who might never have contact with clergy and religious. To them I express the thanks of the whole Church, and I encourage all lay people to assume their proper role in the life and mission of the People of God, as witnesses to Christ wherever they may find themselves" (45).

Heeding to the urgent appeal of the Holy Father, migrants bring the gospel in their places of work. They proclaim the Gospel through their words and actions by working selflessly and conscientiously. They even help others find work. They don't hold grudges. They do things with sincerity and humility. They love their work. They care for their employers. With these virtues migrants bring to life the teachings of the Church. They make the words of Jesus on love and service come alive. With their witnessing of life and love migrants became effective missionaries of the Church.

Their days off and free times are spent for the Church. Many offer their assistance to the Church. They even inspire and bring their employers to the Church. They teach the children under their care good manners and prayers. Migrants are not only cleaning houses, they are also strengthening the moral and spiritual fibre of the families they are living with. They are not only taking care of the children, they also catechise them. Migrants in their daily living of their religious customs and practices are in reality spreading the faith. With their religious witnessing in foreign lands, migrants live what Jesus said, "It was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (John 15:16) even though they are uprooted from their native land because of economic reasons.

Migrants as Living Martyrs

Man is always searching, trying to fulfil his dreams. His dreams are for the good of his loved ones. His goals are always connected with the welfare of his family. He will even sacrifice his ambition for their benefit. Man is willing to suffer to make his family happy. And if he cannot accomplish his dreams and his goals in his own place, he moves, he migrates.

A martyr is defined as "one who suffers death for a cause" (The Catholic Encyclopaedia). A martyr gives up his own life rather than betray his faith. Vatican II says that, "By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master, who freely accepted death on behalf of the world's salvation; he fulfils that image even to the shedding of blood" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 42). Martyrs are heroes of faith. They sacrifice their lives for Jesus. Martyrdom is a testimony of love to Jesus "who gives one's life to his friends" (John 15:13).

Migrants are living martyrs. They are witnesses of hope for those they have left behind. They likewise offer a testimony of love to those whom they are serving. They also experience continuous death, that is, death to self and to sin. Dying to self is cutting off what is useless in us; getting rid of what is unnecessary in our life; letting go of the so-called excess baggage in life. Dying to self is self-purification, self-emptying. By leaving their families and working in foreign lands, migrants deny themselves of comforts and companionship of home and of their loved ones. Remaining ever conscious of their family commitment, they don't give in to their bodily whims and caprices. Always thinking of the future of their family, they avoid the material pleasures. They remain faithful to their families. They work hard, careful not to create problems. They avoid scandals. For the sake of their families and for a continuous harmonious relationship with those they are serving, migrants are even willing to suffer in silence. Migrants are martyrs, living martyrs. They have shown time and again that they are willing to embrace death - death to selfishness, death to sin and self. They rise to heroic acts of self-sacrifice, self-discipline, and self-giving.

Self-sacrifice. Migrants perform their obligations responsibly. They fulfil their duties to the best of their abilities. They are not after their own personal agenda for the well being of their loved ones. That is why they are willing to brave faraway lands in order to find work and even to assume dangerous tasks. Migrants do not want to be an embarrassment to their family and friends and try as much as possible not to be a burden to them. That is why they choose to suffer the pains of homesickness, loneliness and discomfort in silence.

In their self-sacrifice, migrants know that they are not self-sufficient. They accept their limitations and know their vulnerability. They place all their trust in God. They believe that God will take care of them and of their families and will lead them to verdant pastures. God will protect those they have left behind. These are the faith and that hope that migrants constantly show to and share with their employers.

Self-discipline. Migrants are devoted and dedicated to their work. They treat their employers with respect and affection. They cultivate

happy and harmonious relationships with them. Migrants show self-discipline by not leaving for tomorrow what they can do for today. They will not leave their works unless everything is accounted for, everything is in order, and everything is neat and tidy. They use their time wisely, not wasting it on trivial matters. They value things under their care.

Self-discipline makes the migrants self-reliant and more committed. Self-discipline helps give them more focus. They will not abuse the trust and confidence of their employers. They will not misuse things entrusted to their care.

Self-giving. Migrants always think of their loved ones who are their number one priority. Migrants manifest self-giving through helping, assisting and making themselves available to their family or their co-workers who are in need. They extend help even without being asked and without thoughts of reward. They are always charitable and considerate to those who have less. They show solidarity with them.

Self-giving teaches migrants the beauty of simplicity. Their lives are not clogged with unnecessary possessions and they are not preoccupied with acquiring and with possessing. Self-giving makes them focus on their work and, above all, on God. Self-giving prepares them in the virtue of complete surrender anything to God. Self-giving is their visible testimony to the world that it is God who matters most in everything one does in this life.

THE CHURCH AND THE CARE OF MIGRANTS

The pastoral care of migrants is an ecclesial concern. The Church strongly exhorts her children to be more hospitable to migrants. She is also concerned with the wellbeing and welfare of migrants that she opens her door to enable migrants to be integrated into the Catholic churches of the receiving countries. The church shows her universality by welcoming, accepting and treating all equally. In her no one is treated like a stranger since all are her children. There is no hostility, no contempt. She is a Church without borders; a Church without favourites. When the Church

welcomes a stranger, she recognises Jesus in him. Jesus says, “I am a stranger and you welcome me into your house” (Matthew 25:36).

The solicitude of the Church encompasses all of her children. She is open and available to all. The Church cares for her children, whoever and wherever they are. It was Pope Pius XII who recognized that every man has a natural right to migrate or immigrate that cannot be denied or annulled by governmental acts, but should be fully recognized, protected, and encouraged by a state or by the community of nations. The Pope affirmed that, “The natural law itself, no less than devotion to humanity, urges that ways to migration be opened to needy people. For the Creator of Universe made all good thing primarily for the good of all. If then, in some locality, the land offers the possibility of supporting a large number of people, the sovereignty of the State, although it has to be respected, cannot be exaggerated to the point that access to this land is, for inadequate or unjustified reasons, denied to needy and decent people from other nations, provided of course that public weal considered very carefully, does not forbid this” (In *Fratres Caritas, Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 41, 1949 pages 69-70). Blessed Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* admitted also “the right of the family to migrate” and that a “freer movement of goods, capital and men” would lessen inequalities among nations (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 53, 1961, pages 411, 439).

Indeed the Church shows herself deeply interested in the development of migration. She takes it as her obligation and responsibility. She accepts that those who are affected and involved with migration are all her children. The Church being a mother is impelled by maternal care and love to protect and to pastor them, providing them safety, security and above all spiritual assistance. The Church desire that her children, the migrants, to assume an active participation in cultural, economic and spiritual life of the “host country.” The Church desires that the migrants must be able to work for the development of their personality. She encourages them to integrate positive elements of their cultures and be living witnesses of the Gospel in their everyday lives by their good working relationship and fruitful living in their “host country.”

Pope Pius XII in his apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia* of August 1, 1952 mentioned five important decisions on the spiritual care of migrants. The apostolic constitution entrusted the following:

- a. Designation of the Consistorial Congregation of the Holy See to supervise spiritual assistance to migrants and the organization within it of the supreme council for emigration to work through Episcopal commissions for emigration established in each country.
- b. Extension of rule previously established for Italian priests to all European priests wishing to emigrate overseas.
- c. Establishment of the principle that priests should give assistance to migrants by communicating with them in their own language.
- d. Establishment of national parishes for migrants and missionaries to emigrants.
- e. Institution of the First Sunday of Advent as migration day, following a custom originating in Italy in 1914 (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 44, 1952, pages 649-704).

The Church is journeying with her children. She accompanies them in their pilgrimage in life. She attends to their spiritual welfare. She sends missionaries to reach out for them. She assigns competent persons and pastoral workers to help them with their spiritual needs. The Church looks out for them through her priests who walk and work with them. Indeed the words of Pope John Paul II “*nella Chiesa nessuno e’ estraniero*” (in the Church no one is a stranger) ring strong and true in the ears of all men.

PRIEST-CHAPLAINS OF THE MIGRANTS

Saint Peter in his first letter affirmed our task saying, “Tend the flock of God that is your charge” (1 Peter 5:2). Vatican II issued an appeal that “Special concern should be shown for those members of the faithful who, on account of their way of life are not adequately catered for by the ordinary pastoral ministry of the parochial clergy or are entirely deprived of it. These include the many migrants, exiles and refugees, sailors and airmen, itinerants and others of this kind. Suitable pastoral methods should be developed to provide for the spiritual life of people on holidays” (*Christus Dominus*, 18). The 1983 Code of Canon Law stated that, “insofar

as it is possible, chaplains should be provided for to those who cannot make use of the ordinary pastoral care because of their situation in life, such as emigrants, refugees, nomads and seafarers” (568). These chaplains on whom the care of immigrant people is entrusted “should be equal to the task in his virtue, knowledge, ability with the language, and other personal endowments” (*Exsul Familia*, II, 54).

From the New Testament we know that Jesus commanded Peter by saying, “feed my lambs” (John 21:16). We received our task from Jesus to “look after my sheep” (John 21:16). Like what He did to Peter, Jesus is also asking us, if we love Him, to share with Him the responsibility of caring for His flock: “feed my sheep” (John 21:17). To love Jesus is to fulfil the missions of seeking out His flock, serving them and sowing good deeds in their lives. Thus the priest-chaplains as pastors of migrants must do the functions of the three “s” such as seek out, serve and sow.

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10)

Like sheep scattered in different fields and meadows, people have travelled to different places in search of greener pastures. As their priests, we have to take good care of them, wherever and whoever they are. We are their pastors and we have to seek out, gather them, nurse them and tend to their spiritual needs. We have to look out for them – especially the lost - and lead them back to the right path. We have to take particular care of the weak so that we may help to strengthen them.

For migrants could find themselves isolated or marginalized, we have to help them integrate into the social life of the community as called for in *Gaudium et Spes*, “All the people, moreover above all the public authorities, must treat migrants not as mere tools of production but as persons, and must help them to bring their families to live with them and to provide themselves with as decent dwelling; they must also see to it that these workers are incorporated into the social life of the country or region that received them. Employment opportunities, however, should be created in their own areas as far as possible” (66). For migrants who are lost, neglected or discriminated against, we must seek them out and support them so that they can improve their lives and living conditions. Migrants who are abused and living in subhuman conditions must be

defended so that their basic human rights may be upheld. Migrants who are too preoccupied with their work and who lose contact with the Church as a result must be found and led back to the fold. As priests and pastors of migrants, we should never be silent. We must never tire of going out in search of them. And when we find them we must serve them in order to save them.

As priests and pastors of migrants, we must always think of their welfare and work for their good. We must denounce evil practices whenever we find them be they committed against or by migrants and stand for what is right. It is our duty to direct, guide and lead them to Jesus. We must let them know that Jesus is their only hope in this earthly life. Jesus is the one true satisfaction and the only sustenance needed in this passing world.

In our pilgrimage in life, we will be tempted, tested and tried; we will be persecuted and endure so much pain; we will be broken and bruised but Jesus assures us, “No one shall snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:23). On earth we will experience sorrow, sadness and suffering; rejection and ridicule. Surely there will be some who will abandon us but Jesus tells us, “There is no snatching out of His hands (John 10:28). By these words, we are assured of His protection and His providence. We are sure that he will see us out and save us. We, in turn, must also do these things for our lost brothers and sisters. Jesus says, “Truly I say to you: whenever you did this to these little ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

“the Son of Man who has not come to be served but to serve and to give His life to redeem many” (Mark 10:45)

Since migrants could feel socially and culturally uprooted when entering a foreign land, we as their priests and pastors must welcome them and be in solidarity with them. They may fall prey to aggressive sects or to new religious movements so we must strengthen their Catholic faith and spiritual life. In order to ease the migrants’ feelings of separation, loneliness and homesickness, we must assist them and share out time and talents with them. All these can be done through our pastoral services and sacramental celebrations.

In serving them we show that a stranger is not a burden or a problem but rather a brother or a sister whom we respect, care for and want to save. In serving our migrants we guide them to reject the temptation of easy money and the cravings for material pleasures. In serving our migrants we must enlighten them to be patient, to persevere and to sacrifice. By serving them we show our love and our concern for them. By serving our migrants we relive the words of Jesus who says, "This is how all will know that you are my disciples' (John 13:35).

"the sower went out to sow" (Luke 8:4)

Migrants are very powerful evangelizing instruments. They can announce and give witness to the Gospel to their host country by living their faith and the Gospel values. In so doing, they help in the spread of the Catholic faith. Migration builds up the people of God and in this I am not only referring to the migrants but also to the people of the host country who are stirred to being hospitable, charitable and compassionate. We, as priests of the migrants, must sow seeds of hope, patience and confidence within the hearts of the migrants so they will not fall to despair or pessimism. We must likewise sow seeds of empathy and acceptance within the host country so people will be more sympathetic and receptive to the plight of migrants so there will be charity and communion. All will feel a sense of belongingness. All will realize that they are what Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MODEL OF MIGRANTS

Our Church is a pilgrim Church. We are on a journey, and we must remember that we are just passing in this world. Our final destination, our true home is Heaven where our Father is. But before we can reach our ultimate union with God the Father we must first live "mourning and weeping in this valley of tears." To be able to endure this kind of existence, we must turn to our dear Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the source of our consolation, encouragement and inspiration throughout our trying journey to Heaven. Our Blessed Mother Mary listens, understands and is ever ready to enfold us in her loving and comforting embrace.

Our Blessed Mother knows our situation and our condition. This after all is the woman who described herself a “servant in her lowliness” (Luke 1:48) and also experienced being a migrant. Saint Luke tells us, “Mary then set out for a town in the hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth” (Luke 1:39-40). Mary went to serve and provide companionship to Elizabeth who was also expecting a child in her old age. Mary wanted to share, not only her joy and her filial greetings but much more- Jesus. Mary brought Jesus to Elizabeth. And Elizabeth exclaimed, “The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy” (Luke 1:49).

In obedience to the required census (cf. Luke 2:1), Joseph and Mary left Nazareth for Bethlehem. We read from the gospel of Saint Luke that, “everyone set out for his own city; Joseph too set out from Nazareth of Galilee. As he belonged to the family of David, being a descendant of his, he went to Judea to David’s town of Bethlehem to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was with a child” (Luke 2:4-5). Our Blessed Mother Mary experienced how to be a stranger in a foreign land. Matthew narrated the command of the angel of the Lord to Joseph who appeared to him in a dream ordering him to “get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you for Herod will soon be looking for the child in order to kill him” (Matthew 2:13).

Our Blessed Mother understood that her whole life was a continuous journey with Jesus. Her “*fiat*” was her total submission to God’s will and the complete dedication of her whole self to God. Indeed life is travelling with Jesus. Life must be lived for Jesus. Our Blessed Mother accompanied Jesus from birth (Matthew 1:18ff) to the cross (John 19:26ff). After Jesus, death, she stayed with the Apostles of Jesus (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4). The Blessed Virgin Mary knows what we go through, having lived through what we, as migrants, now experience. Who can be more sympathetic to us than her? We can look up to her as our example, our model.

Migrants should follow the “*fiat*” of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “*Fiat*” literally means “yes.” The “*fiat*” of the Blessed Virgin Mary was her total submission to God’s will. It was the complete dedication of her whole self to God. The “yes” of the Blessed Virgin Mary signified her

service to God and to mankind; her “yes” to God’s plan. Her yes meant she wanted her life to be lived in accordance with the divine plan of God to redeem the fallen humanity. Her yes was her self-surrender to God, her unconditional self-offering to God. Migrants must also give their “*fiat*” to God. Their “*fiat*” is a yes to love, a yes to life. Their *fiat* means yes to service, to work. Their “*fiat*” moreover is a resounding no to sin, and to self. Migrants should live the “*fiat*” of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “*Fiat*” also stands for fidelity to God and family, intimacy with Jesus, availability to others, and trust in God.

Fidelity to God, faithfulness to the family

The Blessed Virgin Mary as a wife was faithful. She did not hide anything. She did not hold any secrets. She was open, honest and straight. Her life was transparent, clean and trustworthy. The “*fiat*” of the Blessed Virgin Mary was an eternal, unhesitant yes to God. It was a yes in the face of sacrifice, service and suffering. Her yes was a total fidelity to God. The Blessed Virgin Mary stood with Joseph as a faithful wife from the flight to Egypt to the quiet life with Jesus in Nazareth.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was a faithful daughter of God. She did not question God’s will. She did not doubt God’s ways. She did not ask for concession or for any privilege. She accepted everything in her heart (cf. Luke 2:19). The Blessed Virgin Mary was always at the background leading everyone to Jesus. She did not attract attention. She admitted that she was just a lowly servant, a handmaid of the Lord.

Fidelity to the family is to love faithfully and to live honestly. There’s no hiding or keeping secrets from loved ones. Fidelity is being open to them, being loyal to them. Imitating the fidelity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, migrants must stand with their families, and serve them even to the point of sacrificing their ambition and personal interest for them. Reliving the fidelity of the Blessed Virgin Mary migrants are called to love and be loyal to their families in good times and in bad. How can the migrants say that they accept the Blessed Virgin Mary if they live unclean and unfaithful lives? How can the migrants prove that they imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary if they are breaking their marital vows? How can they say that they take the Blessed Virgin Mary as their model and mother if they go against the teachings of the Church?

Intimacy with Jesus

The Blessed Virgin Mary lived her life only for Jesus. She was united with Him. She was always there for Jesus and always with Jesus. She loved Jesus and loved whom Jesus loved. The Blessed Virgin Mary understood Jesus, accepted His ways and committed her life to His divine plan of saving mankind. She did not question His ways as she “kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51). She gave up her time and surrendered her aspiration to Jesus.

Intimacy with Jesus is an encouragement for migrants to attend also to the needs of their fellow migrants and to build them up too. Intimacy with Jesus helps them to understand that Jesus was so close to the marginalized people and that they must also emulate Jesus. Migrants fostering intimacy with Jesus will realize that Jesus is the right answer to their problems and needs; safety to their insecurities; hope in their struggles; comfort in their sorrows. Migrants need Jesus. They must look for Jesus. If they have strayed, they should return to Jesus. They must follow His words and examples. In their times of uncertainty, migrants must see Jesus as their true friend; their merciful and compassionate God. Imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary in her intimacy with Jesus, migrants must live and work for Jesus. They must become like Jesus.

Availability to others

The Blessed Virgin Mary did not keep Jesus only for herself. She willingly shared Jesus with others. Unselfishly, she allowed herself to be an instrument of His love and of His saving acts. She devoted her whole self to Jesus. As a mother the Blessed Virgin Mary presented Jesus to God as narrated by Saint Luke, “When the day came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to God” (Luke 2:22). She made and continues to make Jesus available to all and for all. The Blessed Virgin Mary is also available for the needs of others. She does not need to be asked or cajoled for help. She is sensitive to the needs of her children. She will intercede on our behalf as she did at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1ff) and she makes herself available to us as she was to the needs of Elizabeth who was expecting a child (Luke 1:39-44).

Imitating the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, migrants must be sensitive to the welfare of their fellow migrants and be responsible stewards of their host country. They should not be the cause of scandal, of sin and of shame to their people and to their family. They should not be the cause of trouble to others. Following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary migrants should always be ready to help others. Imitating the availability of the Blessed Virgin Mary they should be exemplary in their work and a good influence to others thus following the exhortation, “Each man will be loved and helped as his brother, as his neighbour” (*Populorum Progressio*, 82).

Trusting God, being thankful to God

The Blessed Virgin Mary accepted her unworthiness though she was “troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean” (Luke 1:29). She knew her limitations. She admitted that she was just “his servant in her lowliness” (Luke 1:46). Yet in her total trust, she surrendered herself to God’s plan. She submitted to God’s will. The Blessed Virgin Mary did not brag about her honour or her privilege as Mother of God. She was self-effacing. She was not thinking of herself. She was only thinking about God and trusting God. She was ever thankful to Him when she said, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord” (Luke 1:46).

Following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, migrants must always turn to God and trust Him. They should not depend on their luck, strength, or wealth. Migrants should not rely on their connections, abilities or skills. Migrants must accept that everything is because of the goodness of God and are all a result of God’s grace. Thus, they must turn to God and trust Him evermore. In living and working in foreign lands enjoying the benefits and providing a better life for those whom they have left behind migrants must return the glory to God and be thankful to Him. They must give witness to Him through respectful, caring and selfless living. Gratitude to God finds expression through responsible service. Giving thanks to God is proclaiming His goodness among men through clean, honest and moral living. And doing these, migrants truly become missionaries and living martyrs of the Gospel values.

When migrants are praised and promoted they must look up to the Blessed Virgin Mary. When they experience kindness and acceptance,

they must imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary who directs everything to Jesus and leads everyone to Him. When working and living in a foreign land is a happy and harmonious experience, migrants must give credit back to God and be thankful to Him. Even where there is pain, suffering and disappointment, they must still go the Blessed Virgin Mary. They must ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and like her, not be tempted go against God or doubt His ways. Like her migrants must turn to God and allow themselves to be touched and transformed by Him so that they also become His disciples, His witnesses.

The Blessed Virgin Mary will “lead us home” – to Heaven. She will “show unto us” and lead us to her Son. This is because the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of us, a migrant. She is our model, a mother who is, most of all, our way and our refuge.

Let us then conclude this reflection with a prayer entitled “prayer for one who is away” (from 40 more personal prayers which I composed and published by Saint Pauls’).

*O dearest Lord Jesus
I commend to your loving protection (mention their names),
who are now living in foreign lands.
I have not heard from them and
I do not know where they are now.
But I always remember them well
and I am praying for them today.
I fear that they may be struggling with serious problems;
going through trials and crises;
beset by feelings of inadequacy;
alone and lonely.
They may be crying their hearts out
so I pray for them.
Give them strength, O Lord Jesus, that they
overcome all difficulties.
Guide them, O Lord Jesus, to the right path
and to what is best for them.
Let them feel your presence, O Lord Jesus,
that they may not be lonely and lost.*

I pray for them that

*they may not lose heart;
they may resist the lure of sins;
they may continue to trust in You.*

I pray that they may never stop striving to reach their goals.

*I pray that they may remember You
always and call on You.*

*Wherever they are now, O Lord Jesus
watch over them and guide them.*

Whatever their plans are, O Lord Jesus

*Help them realize that they are nothing without You;
give them the success they deserve;
and lead them home safely.*

They may be successful in their careers.

*They may have reached their goals
and made all their dreams come true.*

*They may have found true and loyal friends,
be adjusted to their new homes,
and be integrated to their new community.*

*I pray, O Lord Jesus, that you continue
to shower them with Your blessings;
fill their days with happiness and grace.*

I pray that they may never forget to call on You and rely on You.

May they thank You for Your gifts and blessings.

*May they never stop loving You, and
may they never be parted from You.*

Amen. ■

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DOCUMENTATION

Message for the 95th World Day of Migrants and Refugees

HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Castel Gandolfo, 24 August 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year the theme of the Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: “*St Paul migrant, ‘Apostle of the peoples’*”. It is inspired by its felicitous coincidence with the Jubilee Year I established in the Apostle’s honor on the occasion of the 2,000th anniversary of his birth. Indeed, the preaching and mediation between the different cultures and the Gospel which Paul, “a migrant by vocation” carried out, are also an important reference point for those who find themselves involved in the migratory movement today.

Born into a family of Jewish immigrants in Tarsus, Cilicia, Saul was educated in the Hebrew and Hellenistic cultures and languages, making the most of the Roman cultural context. After his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus (cf. Gal 1:13-16), although he did not deny his own “traditions” and felt both esteem and gratitude to Judaism and the Law (cf. Rm 9:1-5; 10:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Gal 1:13-14; Phil 3:3-6), he devoted himself without hesitation or second thoughts to his new mission, with courage and enthusiasm and docile to the Lord’s command: “I will send you far away to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21). His life changed radically (cf.

Phil 3:7-11): Jesus became for him his *raison d'être* and the motive that inspired his apostolic dedication to the service of the Gospel. He changed from being a persecutor of Christians to being an Apostle of Christ.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, he spared no effort to see that the Gospel which is “the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rm 1:16) was proclaimed to all, making no distinction of nationality or culture. On his apostolic journeys, in spite of meeting with constant opposition, he first proclaimed the Gospel in the synagogues, giving prior attention to his compatriots in the *diaspora* (cf. Acts 18:4-6). If they rejected him he would address the Gentiles, making himself - an authentic “missionary to migrants” - as a migrant and an ambassador of Jesus Christ “at large” in order to invite every person to become a “new creation” in the Son of God (2 Cor 5:17).

The proclamation of the *kerygma* caused him to cross the seas of the Near East and to travel the roads of Europe until he reached Rome. He set out from Antioch, where he proclaimed the Gospel to people who did not belong to Judaism and where the disciples of Jesus were called “Christians” for the first time (cf. Acts 11:20, 26). His life and his preaching were wholly directed to making Jesus known and loved by all, for all persons are called to become a single people in him.

This is the mission of the Church and of every baptized person in our time too, even in the era of globalization; a mission that with attentive pastoral solicitude is also directed to the variegated universe of migrants - students far from home, immigrants, refugees, displaced people, evacuees - including for example, the victims of modern forms of slavery, and of human trafficking. Today too the message of salvation must be presented with the same approach as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, taking into account the different social and cultural situations and special difficulties of each one as a consequence of his or her condition as a migrant or itinerant person. I express the wish that every Christian community may feel the same apostolic zeal as St Paul who, although he was proclaiming to all the saving love of the Father (Rm 8:15-16; Gal 4:6) to “win more” (1 Cor 9:22) for Christ, made himself weak “to the weak... all things to all men so that [he] might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22). May his example also be an incentive for us to show solidarity to these brothers and sisters

of ours and to promote, in every part of the world and by every means, peaceful coexistence among different races, cultures and religions.

Yet what was the secret of the Apostle to the Gentiles? The missionary zeal and passion of the wrestler that distinguished him stemmed from the fact that since “Christ [had] made him his own”, (Phil 3:12), he remained so closely united to him that he felt he shared in his same life, through sharing in “his sufferings” (Phil 3:10; cf. also Rm 8:17; 2 Cor 4:8-12; Col 1:24). This is the source of the apostolic ardour of St Paul who recounts: “He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles” (Gal 1:15-16; cf. also Rm 15:15-16). He felt “crucified with” Christ, so that he could say: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20), and no difficulty hindered him from persevering in his courageous evangelizing action in cosmopolitan cities such as Rome and Corinth, which were populated at that time by a mosaic of races and cultures.

In reading the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters that Paul addressed to various recipients, we perceive a model of a Church that was not exclusive but on the contrary open to all, formed by believers without distinction of culture or race: every baptized person is, in fact, a living member of the one Body of Christ. In this perspective, fraternal solidarity expressed in daily gestures of sharing, joint participation and joyful concern for others, acquires a unique prominence. However, it is impossible to achieve this dimension of brotherly mutual acceptance, St Paul always teaches, without the readiness to listen to and welcome the Word preached and practiced (cf. 1 Thes 1:6), a Word that urges all to be imitators of Christ (cf. Eph 5:1-2), to be imitators of the Apostle (cf. 1 Cor 11:1). And therefore, the more closely the community is united to Christ, the more it cares for its neighbor, eschewing judgment, scorn and scandal, and opening itself to reciprocal acceptance (cf. Rm 14:1-3; 15:7). Conformed to Christ, believers feel they are “brothers” in him, sons of the same Father (Rm 8:14-16; Gal 3:26; 4:6). This treasure of brotherhood makes them “practice hospitality” (Rm 12:13), which is the firstborn daughter of *agape* (cf. 1 Tm 3:2, 5:10; Ti 1:8; Phlm 17).

In this manner the Lord's promise: comes true: "then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Cor 6:17-18). If we are aware of this, how can we fail to take charge of all those, particularly refugees and displaced people, who are in conditions of difficulty or hardship? How can we fail to meet the needs of those who are de facto the weakest and most defenseless, marked by precariousness and insecurity, marginalized and often excluded by society? We should give our priority attention to them because, paraphrasing a well known Pauline text, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1 Cor 1:27).

Dear brothers and sisters, may the World Day for Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated on 18 January 2009, be for all an incentive to live brotherly love to the full without making any kind of distinction and without discrimination, in the conviction that any one who needs us and whom we can help is our neighbor (cf. *Deus Caritas Est* n. 15). May the teaching and example of St Paul, a great and humble Apostle and a migrant, an evangelizer of peoples and cultures, spur us to understand that the exercise of charity is the culmination and synthesis of the whole of Christian life.

The commandment of love - as we well know - is nourished when disciples of Christ, united, share in the banquet of the Eucharist which is, par excellence, the sacrament of brotherhood and love. And just as Jesus at the Last Supper combined the new commandment of fraternal love with the gift of the Eucharist, so his "friends", following in the footsteps of Christ who made himself a "servant" of humanity, and sustained by his Grace cannot but dedicate themselves to mutual service, taking charge of one another, complying with St Paul's recommendation: "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Only in this way does love increase among believers and for all people (cf. 1 Thes 3:12).

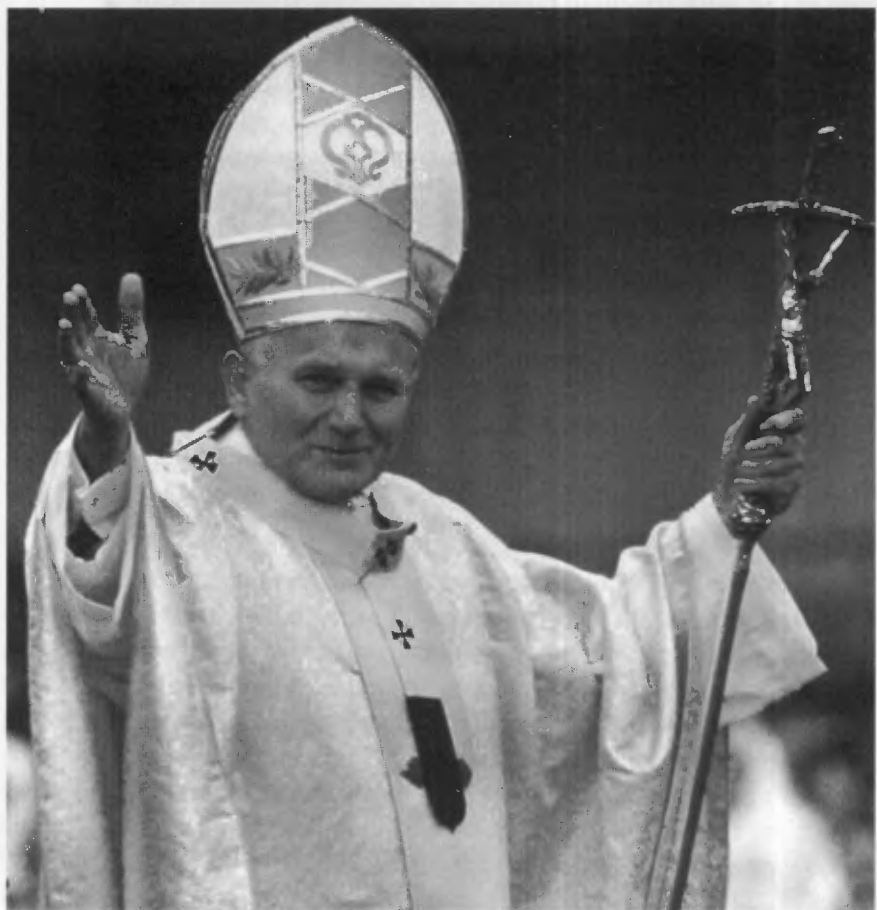
Dear brothers and sisters, let us not tire of proclaiming and witnessing to this "Good News" with enthusiasm, without fear and sparing no energy! The entire Gospel message is condensed in love, and authentic

disciples of Christ are recognized by the mutual love they bear one another and by their acceptance of all.

May the Apostle Paul and especially Mary, the Mother of acceptance and love, obtain this gift for us. As I invoke the divine protection upon all those who are dedicated to helping migrants, and more generally, in the vast world of migration, I assure each one of my constant remembrance in prayer and, with affection, I impart my apostolic Blessing to all. ■

SOURCE:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20080824_world-migrants-day_en.html



JOHN PAUL II: Migrant Pope Teaches on Migration

INTERCULTURAL FORUM

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Pope John Paul II Cultural Center

MOST REV. NICHOLAS DIMARZIO, D.D.

INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to have been invited to the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center to speak on the issue of migration as found in the teaching of John Paul II. This great institute dedicated to the preserving thought of John Paul II and to plumbing its depths certainly will have work for many years to come, since the vastness of John Paul II's writings and the complexity of his thought will take many successive generations of scholars to study and apply.

I was asked by Father Gus DiNoia to present this paper following a discussion we had on the Holy Father's thought in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* on which I had done a paper when I was here in Washington as director of Migration and Refugees Services, at a time in my life when I had more time than I do now. The paper was entitled "A Commentary on *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* from the Perspective of Migration Concerns." I remember distinctly presenting this paper to a staff member

of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace who was charged with developing background for the Encyclical. After a careful reading, I was told that it was truly amazing that I had found what was not contained in the Encyclical regarding migration. His comment obviously was meant to clarify that the issue of migration was not a subject of *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, but rather it was development and other issues. However, one of the major causes and factors influencing migration is development itself. So, I make the point to set the stage for my treatment of the Holy Father's thought on migration, which is implicit in many of his teachings, but which is also explicit in many of his discourses.

I have called the Holy Father the migrant pope, not because of his many travels, but rather since he has described himself as such in his *First Greeting to the Faithful* from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. "Praise be Jesus Christ!" he said. "Now their eminences the cardinals have summoned a new bishop of Rome. They have summoned him from a distant land -- distant, yet always so close in the communion of faith and in Christian tradition." John Paul gave this spontaneous address in somewhat halting Italian. He went on to joke, "I do not know whether I can express myself properly in your/our Italian tongue. If I make mistakes, you will correct me." (He already had made two errors)¹ With that initial greeting, it is clear that John Paul realized that he, too, was a migrant, the first migrant pope in 400 years who has become the defender of human dignity and human rights of migrants. There is no pope before him that was ever able to accomplish as much as he has in this area. In his homily at his first radio message *Urbi et Orbi*, his famous words ring out, "Do not be afraid, open wide the doors to Christ, to a saving power. Open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems, the vast field of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid."² It is clear that the issues of human freedom very much form the core of his teaching. Some who really understand his teaching have called him the "Freedom Pope."

MIGRATION THEORY AND THE PERSON

From his various encyclicals and other writings, we can deduce a Christian anthropology. It forms the basis from which we can understand

his teaching on migration. In preparing for this talk, I had to give some serious consideration to the presentation framework. A mere recitation of statements on migration from the Holy Father would not do justice to the real issues at hand. Just how could we understand the human person, as the Pope does, who is the subject of migration and not its object in a world that has often forgotten human dignity. The Holy Father understands the human person as subject and not object. This theological and philosophical understanding comes from the elaboration of the experience of faith, as described in *Fides et Ratio, Veritatis Splendor* and his earlier works before becoming pope. The basic groundwork is faith, as anthropological act, and experience which he then describes phenomenologically and assigns to it being, giving it value and weight. Man is subject as he images God by the obedience of faith. For example, the migration of Abraham illustrates the obedience of faith. The human person emerges into self-consciousness from the act of believing in the revealing person of Jesus Christ. This Christian anthropology builds on the foundation of *Gadium et Spes*, Paragraph 24, in which the likeness of the human person to the Trinity concludes in the statement: “This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for Himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self.”³

The human person has been treated as an object in the last century in more ways than one. And nowhere is it clearer than in the migration phenomenon. Be they refugees, migrant workers, immigrants or undocumented migrants, all are seen as objects not persons who are the real subjects of human activity. But John Paul asserts that the human person is never an object or a concept. The human person is a subject with a conscientiousness that allows him to act in full responsibility.

The theories of migration are wide and varied. I remember that I knew something about them, thinking back to the days when I wrote my doctoral dissertation. But I had forgotten what I had written. In fact, sometimes I tell myself that I have forgotten more about migration than most people know and this I hope is not a self-serving statement. I did eventually find my dissertation which was lost in a box in my basement. My life’s blood had been poured out only to be lost. [I was almost tempted to call my mother because I was sure she had a copy somewhere, but I did find it.] I opened to the section on migration theory, which included 60 pages of

a 400-page doctoral dissertation, entitled, "Profiling Undocumented Aliens in the New York Metropolitan Area, Social Welfare and Labor Market Implications." In order to do the necessary field research, a large part of the study was directed to understanding the theoretical models of migration, with their implications for international migration theory. Without a theory of migration, how can we explain, in particular, as was the subject of the dissertation, "Undocumented Migration," which seems to defy theoretical constructs and categorization. As I paged through the matrix that I had developed from the writings of over 60 migration theorists categorized in various perspectives, I did find what I had written about anthropology as being a discipline that held some hope in understanding migration. Allow me to read to you what I wrote about 18 years ago.

"Anthropology perhaps holds the best hope for a theory of migration by giving proper attention to the human consequences of migration. The main change of migration is, in fact, cultural by the migrant transfer from one place to another. The problems of cultural change and shock need greater attention, as does the whole area of migration consequences. A migrant is a person and those disciplines which respect the human quality of this phenomenon offer a better means of analysis than those which exclude the personal consequences."⁴

This is what I find interesting about John Paul II's thought on migration and on many subjects. He has in effect developed a Christian anthropology which allows us to reconcile many difficulties of the past by developing an adequate anthropology of the believing self. It is this Christian anthropology, with all of its facets, that forms the framework in which we can understand the Pope's teaching on the human person as migrant.

To continue the discussion of the person, not merely in the reductive terms of being as an object, but rather as a subject, we have to enter into the topics of freedom and therefore self-determination. If faith is the most determinant act of the person as person because of a complete handing over of the self to the revealing Self of Christ, then we have to consider how the self is able to be handed over, such that it can be gift. And how could there a gift that is not free? Freedom now takes on the meaning of having the use and possession of oneself, which is manifested

in the experience of responsibility. And responsibility implies the exercise of a freedom that is dependent on truth. As Pope John Paul says “It is through this dependence on the recognized and admitted truth that I am really ‘independent’ – with regard to others and to things. I am dependent *on myself*. Responsibility is born with the knowledge of the truth: the truth of being, the truth of values, the truth of my relations to being and to values, the truth of the actions which I undertake. So in man liberty is a faculty of responsible self-determination. It lies at the very center of the transcendence peculiar to man as a person. It also lies at the basis of morality, where it appears as a capacity for choice...”⁵

Self-determination is such an important aspect of understanding migration, since migrants determine their action. Some theories of migration see migrants as magnets in push and pull theories as if they have no say in what they do. Other theories, especially those in the conflict school, describe migration as a phenomena of post modern capitalism seen in a Marxist perspective. Others would concentrate their attention on socio-economic models. However, of the over 60 theorists and 6 major divisions of migration theory under the equilibrium and conflict models that I carefully studied, only the anthropological theories came close to describing the true human perspective of migration, because it is persons as both subject and object who migrate.

HUMAN DIGNITY

The other major concept in John Paul II’s thought is the issue of human dignity. Human dignity derives from the freedom to obey the divine commands and proceeds from all that was said above about self-determination. The “structure” of the human person is taken from the Godhead itself and its dignity derives from the dynamic of self-determination to become relational as the trinity of Persons is relational. The meaning of the “Father” is the act of engendering the Son. He is not Father and then engenders the Son, but is the very act of engendering. Hence, “person” in God means relation. And in the dynamic of fatherhood and filiation, this relation is a gift. I know that is a mouthful, but it is the core of the Holy Father’s teaching. Because man is made in the image and likeness of God, he has a masterful dignity which the Second Vatican

Council, of which John Paul II was a father, clearly states in *Gaudium et Spes*,¹⁷ that we cannot forget that “man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake” meaning “God willed to leave man in the power of his own counsel, so that he would seek his Creator of his own accord and would freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God.”

These words indicate the wonderful depth of the sharing of God’s dominion to which man has been called. They indicate that man’s dominion extends in a certain sense over himself. This we find reflected in *Veritatis Splendor*, 39. “The exercise of dominion over the world represents ‘a rightful autonomy which is due to every man....’ Not only of the world, however, but also man himself has been entrusted to his own care and responsibility.”

Theological underpinnings of John Paul’s anthropology help us to understand that dominion and autonomy that have been translated into philosophical term of self-determination by Karol Wojtyla, himself, in his earlier works. We must remember that here he is defining the workings of human freedom, in a new way. This understanding is very important to migration concerns, as freedom to move and migrate is so critical.

John Paul’s thought on the human person well pre-dated his election to the Pontificate. In an article entitled “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination” he says, “Only if one can determine oneself (...) can one also become a gift for others. The Council’s statement that ‘the human being...cannot fully find himself or herself except through a disinterested gift of himself or herself’ allows us to conclude that it precisely when one becomes a gift for others that one most fully becomes oneself. This ‘law of the gift,’ if it may be so designated, is inscribed deep within the dynamic structure of the person. The text of Vatican II certainly draws its inspiration from revelation, in the light of which it paints this portrait of the human being as a person. One could say that his is a portrait in which the person is depicted as a being willed by God ‘for itself’ and, at the same time, as a being turned ‘toward’ others. This relational portrait of the person, however, necessarily presupposes the immanent (and indirectly ‘substantial’) portrait that unfolds before us from an analysis of the personal structure of self-determination.”⁷

In my experience with immigrants, migrants and refugees, the reality of the disinterested gift of self is almost always found. If you ask one of the above-mentioned why he or she chose to migrate, rarely does someone answer for myself. Rather it was for my children's sake, my family and sometimes even to help my country. The concrete fact of the power of remittances is verification of the almost universal gift of self which migrants, immigrants and refugees make.

How important the notion of self-determination is to understanding the motivation for migrants to leave comfortable surroundings and to start out for the unfamiliar. Even the refugee, who is categorized as a forced migrant, self-determines for himself that he will make a decision and flee for his life or to protect his family. Human beings are persons, not inanimate objects, or pushed to and fro by external circumstances. This is key to understanding migrants and migration today. Our Holy Father, by giving us an insight to the human person, has given us a foundation upon which to base our thinking.

In his Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, the Holy Father speaks clearly about the foundation of philosophical thought. In fact, his own Wojtylan method has been described as a phenomenological description of experience which is accompanied by philosophical and theological mediation. Most of his Encyclicals follow this pattern. The human experience is described but its philosophical foundations are extricated so that a theological reflection, especially from the scriptures, can be given. In *Fides et Ratio* he says, "We face a great challenge at the end of this millennium to move from phenomenon to foundation, a step as necessary as it is urgent. We cannot stop short at experience alone; even if experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises. Therefore, a philosophy which shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of Revelation."⁸

Some might say what does this have to do with migration. But let me supply an example of this methodology to understand the first migrant couple, Adam and Eve. If we think about it, we can discover that Adam and Eve, having been expelled from Paradise, moved from one place to another and, perhaps, were the first refugee couple. John Paul II speaks about the state of anthropological innocence depicted in Genesis 1 and 2 when he

states, "I have attempted to stress the very real need for a confrontation of the metaphysical view of the person that we find in St. Thomas and in the traditions of Thomistic philosophy with the comprehensive experience of the human being." What he really tries to do is to cross the threshold from original sin to the original innocence of man who was working with God in the Garden of Paradise in obedience. This, later on, would form the core of his understanding of human work. John Paul deploys the descriptive powers of phenomenology to disclose a biblical understanding of the 'original solitude' experienced as the result of self-determination in the work of tilling the garden and naming the animals that we find in Genesis. He unites it to a metaphysics of being where he asserts that "In a special way, the person constituted a privileged focus for the encounter with being and hence is capable of metaphysical enquiry. The extraordinary character of this anthropological proposal and of the understanding of man is a unique attempt to take the revelation of God and apply it to the ancient and modern tools of philosophic reasoning, so that we can understand the true nature of man before his reason was darkened and his world was weakened by sin. That is before the decomposition of his anthropological structure set in. Hence, we might deduce that migration, itself, has been described in many times by our Holy Father not as a good in itself, but rather as an evil that has resulted from the very weakening of human nature that was part of original sin."⁹

HUMAN RIGHTS

All human rights proceed from the anthropological understanding of self-determination with self-completion. This means that the human person cannot be used or exploited by anyone, not even God Himself. Karol Wojtyla asserts this in *Love and Responsibility* when he says, "We must never treat a person as the means to an end. This principle has a universal validity. Nobody can use a person as a means towards an end, no human being, not even God the Creator."¹⁰

In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, the Holy Father responds to certain questions posed to him. On the question of human rights, he continues to assert that human rights "were inscribed by the Creator in the order of Creation...they are not concessions on the part of human

institutions, or on the part of states and international organizations. These institutions express no more than what God Himself inscribed in the order He created, what He Himself has inscribed in the moral conscience, or in the human heart, as Saint Paul explains in the Letter to the Romans where he says, ‘Their conscience bears witness together with that law, their thoughts will accuse or defend them on the day when in accordance with the Gospel I preach, God will pass judgment on the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.’ (Rom 2:15)”¹² The Holy Father goes on to say, “The Gospel is the fullest confirmation of all of human rights.”¹³

Human dignity has its source in the redemption itself. That is why in *Redemptor Hominis*, the Holy Father’s first Encyclical, we see in Paragraph 17 a discussion of human rights as “letter or spirit.” The Holy Father goes on for nine paragraphs to describe the basis of human rights as the human person who has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. He specifically mentions the declaration of human rights as the basis for the setting up of the United Nations organization. He says, “The declaration of human rights and the acceptance of their letter means everywhere also the actualization of their spirit.”¹⁴

Again, in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* in the response to the question on human rights, the Holy Father says, “The Redeemer confirms human rights simply by restoring the fullness of the dignity of man received when God created him in His image and likeness.”¹⁵ He goes on to answer the question by asserting two important aspects of the human person, the person as a sincere gift of self and the person who was only realized through love. If the person can only realize himself / herself through love but when he/she cannot completely give of self, then he/she is truly deprived of human freedom which is the most basic human right, the right to self-determination. He goes on to say, “If we cannot accept the prospect of giving ourselves as a gift, then the danger of a selfish freedom will always be present.”¹⁶ In this clear and simple response to the question of human rights and human dignity, the Holy Father joins together freedom with truth which is treated at length in his Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, while at the same time giving us a real understanding of freedom as conformity with the will of God, reflecting the wisdom of God which is truth. The Holy Father’s teaching in this regard gives a firm foundation to human rights.

When speaking of migration as a human right, we can refer ourselves to the *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, presented by the Holy See to all persons, institutions of authorities concerned with the mission of the family in today's world. On October 22, 1983, Article 12 of this document states, "The families of migrants have the right to the same protection as that accorded other families. The families of immigrants have the right to respect for their own culture and to receive support and assistance towards their integration into the community to which they contribute. Emigrant workers have the right to see their family united as soon as possible. And refugees have the right to the assistance of public authorities and International Organizations in facilitating the reunion of their families."¹⁷ I believe that we can see the Holy Father's fingerprints in this clear declaration of the rights of families in migration.

In the Annual Migration Message of 1993, which marked the International Year of the Family, the Holy Father quotes his Apostolic Letter *Familiaris Consortio*, saying, "The family of migrants, . . . , should be able to find a homeland everywhere in the Church."¹⁸ The Church must avoid the risk of marginalized pastoral care for the marginalized. The personal parish's mission for the cares of soul's integration is a desirable process not to be rushed. Human rights is not simply an amenity to be afforded families in society, but rather a right within the Church itself.

In *Laborem Exercens*, the Holy Father makes the clear statement joining work and the immigration question. He says, "Man has the right to leave his native land for various motives -- and also the right to return -- in order to seek better conditions of life in another country." This right to migrate, which is incumbent on both countries of origin and countries of destination, supports the basic human freedom and the dignity of the person. The entire Encyclical on human work enunciates the gospel of work which asserts the priority of labor over capital, the primacy of man over things. Again, we see the basic theme, the subject of work is man and work has man as its subject. Work can be misconstrued as an object, something which is produced by man which can degenerate into seeing human beings as tools of production. This can happen in both the capitalistic and Marxist system of labor. He concludes the section on work and emigration by saying that, "Capital should be at the service of labor and not labor at the service of capital."²⁰ It is certainly clear that the sound

anthropology in the Holy Father's teaching gives a foundation from which to judge the question of immigration as it relates to "man the worker."

CULTURE AND INCULTURATION

It is almost impossible to speak about the phenomenon of migration without contemporaneously addressing oneself to the issue of culture. The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has devoted a significant amount of his teaching to the issue of culture and in particular there are many ways that this relates to his treatment of the migration issue. An in depth understanding of the teaching of our Holy Father can be found in the doctoral dissertation of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal George entitled, "Inculturation in Ecclesial Communion: Culture and Church in the Teaching of John Paul II." In trying to understand John Paul's teaching on culture, Cardinal George's analysis and study is excellent. (Perhaps some day he also could be invited to give a lecture on this important aspect of papal teaching.)

I wish to begin with a quote from his dissertation which makes the link between culture and migration clearer. Cardinal George says, "A person's right to freedom and identity is ontologically basic because the self-possession revealed in action is irreducible. Without self-possession, the person is less than human; his or her truth and dignity are destroyed at the root, even if a superficial array of choices remains open."²¹ There is nothing more basic to human identity than culture itself. Because of the freedom to self determine, that is the basis for all human rights that we spoke about before, the human person has a right to create his own culture. Karol Wojtyla asserted that "Culture is not simply manifested in objectivities such as language, dress, song, dance and other superficial or non-essential elements, but the cultivation of the subjectivity, that is the self as asserted in *Gaudium et Spes* 24, "The person becomes self by a praxis of self giving." This is the real heart of culture. Karol Wojtyla wrote regarding the constitution of culture through human praxis that "a person, in so far as he or she is a self-determining subject, allows culture to exist. Culture develops principally within this dimension, the dimension of self-determining subjects. Culture is basically oriented not so much toward the creation of human products, things or objects as towards the Creator of the human self, which then radiates into the world of products."²²

The Pope's phenomenological analysis of culture, consistent with his understanding of the human person, gives us a basis upon which we can defend the inalienable right to culture that is part of every human person's heritage. The migrant himself is a person who moves from one culture to another in most instances. Even internal migrants change geography and culture in moving from one part of their own country to another. But the unity of the human person is expressed in culture which is not destroyed by diversity. Just as the Trinity is able to maintain unity and diversity, so, too, cultures can maintain an overall unity even within areas that might be open to conflict.

In the annual Migration Day Message of 2002, the Holy Father states, "On the day of Pentecost there was the Spirit of truth who completed the divine design of the unity of mankind in the diversity of culture and religions."²³ The theme of the overall message was inter-religious dialogue which necessarily involves cultural differences. Migrants bring the question cultural identity to the world's attention. They are the prime movers in the world of diversity since they carry that diversity with them. They challenge the world to be open.

Cardinal George, in describing the relationship between culture and faith says this, "If culture is also to be related to faith, believers need a philosophical anthropology which restores to human persons their integrity in such a way that they remain certain of their own identity and yet always open to goals which transcend their own particular experience."²⁴

Most migrants in the process of migration undergo an identity crisis, a challenge to their own identity, a challenge to take on a new culture, while at the same time they must defend their innate culture lest they lose something of who they are. Hence, the teaching of the Holy Father on migration issues comes down on the side of cultural preservation, as well as cultural pluralism.

The 1991 Migration Day message addresses this fact most directly. The Holy Father says, "Migration always has two aspects, diversity and universality. The former comes from the meeting between diverse individuals and groups of people and involves inevitable tension, latent rejection and open polemics. The latter is constituted by the harmonious meeting of diverse social subjects who discover themselves in the

patrimony that is common to every human being formed as it is by the values of humanity and fraternity. There is a mutual enrichment when diverse cultures come into contact.”²⁵ The message goes on to contrast the biblical images of the Tower of Babel and the Pentecost event. The ethnic and linguistic diversity and the issue of language and culture as seen in this context teaches that culture is at the very root of human existence. What Babel had destroyed, the Holy Father has said, “On Pentecost then the legitimacy and ethnic and cultural pluralism was restored...Every person must have his dignity recognized and his cultural identity respected. This principle finds its individual and specific application in the area of migration.”²⁶

The defense of cultural pluralism, especially in regard to migrant peoples, is always consistent with the Holy Father’s understanding of the human person. To strip a person of his or her culture, to reduce a person to an object, when only a person can truly be human is to be able to have the freedom to create their own culture. The Holy Father’s theory of culture is perhaps best expressed in a talk that he gave at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on June 2, 1980. This gave him the opportunity to speak in later discourses on the relationship of culture and faith. The theme of the talk was that the future of mankind depends on culture. In that historic talk he said, “It is through culture that man lives a truly human life. Human life is also culture in the sense that it is by culture that man is distinguished and differentiated from everything else that exists in the visible world; man cannot do without culture.”²⁷ If we were to apply this to the situation of migrants, a migrant person also cannot do without culture. He or she often straddles two cultures and not only must maintain his or her own, but also acquire all that a new culture entails; languages, customs, etc. Migrants become the purveyors of diversity which contributes to the ultimate unity of the human family.

Many times the conflict of cultures results in racism known in the relationship to migrants as xenophobia or the fear of strangers. In the 1984 Annual Migration Day message, written for the Holy Father but issued by Cardinal Casaroli the unbiblical term of xenophobia is translated into the newly coined word of philoxemia. Philoxemia is a sense of open and cordial hospitality of which St. Paul speaks in the Letter to the Romans, 12:13, “If anyone of the Saints is in need, you must share with them, you

must make hospitality your special care.” The statement goes on to say that the same concept is expressed in Peter 4:9 in a most lively and practical statement, “Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling,” In the letter to the Hebrews 13:2, it is underlined that a mysterious design may be hidden in this brotherly behavior, “And remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Another cardinal who understands John Paul II’s mind and can explain his thought is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. In an address at Hong Kong in 1993 to the presidents of the Asian Bishops Conference, he addressed the specific issue of “Christ, Faith and the Challenge of Cultures.” The issue of inculturation is closely related to the world of migrants and especially related to the understanding of the Church’s missionology. It challenges us to understand, first what culture is and how the movement from one culture to another presents great challenges. Cardinal Ratzinger says that from the biblical perspective Israel’s faith is based on the call of Abraham which in itself, (my interpretation) is a migration event. Abraham was called to leave his country and to find not only a new land, but also a new religion and all that the culture entailed. Ratzinger says that a cultural break is very necessary. A new beginning and a new healing is necessary as the basis of all religious faith. A new center calls a person to a different understanding of God. For example, Christ’s cross was a break. It was a type of expulsion, an alienation from the earth. It was a new center that pulled and drew both things to Himself, as the Scripture tells us. In his talk, he describes how one cannot be a Christian without a certain exodus, a break from one’s previous life in all aspects. How much does this apply to the migrant who is called to break from his previous culture to find a new culture. Cardinal Ratzinger goes on in his talk to coin a new phrase for inculturation, “For this reason, we should no longer speak of inculturation but of the meeting of cultures of “interculturality”, to coin a new phrase. For inculturation presumes that a faith stripped of culture is transplanted into a religiously indifferent culture whereby two subjects, formally unknown to each other, meet and fuse. But such a notion is first of all artificial and unrealistic... Only if all cultures are potentially universal and open to each other can interculturality lead to flourishing new forms.”²⁸ As you see, those who know the thought and mind of the Holy Father well, as these two eminent

cardinals, are able to explain what sometimes is difficult to decipher in the Holy Father's Christian anthropology.

Having taken this brief excursion into the area of culture and inculturation of migrants in the Holy Father's thought, it is now incumbent, that as the implicit teaching on migration has been put into context, that the explicit teaching be given some coverage in a summary fashion.

SOURCES OF MIGRATION TEACHING: A SURVEY

The main sources of Papal teaching most obviously are the Encyclicals and also in this case the annual Migration Day messages, as well as the four World Migration Congress messages and numerous other talks where he mentions migration. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states that there are 37 messages regarding refugees and 21 messages regarding migrants in various other places. Also, the most recent Apostolic Letters, *As the Third Millennium Approaches* and *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, also offer some citations. And finally, the post-synodal exhortations, particularly *Ecclesia in America*, can be helpful in understanding the specific migration teaching of John Paul II.

ENCYCLICALS

I will deal with the Encyclicals in chronological order, the first being *Redemptor Hominis, the Redeemer of Man*, which certainly forms the basis of the Christian anthropology of John Paul II. The human person is, "... primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling Her mission. He is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ Himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.²⁹ The Church looks to man in order to bring him the truth about God and himself. As previously noted, the Spirit versus the letter of the declaration of human rights is discussed in this Encyclical and primarily to treat the fact of redemption. But the redemption is not merely a theological fact, it is the basis of Christian anthropology and most fundamental is the citation of *Gadium et Spes*, paragraph 23, in which we see clearly announced that "Christ has united

Himself to each man, therefore, each person has an innate ability to find Christ.” The Church Herself is a traveler. If the way of the Church is man, the Church must travel and the depths of the mystery of the incarnation. And all the human activity, therefore, must be the concern of the Church. In this case, migration never falls far from the Church’s concern.

In the next Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia, Rich in Mercy*, we understand the intimate relationship between mercy and justice. Mercy, not merely justice, provides a solid foundation of a society which can truly meet human expectations. Divine mercy and human dignity are intrinsically combined. Social relations cannot only be based on justice that lacks mercy. True mercy, is so to speak, the most profound source of justice. In some of the Migration Day messages, this Encyclical is quoted, especially in regard to the issue of undocumented migrants.

Laborem Exercens addresses the human person as worker, in fact, human work is the key to the social question as we hear in Paragraph 20, “Work must not be seen as an object, as a result or product. But rather work must be seen through the subject who performs the work. Work has man as its subject.”³⁰ The enunciation of the Gospel of work and in particular to the question of immigration for work is covered in Paragraph 23, “Migrants are workers, but they must not become the object of our concern, but rather they are the subject.”³¹

My analysis of the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, was the cause of my being invited to give this talk. It deals primarily with international development concerns. Under the topic of authentic human development, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* discusses the necessary cooperation for development which must exist between nations and peoples if authentic human development is to occur. The moral character of development can never be forgotten; lest in the process of development the rights of nations and peoples, especially individuals, will be disregarded. There is a unique balance between solidarity and freedom, and that balance must characterize the relations between nations and peoples if authentic human development is to become a reality.

The migration right is implied in integral human development. Development has a unique connection to migration, and even if the exact relationship between these two social realities is not settled, the

fundamental interconnection remains. It might be well here to describe this relationship.

In general, migration is a limited mechanism for development in the sending countries, although some immediate results of migration; namely the remittances of capital sent home by the migrants, can provide short-term assistance. Remittances are in a certain sense a double-edged sword in relation to development. Because remittances are individually sent by migrants and spent by the migrant's family, this capital is often used to purchase goods and land, to improve housing, and even to develop small business or agricultural projects. The multiple effects of these remittances are not capable of developing a society at large and in some ways micro-level remittances even contribute to inflation.

The characteristics of the migrants who leave developing countries also tend to influence long-term development. If it is skilled workers and professionals who leave, then development is hindered, but the emigration of low-skilled workers can in some ways contribute to development as described above. The eventual repatriation of migrants also contributes to development, if the return of migrants is sizeable and if the migrants were successful in the receiving countries, especially if they gained skills needed in the sending countries.

The structural problems associated with the causes of underdevelopment create the necessary conditions for emigration of surplus labor, yet these same conditions are not sufficient to induce labor to migrate. The influence of personal decision-making in the labor migration process must be considered. Not all labor migration is receiving-country induced."³²

The Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* develops a Christian anthropology as the basis of Catholic social doctrine which begins with the correct view of the human person and his or her unique value. Human dignity and human rights must necessarily be supported by subsidiarity and participation. In Paragraph 28 we hear that "...The poor as individuals and as peoples...are not irksome intruders."³³ This is a clear reference to migrants who often are poor and seen as intruders. In Paragraph 57, we see that "The social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action."³⁴ Further

on, concern for the marginalized refugees and migrants is expressed in this paragraph.

In *Veritatis Splendor*, there is a reference in Paragraph 53 to culture, “It must certainly be admitted that man always exists in a particular culture, but it must also be admitted that man is not exhaustively defined by that same culture.”³⁵ Man is not the prisoner of any culture; the human person’s transcendent nature is the measure of all culture.

Veritatis Splendor, which describes the Gospel as the gift of the commandment of new life, is a reflection on the life which professes truth and love. It gives the anthropological concerns that underline the moral doctrine for a vision of man set forth by the Church.

The *Gospel of Life* contains a powerful dissertation on the moral foundation of civil law. In Paragraph 72 we hear that civil law should “mirror natural law.” Paragraph 71 says that “Civil Law must insure all members of society enjoy respect and certain fundamental rights which innately belong to the person, rights which every positive law must recognize and guarantee.” Further on in Paragraph 71, “Thus any government which refused to recognize human rights or acted in violation of them would not only fail in its duty; but its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force. These citations provide a basis for the defense of asylum seekers and undocumented workers who sometimes challenge existing civil laws, but who exercise natural rights.”³⁶

These encyclicals provide much of the background for John Paul II’s teaching on migration and for the annual Migration Day messages to be described below.

ANNUAL MIGRATION MESSAGES

The annual Migration Day messages can be divided into two categories. From 1974 to 1983 inclusive, the messages were issued under the signature of the Secretary of State. Although approved by the Holy Father, they cannot be directly attributable to his own authorship, although he is quoted extensively. From 1985 to 2002, each message bears the signature of the Holy Father, therefore, can be interpreted as authentically his own authorship. Instead of characterizing each message, I have attempted to

analyze and categorize the issues treated. A general division, I believe, can be made between the statements regarding anthropology and those which are more of a religious nature. I will attempt in just a few brief statements to enunciate some of the themes of these numerous messages, beginning from the most recent to the earlier statements.

The following issues have been treated within the last five years; the issue of inter-religious dialogue, evangelization, the unity of humankind and the diversity of culture, and globalization of solidarity. The right to migrate, relying heavily on *Laborem Exercens* is seen as enriching to both sending and receiving countries. The issue of human freedom and communion also are treated in separate messages. The development issue, relying heavily on *Centesimus Annus* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, is treated in one message. The issue of necessity of ecclesial integration and incultural pluralism is set in the biblical context of the Pentecost event which unites overturning the Babel event which has divided humankind. Human mobility in general is a constant theme, as well as the solidarity that is necessary between sending and receiving cultures. One message already cited in the talk about described racism as against migrants as xenophobia which must be replaced by philoxemia. The issue of discrimination against migrants is also treated from the perspective of family unity as a principle of migration rights. It is a subject that draws heavily from the Apostolic Letter *Familiaris Consortio*. Interdependence and the structures of sin drawing from *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, are also treated in one of the letters. The issue of cultural acceptance, as cited above, is essential to ecclesial identity. Drawing heavily from *Centesimus Annus*, we hear that work is meant to unite the human race, not divide it. Human dignity and human rights are integral to the social message of gospel proclamation. It must reach out to the marginalized, especially refugees and migrants.

On the other hand, the religious statements would include a citation of the Gospel of Charity, a statement from both the *Coming and The Beginning of the New Millennium* letters.

Respect for conscience and the incarnation as a religious fact that extends the Gospel to all people. Christian service is treated as an obligation towards migrants.³⁷ The unity of the trinity becomes a model for the integration of newcomers. Citing *Lumen Gentium* Paragraph 9, we see how the image of the Church is one of unity. Regarding the

undocumented, the Holy Father calls them the man on the roadside in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Hospitality is a grave obligation on the Church. The civilization of love, the phrase coined by Pope Paul VI, becomes a reality when migrants are well received. There are several references to Mary as the “Pilgrim of Faith,” as well as the mention of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, citing the missionary nature of the Church which involved migration for its missionaries.

This extensive body of teaching augmented on an annual basis represents a veritable treasure trove of thought and development of the issue of migration.³⁸

MIGRATION CONGRESSES

The Pontifical Council on Migration over the course of its almost 30 years of existence has called four world congresses on migration, three of which have taken place in John Paul II’s pontificate. The most recent congress in 1998, dealt with the pastoral care of migrants and refugees. As is customary, the Holy Father addresses the congress delegates and issues a statement. A particular concern of the 1998 statement was the issue of illegal migration which was explained in the context of the basic right to leave one’s own country. Immigration is a complex matter which very much depends on public opinion. Public opinion needs to be shaped, so that solidarity with the poor will result. Denunciations of racism and xenophobia are not enough. The Church must be the good Samaritan of the world when it comes to the world’s migrants and refugees. At the conclusion of the document, citing the coming of the third millennium and the Jubilee Year as well as its practices, such as debt cancellation, the Holy Father also called for an amnesty for illegal immigrants. At the third World Congress on Migration, he spoke regarding the increase of the migration phenomenon of the world and the caution of not seeing migrants merely as a labor force, but rather as human beings. The Holy Father says that in Matthew 25, we find the injunction to Welcome the Stranger which is the hallmark for the Church’s work with migrants and refugees. Openness and cooperation must be the hallmarks of the Church’s reception of migrants, as well as the defense of human rights and justice. In 1985, the second World Congress gave the Holy Father an opportunity to cite his

Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* and underline the right to leave and return and seek better conditions of life. He describes immigration as a drama and a trial. It is a necessary evil, not a positive fact for all. For example, refugees experience a negative effect of migration. The right to migrate comes with duties. However, asylum is a strict right as is immigration for work and the right to settle should be protected by civil societies. The issue of integration was addressed. Immigrants must not be assimilated or absorbed, much less dissolved, they must maintain their own identity and culture. Ghettos are not conducive to integration, yet the migrants are urged to be faithful to their origins and faith. It sometimes happens in their own local communities. The Church is a sacrament of unity. It welcomes diversity and unity and is a reconciling force in the world, it must welcome all as brothers, even though they might be strangers. The Church must be the voice of the voiceless when it comes to immigration matters.

POST SYNODAL DOCUMENT

Finally, in the post synodal document *Ecclesia in America* the question of immigrants is treated in Paragraph 65. “The future of migration in America, including North and South America, is obviously of great concern to all nations in the hemisphere.”³⁹ The first service that the Holy Father has given to the issue of migration is to call the Church in America as one Church. Economic globalization has already forged an uneasy unity between the nations of this hemisphere. The question of immigrants is treated both with attention to migrants rights, and non-legal immigration as well as seeking means for effective evangelization of those recent arrivals who do not yet know Christ.

CONCLUSION

In this talk, I was not able, perhaps, to do justice to the vast volume of information and teaching that our Holy Father has annunciated regarding the issue of migration implicitly and explicitly. Perhaps this address will serve as an incentive and foundation for others who will come to the center in the future and plumb the depths of our Holy Father’s thought. The John Paul II Cultural Center, dedicated to preserving his thought and

expounding it, has much work to do. I am happy to have contributed this in a small way to its mission.

Thank you. ■

NOTES:

- ¹ John Paul II, First Greeting to the Faithful, October 16, 1978.
- ² John Paul II, Homily, October 22, 1979, *Observatory Romano* 44 (79).
- ³ John Paul II, *Gadium et Spes*, no. 24.
- ⁴ Nicholas A. DiMarzio, *Profiling Undocumented Aliens in the New York Metropolitan Area: Social Welfare and Labor Market Implications*, Doctoral Thesis, Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work, May, 1985.
- ⁵ Andre Fossard and Pope John Paul II, *Be Not Afraid: Pope John Paul II Speaks Out on His Life, His Beliefs, and His Inspiring Vision for Humanity*, St. Martins Press, April 1984, p. 100-101.
- ⁶ *Gadium et Spes*, op. cit., no. 17.
- ⁷ Karol Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Person and Community*, Lang (1993) 194.
- ⁸ John Paul II, *Rides et Ratio*, no. 83.
- ⁹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 23.2.
- ¹⁰ *Love and Responsibility*, Ignatius Press (1981) 27.
- ¹¹ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, His Holiness John Paul II, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1994, P.196-197.
- ¹² Romans, 2:15, New American Bible Version.
- ¹³ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, op. cit.
- ¹⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, March 4, 1979, no. 17.5.
- ¹⁵ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, op. cit., P.197.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 202.
- ¹⁷ *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, Holy See, October 22, 1983, Article 12.
- ¹⁸ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 77.
- ¹⁹ *Laborem Exercens*, op. cit., no. 23.1.

- ²⁰ Ibid., 23.3.
- ²¹ *Inculturation and Ecclesial Communion, Culture and Church in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II*, Francis E. George, OMI, Urbaniana University Press, Rome, 1990, p. 37.
- ²² *Gaudium et Spes*, op. cit., no. 24.
- ²³ John Paul II, Migration Day Message, 2002, no. 4.
- ²⁴ Francis E. George, OMI, op. cit., p.31.
- ²⁵ John Paul II, Migration Day Message, 1991, no. 3.
- ²⁶ Ibid., no. 4.
- ²⁷ John Paul II, presentation at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, June 2, 1980, "Paths to Peace: a Contribution" p. 30.
- ²⁸ *Christ, Faith and the Challenge of Cultures*, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Origins 1993, p. 681.
- ²⁹ *Redemptor Hominis*, op. cit., no. 14.
- ³⁰ *Laborem Exercens*, op. cit., no. 20.
- ³¹ Ibid., no 23.
- ³² *Profiling Undocumented Aliens*, op. cit., p.17.
- ³³ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, May 1, 1991, no. 28.
- ³⁴ Ibid., no.57.
- ³⁵ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 53.
- ³⁶ John Paul II, *Gospel of Life*, no. 71.
- ³⁷ John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, no. 49.
- ³⁸ For a more detailed analysis of the annual Migration Day Messages see published paper, "Themes of Messages of Pope John Paul II for World Migration Day," Reverend Michael Blume, Pontifical Council on Migration.
- ³⁹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, no. 42.

SOURCE:

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/ndjohnpaul.shtml>



The Theology of Migration

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES

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MARK FRANKEN

To consider the theology of migration, I drew from two sources: Scripture and teachings of the Catholic Church. So, what I thought I'd try to do today is describe some of the theological underpinnings of the Catholic Church's ministry to migrants and point to a couple of challenges both of our Churches and organizations face because of our calling as followers of Christ.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES TO MIGRATION

Throughout the Old and New Testament, we are commanded time and again to be welcoming of and serve the needs of the stranger. There is no question about God's expectations of us. In the earliest Hebrew books of the Old Testament, we hear the prophets teaching the Israelites that the test of their society would be how well the widows, the orphans, and the aliens fared among them. This theme carries on throughout the Scriptures all the way through to Luke's Gospel story of the Good Samaritan and Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus tells us that in the final judgment, we will be asked if we welcomed Him, in the form of the stranger.

In Genesis, we learn that Abraham and Sarah provided hospitality to three strangers from another land and that this response became a paradigm for the treatment of strangers by Abraham's descendents. We see the children of Jacob become forced migrants, with Joseph being sold into slavery.

The enslavement of the Chosen People by the Egyptians and then the liberation by God led directly to the commandments regarding strangers. "You shall treat the stranger no differently than the natives born among you, have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lv 19:33-34)

Think of these passages when you consider today's slaves. Hundreds of thousands of mostly women and young girls trafficked and enslaved in the sex industry. We're told that some 20,000 are trafficked into the U.S. each year. What are we doing as individuals and as Church to liberate these poor people of God?

For the Israelites, not only were they commanded to care for the stranger, but they structured the welcome and care of aliens into their gleaning and tithing laws. (Lv 19:9-10; Dt 14:28-29)

How have we formalized and structured our response as followers of God's Word toward freeing the modern day slaves and welcoming today's strangers? A rather fundamental fact about human relations is that the encounter of one person to another often falls into two categories: the way we relate to family, friends, and community, on the one hand, and the way we relate to the stranger, on the other. Those who we consider members of our community are those we have bonds with, who we live, play and work with, who have interests, values and commitments in common with us. Our instinctive reactions to these people are positive and open.

Reaction to the stranger, whether the actual stranger or the thought of a stranger, is another matter altogether. Our instinct often manifests in suspicion, uncertainty, questions, hesitation, and sometimes even alarm. Just think about the how we Americans now perceive immigrants in this post-9/11 world. The very term "stranger" is a rather ominous one and the word "alien" tends to create resistance and hostility. The stranger or the alien is the outsider; someone who doesn't have the same claims upon us as do our family, friends and community.

What is clear from the Scriptures, however, is that the stranger, no less than our sisters and brothers or our neighbors, is a moral category, demanding of us certain responses based on Gospel attitudes.

I believe it is especially important to note that the biblical tradition puts the migrant and exile at the very center of concern. Therefore, we, as believers and followers of Jesus, can do no less.

For me there is no more poignant migration theme in the Scriptures than that of the Holy Family in flight as refugees from Herod's tyranny. Not only did the Son of God become man, but just as the Israelites of old, He became a refugee in the land of Egypt.

VISIT WITH RWANDAN REFUGEES

One time I was traveling with a bishop to visit refugees in Africa. At one point we met with a group of Rwandan refugees who had been barely surviving for five years in some of the most deplorable conditions I have ever seen – the camp was in the middle of a remote jungle and had open sewage; the refugees' food was limited to what they could yield from the harsh terrain and the water source was not only limited but erratic. Because these refugees, most of whom were women and children, were of the Hutu tribe and suspected of having participated in the genocide in Rwanda years earlier, they were truly outcasts and not welcomed home and only barely accepted where they were at the time.

Living in those conditions and having no hope for a future beyond the confines of the inhospitable camp, I had an image of a leper colony. I had no idea what to say or what to do for the refugees who came up to us and asked for our help.

Then, the bishop I was with sat down with some the refugees and after hearing their pleas, he asked them to join him in prayer. After praying together, the bishop said to the refugees that God hears their prayers and that through His son, Jesus, he understands their plight. Then the bishop said what I thought was the most comforting thing possible under the circumstances. He said, "Remember, Jesus was a refugee."

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

We have a wonderful gift in the Catholic tradition; it is referred to as Catholic Social Teaching. This body of teachings, which spans centuries,

is an attempt by Church leaders to interpret God's Word in contemporary society. Pope John XXIII in the 1960's put it this way, "The Church has the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel." (*Gaudium et Spes*, The Church in the Modern World, 4) CST tries to answer the question, "how does one live a Christian life in today's world?" CST provides principles upon which to inform our responses to the challenges of modern society.

To illustrate the design of these teachings, I'll briefly review one of them, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), issued by Pope John XXIII in 1963. It starts with the dignity of the human person; it tells us that the person is the clearest reflection of the presence of God among us. It reminds us that the person is embodied before us as the abiding presence of God. He goes on to say that as Church, we build institutions because we are under the obligation of faith to protect and promote the dignity of the human person.

Next, in *Peace on Earth*, Pope John argues that each person's dignity is the source of both rights and responsibilities. The rights are moral claims to goods that people need to protect and promote their human dignity, claims that bear upon the spiritual nature of the person; for instance, the right to worship and the right to freedom of conscience. Also claims that relate to their material needs; to housing and employment, to nutrition and healthcare.

The third part of this teaching tells us that the basic moral unit for understanding the world is the human community. Although we live in a world comprised of independent sovereign states, and these are important, they are not where we begin our understanding of the human situation. We begin with the dignity of each person and the social nature of the person, which extends out to multiple communities in which the person needs to grow and develop as a person – the community of family; the community of civil society; but finally, and ultimately, the human community.

In other words, the vision is that every person belongs to a single human community and civil society, in its politics, economics, its laws and its international organization, is judged by how well it responds to the needs of the whole human community.

So, the basic design of CST starts with the sacredness of every person. Then, it points to the rights and responsibilities of individuals. Then, it calls for structures to protect these rights and fulfill these responsibilities, based on the values of truth, justice, freedom, and love.

CST AND MIGRATION

Within this body of CST, particularly in relatively recent times, there is much written on the question of migration. In fact, the current Pope, John Paul II, has been prolific in his communications concerning migrants and the phenomenon of migration.

I'll mention a few of these teachings so you get a flavor.

In 1952, Pope Pius XII issued a document called, *Exsul Familia* (Families in Exile), which is referred to as the "Magna Charta for Migrants." In it Pope Pius says, "The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and for all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien, and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil."

In *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), a document issued by Pope John XXIII in 1963, the Pope says "Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own state. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and to take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the worldwide fellowship of man."

In 1965, at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII, said in *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), "The joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the women and men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way oppressed, these are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

In 1967, Pope Paul VI issued *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples) in which he said, "We cannot insist too much on

the duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception. It is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity...”

Pope John Paul II, in his statement, *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), said “Emigration in search of work should in no way become an opportunity for financial or social exploitation. As regards to the work relationship, the same criteria should be applied to immigrant workers as to all other workers in the society.”

And on the more controversial topic of undocumented migration, Pope John Paul II has said that the ultimate antidote to illegal immigration is the elimination of global underdevelopment and that in the meantime, the human rights of migrants, even in the cases of non-legal immigration, must be respected.

CST PRINCIPLES RELATING TO MIGRATION

If you look at the totality of CST up to the present time, there are at least five principles that emerge that have particular relevancy for migration and migrants.

1. Persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In other words, people have a right not to migrate.
2. The goods of the earth belong to all people and, therefore, people have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families if they cannot do so in their own country. Sovereign nations have the responsibility to accommodate this right within the limits of their resources.
3. Sovereign nations have the right to control their territories and provide for the common good of their residents, as long as this control is not exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring more wealth. In other words, more economically powerful nations have a larger obligation to accommodate migration than do poorer nations.
4. Refugees and asylum seekers fleeing wars and persecution have a particular claim and right to protection.

5. Regardless of their legal status in a country, migrants, like all of God's children, possess inherent human dignity that must at all times be respected.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER AMONG US: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

I'll now turn to a document issued in November 2000 by the Catholic bishops in the United States. It's called *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*.

Having witnessed the unprecedented levels and diversity of immigration over the previous two decades, the bishops were painfully aware of how inadequately the Church had truly been a welcoming presence in the lives of the newest Americans. So, in this document they attempt to set out a vision of welcome, calling on all Catholics and others of good will to open themselves up to see the face of Christ in the newcomers.

The bishops acknowledged that the presence of so many people of so many different cultures and religions in so many parts of the country has challenged the Church to welcome these new immigrants and help them join our communities in ways that are respectful of their cultures and in ways that mutually enrich the immigrants and their new communities.

So, to pursue this vision of welcome, the bishops call for a three-step process that involves: Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity.

The Conversion called for is one that acknowledges our past failures of understanding and our sinful patterns of chauvinism, prejudice, and discrimination toward newcomers, and to undergo a profound conversion of the spirit. It calls for concrete measures to overcome the misunderstanding, ignorance, competition, and fear that stand in the way of genuinely welcoming the stranger in our midst. It also calls for changes in the structures of the Church so that as an institution, the Church will be fully embracing of the cultural pluralism that is our society.

By calling for Communion, the bishops recognize that we need to strengthen our understanding of different cultures and to promote intercultural communications. In other words, we Christians, in order to be truly welcoming, must achieve empathy for the newcomers. We must learn to meet them on their terms.

In the call to Solidarity, the bishops envision putting the fruits of our conversion and communion into practice. By being in solidarity with newcomers we find ways to act on their behalf. This can take many forms. We can participate in public policy advocacy, pushing for laws and policies that are respectful of the human rights and dignity of the immigrants. We can be involved in services to newcomers; respectfully assisting them learn how to navigate their new community.

The bishops felt so strongly about these issues that they have mounted a comprehensive effort to implement the vision contained in *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*.

Soon after the publication of this document, Church leaders from across the country were convened in regional meetings. After some study of the document and some reflection, these leaders took a critical look at the current condition of welcome in their own dioceses. Based on this assessment, the bishops and their staffs began a planning process designed to incorporate the ministry of welcome into the life of the local Church, changing and adapting structures at the diocesan and parish levels.

At the national level, we provided the local churches small grants to serve as seed money to start things like multicultural programs and other initiatives designed to sustain a more welcoming presence.

Today, we are working on a program that infuses multicultural ministry into the curricula of seminaries and formation programs for priests and religious, so that tomorrow's leaders of the Church will be better grounded in this important facet of ministry.

STRANGERS NO LONGER: TOGETHER ON THE JOURNEY OF HOPE

The last document I'll mention is a pastoral letter issued jointly by the bishops of Mexico and the United States in January 2003, called *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. In this document the bishops strive to discern Scripture and CST in the face of the unprecedented levels of migration occurring in this hemisphere and the consequences of current policies toward migrants, including the loss of life along the U.S.-Mexico border. They call for immigration laws and policies that protect the human rights and dignity of migrants and provide for legal and safe means of entry for prospective immigrants and asylum seekers.

The bishops acknowledge that while “globalization” has led to greater and freer flows of goods, technology, capital, and information, the migration of people has become more restrictive, even as the new world economy requires a more mobile labor pool.

In this pastoral letter, the bishops set out a series of public policy proposals designed to achieve their vision. They call on governments to invest in their people and economies so that the economic reasons that compel desperate people to seek a life and livelihood elsewhere may be overcome.

They call for expanded opportunities for legal immigration into the U.S. in order to reunify with families and to obtain jobs. They also call for a broad legalization program for the undocumented in this country who have built up equities and otherwise contributed to our society. And, they call for reforms in our immigration laws and practices that serve to restore some of the due process rights of immigrants and make our border enforcement strategies more humane.

IMMIGRATION REFORM CAMPAIGN

Again, the bishops don’t want to have written a nice document that says a lot of pleasant sounding things without any action. So, we are currently in the process of organizing a national campaign for immigration reform, beginning within the Church, then working in coalition with others.

We envision this campaign being a multi-year effort and having several components:

1. educating the public, especially Catholics and Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration;
2. creating a political will for positive immigration reforms;
3. enacting legislative and administrative reforms based on the bishops’ principles; and
4. organizing Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

When you consider what the public attitudes and public policies are toward immigrants today, you realize we've got a big challenge on our hands. We'll have to dispel the myths and misperceptions about immigrants held by a lot of Americans today. How often do we hear today such sentiments as "Immigrants take jobs away from Americans." "Immigrants are a drain on our economy." "Our nation is being overrun by immigrants." Today's immigrants are not interested in becoming a part of American society." Somehow we've got to convince Americans that these perceptions are false and that like our ancestors, today's immigrants come here seeking freedom and opportunity and very much want to contribute to making this nation great.

CLOSING

In closing. Let me leave you with this thought...

The migration phenomenon in our world today is greater than ever before. In these times of a global economy, ease of international transportation, and communications technology that virtually connects every corner of the globe, greater numbers of people are migrating across international borders. There are today nearly 200 million people who live in a country other than where they were born. This is double the number from just 25 years ago.

This, then, should underscore the challenges we face as people of God and followers of Christ.

I believe the central question for we Christians in today's migration world is this: Do we have a "Gospel attitude" toward migrants? Do we see Jesus in the face of the newcomer or in the face of the refugee languishing away in a camp in some forsaken corner of the globe?

Then we must ask, "What are we doing about it?" ■

SOURCE:

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/lirspresentation.shtml>

Perspective of the Holy See on Catholic Social Teaching and Migration

MICHAEL A. BLUME, SVD

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has much to say on migration issues, as Fr. Hehir has ably brought out in his presentation. Mine intends to complement what he has said, by examining the Holy See's role in proposing this teaching by examining three of its contributions, which are not always well known but nevertheless important.

Before going to my topic, I would like to make some observations of CST. This body of teaching has evolved particularly since the nineteenth century industrial revolution, when worldwide developments in society, states, labor and ownership, as well as in migration (*see* RN 46-47), called for discernment and response of the Church. These were and are *signs of the times* which "the Church has always has the duty of scrutinizing ... and of interpreting ... in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics" (GS 4). The Holy Spirit guides the Church to interpret what is happening in the world and its history in the light of Jesus

Christ, Word made flesh, who “reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling” (GS 22) and thus the dignity of human nature that he took to himself. This dignity is the centerpiece of CST. On that basis the “Church’s social teaching proposes principles for reflection ... provides criteria for judgment ... [and] gives guidelines for action” (CCC 2423).

ECCLESIA IN AMERICA

I would like to start with (EA), which, referred as it is to the vast geographical, cultural and religious reality called America, has also borne fruit in the joint pastoral letter of the Bishops of Mexico and the United States, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. That letter builds on the ecclesial communion and collaboration encouraged by EA among local Churches, applying them to the specific needs of migrants moving between Mexico and the United States.

In the handout I prepared, you can see that EA 65 deals explicitly with migration and EA 52 briefly with refugees. Both references are in the context of promoting a *culture of solidarity*, a major issue of CST. Solidarity, as EA 52 states, is “the fruit of the communion ... grounded in the mystery of the triune God [and] ... is expressed in Christian love which seeks the good of others, especially of those most in need” (EA 52), among whom are migrants. They, in turn, “often bring with them,” says EA 65, “a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements.” To experience this reality – basically the theme of our conference – requires a pastoral strategy of “mutual openness that will bring enrichment to all” (*ibid.*).

The theme of migration penetrates EA. Its concerns about *family*, for example, are also about family in migration. The challenges of youth are also those of young potential migrants. *Church as reconciled communion* is also God’s People learning how to embrace different cultures. *Meeting Jesus Christ in America* today includes welcoming him in the stranger. *Ministry and solidarity with the poor* necessarily reaches out to migrants.

EA brings migration-related issues before the Church in America and calls for reflection, prayer and action, whose goal is appropriating CST, being inspired by it, becoming capable of interpreting the present situation, and determining the actions to take (*see* EA 54). These regard

the quality of welcoming, appreciating, and defending the stranger in ever evolving social and cultural situations. When authentic, this is the work of the Holy Spirit, constantly calling to mind everything that Jesus Christ has left us, and producing, in the community enlarged by migration, fruits like love, joy, and peace (*see* Gal. 5:22). If I may interpret this further, we are talking about the power of Jesus Christ, exercised in the communion of hierarchy, religious, and lay faithful, that makes his authority and gospel present, transforming the social, cultural, political and economic realities surrounding migration in America (*see* EA 8, 10, 54, 68). It is growth of the seed of God's Kingdom, planted by teaching the social doctrine of the Church.

MESSAGES OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The titles and concerns expressed in the twenty-five messages of this Pontificate (*see* the handout) show the continuing reflection of CST as it is reread and restated in a migration key. Here are the most obvious examples:

- forced migrants and refugees and the violation of their most basic human rights (1979, 1984)
- the family in migration and challenges it faces (1980, 1986, 1993)
- respecting and promoting the cultural identity of migrants – something at the heart of our meeting (1981, 1985, 1991, 1999)
- the human dignity of migrants in irregular situations (1984, 1995)
- serious problems faced by migrants (1987)
- particular burdens of migrant women (1994)
- the love of Christ and his Church for migrants (1997, 1998)
- respect for the religion of migrants (2002)
- the commitment to overcome all racism, xenophobia and exaggerated nationalism affecting migrants (2003).

Wherever the human person's dignity, life, social relations, or culture are in question owing to the experience of migration, CST has a contribution to offer as can be seen in these messages. They are, in a sense, a compendium of CST on migration, offering a prophetic word

that encourages (*see* Lk. 22:32) those involved in the world of migration, trying to live out their faith there.

The messages, however, do not stop at social justice issues. CST, while certainly flowing from natural law, is primarily an expression of the faith of the Church in Jesus Christ, whose Holy Spirit pushes us to ever renewed ways of living out his gospel and evangelizing. It is important to discover this “spiritual” reality, which is essential to the identity of the messages and makes them different, say, from declarations of migration advocacy groups. Pastoral-social action and spirituality go hand in hand, and the messages offer good models for that.

The gospel message promotes justice and development in the world of migration “precisely because it leads to conversion of heart and of ways of thinking, fosters the recognition of each person’s dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment and service of one’s neighbor, and gives everyone a place in God’s plan, which is the building of his kingdom of peace and justice, beginning already in this life. This is the biblical perspective of the ‘new heavens and a new earth’ (*cf.* Is. 65:17; 2 Pt. 3:13; Rv. 21:1), which has been the stimulus and goal for mankind’s advancement in history” (RM 59). Progress in the world of migration necessarily derives “from God, and from the model of Jesus – God and man – and must lead back to God” (*ibid*). Proclaiming the gospel and pastoral-social action are closely linked.

DISCOURSES OF THE HOLY FATHER OR HIS REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The Sunday Angelus and the Wednesday General Audience have often been occasions for addressing the world about migrants and their concerns, as shortly before World Refugee Day this year (June 20th) when Pope John Paul II spoke about young refugees and appealed to the international community to deal with the causes of their problems. In texts listed in the handout, you can also note frequent support for the 1951 Geneva Convention, a key rights instrument, and an appeal for generous interpretations of its letter and spirit. International cooperation on migration issues is likewise urged, a frequent refrain in the Holy See’s diplomacy, also in the Israeli and Palestinian situation, which keeps unsolved one of the oldest and largest refugee situations in history. There are also lesser

known statements, such as the New Year Message to the Diplomatic Corps or addresses to ambassadors presenting their credential letters, many of whom come from countries affected by dramatic forms of human mobility. Finally, speeches and messages at international meetings carry forward the reflection and positions taken by the Holy See on the evolving reality of human mobility and the discernment of its meaning and implications.

Something similar can be said for statements by Papal Representatives (Nuncios, Permanent Observers, and others) accredited to international organizations (UN, UNHCR, European Union, etc.) or to States or by Delegations of the Holy See to international conferences. This is the Holy See in dialogue with the peoples and nations on migration. (Last week this involvement was further attested in the presentation of *Words that Matter*, a collection of 1,310 such speeches in the period from 1970 to 2000, which includes a chapter on refugees).

The handout summarizes the main issue in these discourses as they touch on migration, whether forced or voluntary. Reading them, one might ask: What do these reflections on development, justice and peace have to do with migration? The answer is that they deeply affect the movement of people.

- Thus there is a nexus between integral human development (another name for peace, as *Popolorum progressio* affirms) and respect for human rights. Break the link, and we have the reasons why so many people leave their homelands or are even forced to do so. The discourses frequently urge addressing the root causes of displacement, which include the unresolved problem in international debt and the increasing number of “least developed countries.”
- A special insistent contribution of the Holy See, something in practice almost unique to Christianity, lies in the affirmation that there will be no peace without justice, and no justice without *forgiveness*. Thus, peace is more than agreements, promises, or treaties, however necessary these may be. Something enduring, *mercy and forgiveness*, has to cement them. Otherwise the cycle of forced migration starts again.

- In speaking of solutions, the discourses often refer to the *human family*, all men and women seen as united in origin and destiny, in a *culture of solidarity* based on the universal common good. In such a culture, richer nations keep promises made to poorer ones and build confidence, not distrust (Message for the World Day of Peace 2003, n. 8). (This observation may also be relevant to the seemingly stalled migration situation between the United States and Mexico.) Implicit in this is also an international culture that puts the universality of human rights as one of its core principles.

The Pope and his representatives tend to be optimistic about what has been achieved and can be achieved in international diplomacy, reflecting on what would be the situation if even the often imperfect progress made through negotiations had not taken place. Never giving up is part of Christian hope and closely linked to CST.

Is this all only talk? While some may think so, we should not undervalue the power of what springs from faith and hope. Faith moves mountains and breaks down barriers constructed by the human heart. The seed of the Kingdom grows in unexpected ways (*see* Mk. 4:26-29).

TRUTH AND LOVE: THE DYNAMISM BEHIND CST ON MIGRATION

In conclusion, let me mention two things that make CST possible and, in its own way, effective. The first is one of the four pillars of peace as taught in *Pacem in terris* and a continual refrain in the thinking and teaching of John Paul II: the truth. “There exists in man’s very nature an undying capacity to break through the barriers of error and seek the road to truth” (PT 158). An inner dynamic pushes each of us to reach out to the truth, affirm, respect and love it. That is the truth about God, man, history – and human mobility. Here is the basis for discovering that migrants do come bearing gifts, that the stranger is a bearer of culture that can enrich and complement my own, that migration was and is related to positive economic and social developments of many countries. The search for the truth is a struggle against yield to what John XXIII called the “barriers of error.” That means going beyond prejudices and populist media to *the people* who are migrants. Discovering and loving the truth of the other is a life-long project of conversion from “going along with the crowd” to new attitudes of trying to know and love the bearers of other cultures, the

migrants themselves. This is the path to discovering what are the needs of the migrants – and not project my own on them – what are their aspirations, and in what ways they can be met. Ultimately it is the demanding – and rewarding – task of discovering the mystery of the other, the migrant, as a brother or sister for whom Jesus Christ died and rose.

The second is: “Stake everything on charity.” That phrase is from the Church’s program for the twenty-first century, laid out in *Novo millennio ineunte* (NMI). “Charity of its nature opens out into a service that is universal; it inspires in us a *commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being*” (NMI 49), including the stranger, “sacrament” of Christ himself (*see* Matt. 25:35-37). The Holy Father calls for continuing our two-thousand-year tradition of charity, now with greater resourcefulness and creativity. Essential in this is “‘getting close’ to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters” (NMI 50). Then echoing a migration theme, the Pope continues: “We must therefore ensure that in every Christian community the poor feel at home. Would not this approach be the greatest and most effective presentation of the good news of the Kingdom? (*ibid.*).

A privileged instrument for that is CST. I hope the three examples I have explained may provide some of the encouragement in the faith we all need. ■

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS:

CCC - *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992)

GS - *Gaudium et spes* (Vatican II, 1965)

PT - *Pacem in terris* (John XXIII, 1963)

RM - *Redemptoris missio* (John Paul II, 1990)

RN - *Rerum novarum* (Leo XIII, 1891)

UN - United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

SOURCE:

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/lirs/presentation.shtml>



CANON LAW SECTION

The Lifting of Excommunication of Lefebvrite Prelates: And Now What?

JAVIER GONZALES, OP

QUESTION:

I have read with interest the recent news of the lifting of the excommunication to the four bishops ordained without papal permission by Msgr. Marcel Lefebvre in 1988. Now with this situation, what will happen with those followers of Msgr. Lefebvre in Cubao? Will they pass to the direct jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cubao (since their church is just walking distance from the cathedral) or will they/this be like a personal prelature? Can we, Catholics, attend to their masses and receive communion... since we belong to the same Church, being no schism any more? Or have we still to wait until our Bishops react to this? I think it is about time they do! I in the past attended Masses celebrated with indult according to the Tridentine rite of 1962. Now there is no need of indult thanks to the Pope's motu proprio. What do you think of this ongoing issue that is causing confusion and confronting positions? Hope you write something on this...

ANSWER:

The recent remission of the excommunications of the four Bishops (Msgrs Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson

and Alfonso de Galarreta) ordained without papal permission by Msgr Marcel Lefebvre in 1988 has in effect triggered a heated discussion, both within and without the Catholic Church. The controversy, having found echo in most world wide newspapers, fuelled also by the ‘Williamson case’, has created much confusion around the timeliness, scope and motivation of the papal gesture of lifting the excommunications. Even among those who take a positive view of the Pope’s concern for reconciliation, the question remains whether such a gesture was fitting in view of the genuinely urgent demands of the life of faith in our time... As a result, Pope Benedict XVI himself has felt the need to offer a word of clarification through a personal letter dated March 10, 2009.

All these facts are most probably well-known by our readers. However, the above inquiry offers me the chance to write something about the ongoing controversy, with the hope of becoming not just *informative* but also –and mainly– *formative*, and thus contributing to dispel misunderstandings on the matter. (I will leave aside the ‘Williamson case’ to focus exclusively on the papal “ecumenical” gesture of the lifting of the excommunications to the four Prelates.)

1. The Lifting the Excommunication to Lefebvrite Prelates

On January 24, 2009 the Congregation for Bishops released a decree advising of the lifting of excommunication of the four mentioned bishops ordained without papal permission by Msgr Marcel Lefebvre in 1988. The decree, signed on January 21, 2009 by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, read in its last paragraph:

“In virtue of the faculties that have been expressly conceded to me by the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, in virtue of the present decree, I lift from Bishops Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galarreta the censure of excommunication latae sententiae declared by this congregation on July 1, 1988, and declare void of juridical effects beginning today the decree published then.”

Preceding this conclusion, the decree contained some explanations of the above decision:

First, that *the lifting of the excommunication was an answer to a request from bishop Bernard Fellay, written in his name and in that of the other three bishops*. Such request had actually been reiterated on several occasions, the last of which was on December 15, 2008 through a letter sent to Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, president of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*. In that letter Msgr Fellay wrote: “We are always fervently determined in the will to be and to remain Catholics and to place all of our strength at the service of the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Roman Catholic Church. We accept all of her teachings with a filial spirit. We firmly believe in the primacy of Peter and in his prerogatives and because of this, the present situation makes us suffer so much.”

Second, that *the decision was a benevolent response (“a gesture of mercy”) of Pope Benedict XVI intended to alleviate personal suffering and to promote peace and internal unity in the Church*. The decree said it expressly: “His Holiness Benedict XVI, paternally sensitive to the spiritual unrest manifested by the interested parties because of the sanction of excommunication, [...] has decided to reconsider the canonical situation of the bishops Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galarreta, which arose with their episcopal consecration. ... With this act it is desired to consolidate the mutual relations of trust, [and] to intensify and make more stable the relationship of the Society of St Pius X with the Apostolic See. This gift of peace also aims to be a sign for the promotion of unity in charity of the universal Church, and with this means, come to remove the scandal of division.”

Third, that *the lifting of the excommunication was only a step to be hopefully corresponded by others directed towards full communion*: “It is desired that this step be followed by the solicitous fulfillment of full communion with the Church of the Society of St Pius X, thereby witnessing to authentic fidelity and a true recognition of the magisterium and the authority of the Pope, with the proof of visible unity.”

Thus the irregular canonical situation in which bishops Fellay, Tissier, Williamson and de Galarreta had incurred because of their irregular episcopal consecration was removed. *Does it mean that now the four bishops are fully integrated in the Catholic Church, and that the Catholics can “attend to their masses and receive communion... since we belong to the same Church, being no schism any more?”* How I wished to answer

“yes” to these questions expressed in the above inquiry! But unfortunately it is not so, as we will reaffirm later after digging a little more into the matter.

2. *What is an Excommunication and what are its effects?*

Excommunication is one of the three canonical censures (together with suspension and interdict) mentioned in the Code of Canon Law. It is actually the most serious ecclesiastical penalty that may be imposed on a member of the Church for having committed a very grave offence. The purpose of such imposition, like the purpose of any other punishment in the Church, is medicinal, leading hopefully to the rehabilitation of the offender.

What are those offences penalized with excommunication? The answer is expressly found in the Code of Canon Law, according to which those who incur excommunication are the following:

- a. One who throws away the consecrated species or, for a sacrilegious purpose, takes them away or keeps them (c.1367);
- b. A person who uses physical force against the Roman Pontiff (c. 1370 §1);
- c. The priest who absolves his partner in a sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue (c. 1378 §1);
- d. Both the Bishop who, without a pontifical mandate, consecrates a person a Bishop, and the one who receives the consecration from him (1382);
- e. A confessor who directly violates the sacramental seal (c. 1388 §1);
- f. A person who actually procures an abortion (c. 1398);
- g. An apostate from the faith, a heretic or a schismatic (c. 1364 §1).

Out of the seven listed instances, the excommunications mentioned in the first five [1-5] are *latae sententiae*, that is, they are incurred automatically, and they are reserved to the Apostolic See, while those in the last two instances [6-7], are not reserved to the Apostolic See, although they are also *latae sententiae*.

Regarding the effects or consequences produced by this censure, canon 1331 succinctly enumerates them:

“An excommunicated person is forbidden:

1° to have any ministerial part in the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist or in any other ceremonies of public worship;

2° to celebrate the sacraments or sacramentals and to receive the sacraments;

3° to exercise any ecclesiastical offices, ministries, functions or acts of governance.”

One can easily conclude that with the prohibition to exercise those ministerial functions mentioned, the excommunicated person is almost completely excluded from the spiritual goods of the Church and, consequently from communion with the rest of the faithful.

Concerning the remission or lifting of excommunication, the law of the Church says that when the contempt has been purged, remission of the censure cannot be refused (cf can. 1358).

3. The excommunication to Msgr Lefebvre and to the Bishops ordained by him

On July 1, 1988 the Prefect of the Office of the Congregation for Bishops, represented then by Card. Bernardinus Gantin, issued a decree declaring that Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre and the four priests consecrated bishops by him had incurred a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See for having performed “a schismatic act by the episcopal consecration of four priests without pontifical mandate and contrary to the will of the Supreme Pontiff.”

The text of the decree read as follows: “*Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, Archbishop-Bishop Emeritus of Tulle, notwithstanding the formal canonical warning of 17 June last and the repeated appeals to desist from his intention, has performed a schismatic act by the episcopal consecration of four priests, without pontifical mandate and contrary to the will of the Supreme Pontiff, and has therefore incurred the penalty envisaged by canon 1364, §1, and canon 1382 of the Code of Canon Law.*”

The mentioned canon 1382 states that: “Both the Bishop who, without a pontifical mandate, consecrates a person a Bishop, and the one who receives the consecration from him, incur a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See.”

When Archbishop Lefebvre consecrated the four bishops on June 30, 1988 he did so without a pontifical mandate. Therefore, by the very act of carrying out this consecration, both him and the four bishops consecrated incurred an automatic excommunication. (Now, being automatic incurred as soon as the offense is committed, the penalty needed not to be imposed by the ecclesiastical authority, but simply declared.)

Question: *Were those bishops validly ordained?* The answer is “Yes, they were.” *Does it mean that the fact that such consecration was prohibited by the law of the Church and even penalized with excommunication did not affect the validity of the consecration?* Exactly so: The fact that this consecration was prohibited by the law of the Church and that the penalty of excommunication applied did not affect the sacramental validity of the consecration. This has been widely accepted by the different sectors of the Church, and expressly admitted by the Pope himself. Canon lawyers elaborate it a little further and explain that although their episcopal consecration was carried out without papal mandate, however, the episcopal consecration was valid, that is, effective: So they are in fact bishops with episcopal powers, meaning they can validly – but unlawfully – ordain, confirm, celebrate Mass, and validly – but unlawfully – perform any other episcopal function. The reason for such unlawfulness and for the fact that the members of the Society of St Pius X who are priests or bishops cannot exercise their ministry as priests or bishops in full communion is because of their lack of canonical status in the Church, due precisely to the fact that full communion between the Holy See and them has not yet been restored.

4. What is their Status after the lifting of the Excommunication?

The lifting of the excommunication has not made the ordination of the four Prelates lawful. Full communion between the Holy See and the Society of St Pius X has not yet been restored. The announced pending dialogue between the two entities will include looking at how those bishops and priests could exercise their ministry in the Catholic Church.

“From the point of view of full communion,” reads an explanation on the issue prepared by the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales, “the relationship has not changed. Furthermore, the Catholic Church has as a very important goal the restoration of full communion with all Christians and this has not changed either.”

What has changed then in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Society of St Pius X? Well, with the remission of the excommunication something important has already been achieved: the freedom of the four bishops from a very serious canonical penalty and the removal of an impediment which was prejudicial to the opening of a door to dialogue. In addition, the lifting of the excommunications is an important step of furthering the goal of achieving full communion with regard to the Society of St. Pius X. “The next step is continuing dialogue with a view to deepening the relations between the Catholic Church and the Society of St Pius X, in the hope that there can be a return to full communion.”

Thus the lifting of the excommunications is not the end of the road leading to the group’s full communion with the Church, but just the beginning; the beginning of a process of dialogue that may bring reconciliation and healing with the solution to the two fundamental issues still to be resolved: “the integration of the juridical structure of the Society of St Pius X in the Church” and “the agreement on dogmatic and ecclesiological matters.” Among these issues to consider, the recognition of the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium of Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II and Benedict XVI himself are of primary importance.

5. Benedict XVI’s latest Clarifications

Many and polyvalent have been the reactions caused by the Holy See’s decision concerning the lifting of the excommunication to the four Prelates of the Society of St Pius X. Bishops have generally welcomed it, although some have expressed doubts about the effects that such decision may cause within the Church. In other sectors the interpretations have not been too favorable – perhaps the Pope’s motivations have not been rightly understood – and in some cases they have been definitively negative: the

Pope's decision has been seen as a step back, a reflection of the allegedly "involutionist" mind of the present Pope...

In the face of such criticism and with the purpose of guiding the faithful, Pope Benedict XVI issued a personal letter on March 10, 2009 in which he justifies his gesture of lifting the excommunication to the four Lefebvrite Prelates and clarifies other related issues, at the same time that he asked for understanding and enjoined the faithful to "have at heart the unity of all believers." The following are some of its highlights:

First, *he justifies the excommunication on the Prelates twenty years ago, although he acknowledges that its goal has so far not been achieved*: "An episcopal ordination lacking a pontifical mandate raises the danger of a schism, since it jeopardizes the unity of the College of Bishops with the Pope. Consequently the Church must react by employing her most severe punishment – excommunication – with the aim of calling those thus punished to repent and to return to unity. Twenty years after the ordinations, this goal has sadly not yet been attained."

Second, *the remission of the excommunication of the four Bishops has the same purpose as that of the sanction: to invite them once more to return*. This gesture was possible once the interested parties had expressed their recognition in principle of the Pope and his authority as Pastor, although with some reservations in the area of obedience to his doctrinal authority and to the authority of the Council. The excommunication is a disciplinary measure that affects individuals, not institutions. Through the remission of the excommunication the individuals were freed from the burden of conscience constituted by the most serious of ecclesiastical penalties.

Third, *the Society of St Pius X does not possess a canonical status in the Church and for it to be reconciled with the Church some doctrinal issues need to be cleared up*. "The fact that the Society does not possess a canonical status in the Church is not, in the end, based on disciplinary but on doctrinal reasons. [...] In order to make this clear once again: Until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the Society has no canonical status in the Church, and its ministers – even though they have been freed of the ecclesiastical penalty – do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church. There needs to be a distinction, then, between the

disciplinary level, which deals with individuals as such, and the doctrinal level, at which ministry and institutions are involved.” In this regard, the Pope announces that he will join the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, established precisely to oversee the process of healing the Society’s separation from the Church, with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “The problems now to be addressed are essentially doctrinal in nature and concern primarily the acceptance of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar magisterium of the Popes. The Church’s teaching authority cannot be frozen in the year 1962 – this must be quite clear to the Society. But some of those who put themselves forward as great defenders of the Council also need to be reminded that Vatican II embraces the entire doctrinal history of the Church.”

Fourth, *the Pope begs for understanding about his gesture, appealing to have in mind the unity of all believers*. “We must have at heart the unity of all believers. Hence the effort to promote a common witness by Christians to their faith – ecumenism – is part of the supreme priority of the Church.” This is also made up of acts of reconciliation, small and not so small. “That the quiet gesture of extending a hand gave rise to a huge uproar, and thus became exactly the opposite of a gesture of reconciliation, is a fact which we must accept. But I ask now: Was it, and is it truly wrong in this case to meet half-way the brother who ‘has something against you’ (cf Mt 5:23ff) and seek reconciliation? ... Can we be totally indifferent about a community which has 491 priests, 215 seminarians, 6 seminaries, 88 schools, 2 university-level institutes, 117 religious brothers, 164 religious sisters and thousands of lay faithful? Should we casually let them drift farther from the Church?”

Fifth, *Benedict XVI asks if the Church should not be able to show generosity as Mother and Educator*. “But should not the great Church also allow herself to be generous in the knowledge of her great breadth, in the knowledge of the promise made to her? Should not we, as good educators, also be capable of overlooking various faults and making every effort to open up broader vistas? And should we not admit that some unpleasant things have also emerged in Church circles? “At times one gets the impression that our society needs to have at least one group to which no tolerance may be shown; which one can easily attack and hate.”

Sixth, *the members of the Society of St Pius X have shown both positive and negative attitudes*. This is a personal perception of the Pope that he expresses in his letter: “Certainly, for some time now, and once again on this specific occasion, we have heard from some representatives of that community many unpleasant things – arrogance and presumptuousness, an obsession with one-sided positions, etc. Yet to tell the truth, I must add that I have also received a number of touching testimonials of gratitude which clearly showed an openness of heart.” The expectations now from them are to be shown in corresponding gestures of generosity.

Finally, Benedict XVI concludes with a personal reminder: “We must always learn anew the proper use of freedom and the supreme priority, which is love. The whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’.”

6. What has been the reaction of the Society of St Pius X to all this?

An unavoidable question at this stage is on the reception of these developments by the members of the Society of St Pius X, particularly on the part of the four Prelates whose excommunications were remitted: Has there been any specific reaction on their part? What has been their response to the papal gesture and to the papal letter?

Yes, there have been some reactions on the four Bishops in this regard. At least two communications from them have been made public:

The first was a letter signed by the four Bishops Fellay, Tissier, Williamson and de Galarreta, addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and dated February 29, 2009. In it, they expressed their gratitude to the Successor of Peter for the gesture of having lifted their excommunications; a gesture that they consider beneficial for the entire Church and that, in their own words, renders justice to priests and laity attached to the Church’s Tradition. In addition, they promised to somehow take up the dialogue in line with the demands prescribed in the Holy See’s decree, entrusting the success of the forthcoming developments to the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Personally, I would have expected a clear, grateful submission to the Successor of Peter; but it was not. However, compared with their previous stands, this answer means already a great step forward.)

The second communication was a more recent (March 12, 2009) letter. In it Bishop Fellay thanked the Pope for redirecting the debate at its proper level (“we greatly thank the Holy Father for having placed the debate at the level on which it should take place, that of the faith”) and, apart from sharing the Pontiff’s wish to preach the Word to the modern age, he expressed his/their desire not to stop Tradition in 1962 (“Far from wanting to stop Tradition in 1962, we wish to consider the Second Vatican Council and the post-Conciliar magisterium in the light of this Tradition.”) The superior-general assured the Pontiff of the Society’s will “to address the doctrinal discussions considered ‘necessary’ by the decree of January 21, with the desire of serving the revealed Truth which is the first charity to be shown toward all men, Christian or not.”

7. Answers to the Questions Raised in the Inquiry: Philippine Context

After this long exploration around the latest developments on the lifting of excommunications to the four mentioned Lefebvrite Prelates, let us go back to the original text of our Inquiry, which contained several questions formulated in the Philippine context, and answer them one by one.

a. “What will happen with those followers of Msgr Lefebvre in Cubao? Will they pass to the direct jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cubao (since their church is just walking distance from the cathedral) or will they/this be like a personal prelature?” Whether this question refers exclusively to the ordained members of the Society of St Pius X or to all the faithful followers of Msgr Lefebvre, I guess “nothing” will happen, at least for the time being. The reason is because nothing has changed so far at the institutional level with the remission of the excommunications.

Let us repeat the statement mentioned in Pope Benedict XVI’s letter: that the Society of St Pius X does not possess a canonical status in the Church since it is not yet officially reconciled with it. Indeed, the lifting of the excommunication to the four Prelates may have personally alleviated their suffering, but it has not rendered their ordination lawful. Full communion between the Holy See and the Society of St Pius X has not yet been restored. The announced pending dialogue between the two entities will include looking at how those bishops and priests could

exercise their ministry in the Catholic Church. Until then, they as a group will not pass to the direct jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cubao.

Will they/this be like a Personal Prelature? It has been speculated that, in case of a reconciliation of the Society of St Pius X, the status of Personal Prelature could be conferred upon it to facilitate its pastoral activities... My opinion is that it might be, but only as a remote possibility and certainly not before full reconciliation with the Church had taken place. I must admit that this idea is somehow new to me, like the one I recently heard about the possibility of a considerable number of Anglicans converted to the Catholic Church might receive also such status within it, which would allow them to operate as a kind of global diocese, with its own bishops, clergy and liturgy and under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome. I wonder if in the case of the Society of St Pius X such personal global structure would be the most adequate one. Even though personal prelatures are institutions recognized by the Church (and they truly belong to her hierarchical structure), they risk to be easily invoked today as a sort of panacea for everything and serve in some instances rather as a cover up of real, unresolved problems...

b. “Can we, Catholics, attend to their masses and receive communion... since we belong to the same Church, being no schism any more? My straightaway answer is “No”: Catholics are not legally (canonically) permitted to receive the sacraments from the ordained members of the Society of St Pius X.

This is practically the same question as the one often addressed to us canon lawyers: Can a Catholic in good standing with the Church lawfully approach a priest or bishop of the Society of St Pius X for sacraments, particularly those of Eucharist and marriage? The answer is the same as the one just mentioned.

In spite of the appendix added (*“since we belong to the same Church, being no schism any more”*) the situation after the lifting of the excommunication of the four Prelates has not so far changed. The excommunications belong to the personal sphere, not to the sphere of the institution. Hence their remission may have modified the personal status of the concerned prelates and even removed obstacles in the process of reconciliation, but it has not restored by itself the full communion between

the two entities. This is something that will hopefully follow after a process of doctrinal dialogue.

My above negative answer is based also on the pronouncement of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* (Protocol N. 117/95) which read as follows: “*The [St Pius X Society’s] Masses celebrate are also valid, but it is considered morally illicit for the faithful to participate in these Masses unless they are physically or morally impeded from participating in a Mass celebrated by a Catholic priest in good standing (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 844.2). The fact of not being able to assist at the celebration of the so-called “Tridentine” Mass is not considered a sufficient motive for attending such Masses.*”

This clarification was given in lieu of Canon 844 §2, which states that “Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ’s faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.”

Could the fact of not being able to assist at the celebration of the so-called “Tridentine” Mass be cited as a valid reason to participate in the Masses of the Society? To this, the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, interpreting canon 844 §2, clarified that it does not consider the lack of opportunity to assist at a Tridentine Mass sufficient cause to receive the sacraments from a Lefebvrite cleric. (If this was true then, when a special permission was needed for the celebration of the ‘Tridentine Mass’, how much more now that the Latin Mass according to the 1962 rite is allowed?)

c. Or have we still to wait until our Bishops react to this? I think it is about time they do! No, there is no need to wait. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has not spoken on this issue and most probably it will not do it. Reasons...? Our bishops may not consider this an urgent issue, or they may have other priorities, or they simply prefer to leave it to individual Bishops in their respective dioceses. Other episcopal Conferences, like for instance the one of the United Kingdom and Ireland, have spoken, and we may well suppose that the CBCP would agree with what they say since it is in line with the Holy See’s stand on the matter.

d. *“What do you think of this ongoing issue that is causing confusion and confronting positions?”* I think I have expressed my personal feelings in the previous pages. To my mind the Pope’s gesture of remitting the excommunication to the four Prelates has been positive and courageous. True, there have been some unfortunate mishaps or mistakes in the process – acknowledged by Pope Benedict himself in his recent letter – like the Williamson case that came on top of the remission of the excommunication or the fact that the extent and limits of the provision of 21 January were not clearly explained at the moment of its publication; but they do not in any way subtract value to the decision taken.

Besides it is my conviction that even if this courageous step taken by the Pope does not solve the issue of the integration of the juridical structure of the Society of St Pius X in the Church nor the mutual agreement on some dogmatic and ecclesiological matters – which neither have been dispelled by Bishop Fellay’s declarations, by the way quite colorless giving the importance of the moment – it may greatly facilitate dialogue and contribute to bring healing and reconciliation.

One thing has been left uncovered: Behind more or less justifiable arguments on the part of the Society of St Pius X concerning the use of Latin in the celebration of the Mass or the use of the old Rite, the recent steps taken by Pope Benedict XVI have showed that the main block that separates the Society from the Catholic Church continues to be the doctrinal non-acceptance of the Vatican II Council and of the magisterium of the latest Popes, which, as required by the faith of the Church, cannot be in any way compromised.

In the meantime, we welcome any step that may favor communion and reconciliation. The recent remission of excommunications is one of them. ■

HOMILIES

MAY 3

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 4:8-12; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Jn 10:11-18

Vocation is More than Just a Profession

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Jesus compared himself to a shepherd. To claim for oneself the title “shepherd”, one readily understands that such title entails a lifelong commitment. Thus, to describe oneself as “good shepherd” sounds redundant unless the practice of shepherding becomes purely mercenary as time passes by. Well, it seems indeed that such wonderful metaphor is lost in our contemporary time. Otherwise, how can we explain the present generation’s lack of perception of the difference between vocation and profession, between ministry and job. “Trabaho lang ito!” expressed with a complaining tone accompanied with some acerbic pouting, puts dramatically the meaning of such statement. One may have a job but this does not mean that he has a ministry. A ministry is a practice of a vocation. A vocation situates a person into a state of being – stable, permanent, everlasting. That is why vocation is expressed through a vow committing oneself to a state of being without which he is no better than nothing. To fulfill such commitment, he indulges in a lifelong ministry of

loving service. Unlike a job, ministry cannot and does not lead someone to proclaim “Ministry lang ito!”. Such statement involves a contradiction in terms. Ministry is ever taken in earnest because it is a matter of life and death for a minister. Ministry is his person, his very being, his own identity. Remove his ministry and he is reduced to nobody, simply nobody. So, no one limits his ministry within the perimeter of his office, exclusively during a specified office hours. Because job is quantified in terms of time and space, the worker gets a corresponding salary; the minister for all the sweat and effort he spends for a task, gets nothing except an *honorarium*, a token for his ministry which can never be quantified. Have you ever heard, for example, a loving father or mother getting paid for exercising his/her vocation, his/her ministry? In ministry, a person gives his very own self. There is no retirement from ministry although one can quit or be kicked out of his job anytime depending on the ups and downs of the job market. Indeed, happiness does not automatically go with a job. One may be successful in his profession, that is, in his chosen job, in his career, and still cry secretly in loneliness and boredom. He is not happy. Without a vocation to pursue, he only lives for himself and consequently, he has no one to offer the trophy he gets for being a successful professional. “Congratulation to myself!” is a salutation without meaning. It is in fact an insult and at best, a testimony to one’s ego which excels only for the love of itself. A trophy for self-centeredness? Thanks and no thanks. Such reward is actually a self-inflicting punishment.

A ministry works the opposite way. Because it is a vocation in action, it is a service to life, a service to people, a committed love for persons. Persons are forever, things are temporal. That is why ministry for necessarily being person-oriented is never ending, it is endless grace. Ministry grants its practitioner a satisfaction that only heaven can grant because its root is vocation: a gift from God, a recompense from God, who for being a shepherd himself has a special predilection for shepherds like him. They will all be in heaven together with all the sheep they love and live for. It will be a happy reunion. What joy will it be? No one knows and no one has yet experienced except the Good Shepherd and all shepherds and sheep who heed and obey his voice. So, be a good shepherd, be a good sheep.

Welcome to the Lord’s Flock! ■

MAY 10

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 9: 26-31; 1Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15: 1-8

To Live Is To Be True

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Agony is a process of disintegration. When it occurs, one knows death is fast approaching. Any kind of disintegration is therefore an agony or a disorder of some kind, to say the least. Thus, when one suffers from a mental disorder, he undergoes a mental agony; a moral disorder, a moral agony; a physical disorder, a physical agony. Order is needless to say necessary to make us whole all the time. Disorder, on the contrary, is agony, a sure indicator that we are on the way out. But not all kinds of order lead to integration. Only the right kind of order brings out wholeness and integrity. Say, for example, we are going on a library renovation, so, we start arranging the books anew. Shall we for the sake of innovation, arrange the books according to color? Well, such order may suit our aesthetic sense but it will surely violate common sense. Nobody goes to the library to borrow a book according to his favorite color. The library may turn out to be the most colorful library in town but it will likewise be the most disorderly. Arranging the books in the library according to color brings death to the library itself and instead causes its disintegration. It has become the showcase of the librarian's stupidity. He has chosen the wrong kind of order to set the books in order.

Jesus in today's Gospel-Reading gives us the most basic tip on setting our lives in order. If we would like to enjoy life, set it in the right order. How? He ingeniously exemplified this life as the order of unity between the vine and its branches. Such unity in reality is brought about by obedience, in earnest listening to the word of God. Yes, if we listen to Jesus' word and obey it, we will find eternal life. Because his word is an ongoing process of fulfillment, it never fails. It never dies. That is why Jesus claims for himself the truth. Have you ever heard of anyone referring to himself directly as the truth? "I am the truth," Jesus once said about himself and consequently, claims likewise that he is the life

(Jn 14:6). The same cannot be said about our contemporary world. Our world is in the risk of extinction because it lives in the culture of lies. For this reason, it is now a living dead, a zombie of some sort. All the news it proclaims is entertainment intended to get popular approval even if they were not true. So, we laugh every time we listen to the news aired over the radio, shown in the TV, printed in the papers. But it hurts when we laugh. We know we are being duped. Nothing we hear and watch is true. Absolute entertainment, it desensitizes us to make our eventual death both as individuals and as society painless. Still, it hurts when we laugh. There is nothing more painful than dying as idiots.

When Jesus resurrected, he rose as the truth. The life of Jesus is indeed the life of truth. That is why he never dies. We too will resurrect with Jesus if like him we lead a life of truth. Truth will set us free – yes, even from death. ■

MAY 17

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1Jn 4:7-10; Jn 15:9-17

Friendship Means Forever

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Jesus calls us – his disciples – “friends” (Jn 15:15). He wants us to abide with him forever. Only friends are in everlasting presence to one another. This is simply a positive explanation of the fundamental precept of friendship: “Walang iwanan”. If such precept is in force even among the members of syndicates such as the *Mafia* and the *Yakuza*, will the *Communion of Saints* fare less? Absolutely not. Heaven is in fact founded on friendship. There, everyone is a certified true friend. That is why there, only there, true peace and contentment exist. Here, we are constantly restless because we are never sure whether that smiling face that warms a tender relationship with us is just a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He is actually a terrorist who at any moment may explode us into pieces. In heaven such irony is forever excluded. For, there, only friendship – true

and endless – is included. It is said that in heaven, there is no dull moment because we will be spending eternity shaking the hands of our friends. There, too, we will be surrounded with beauty. In the presence of our friends, we will all be smiling. Isn't a smiling face a delightful vision?

Let us make friends while we still have time. Wedded couples should befriend one another without ceasing. It is indeed ironic that a courtship which thrives with a sweet friendship ends with marriage which all of a sudden turns sour because the spouses no longer relate with each other as friends. They start quarreling even over petty things so that they make their lives extremely miserable. They still stay together alright but only because they have children to support and care for. But will not the children grow up and eventually build families of their own? That is why when the children are gone, their mother and father are also gone. They, unfortunately, in their old age, decide to part ways. The father opts to stay with the family of his youngest child; so, the mother chooses to live with the family of her eldest. At times, the father and the mother exchange places. What a way to spend old age! A ping-pong ball will do better. If only this couple developed friendship during their married life, they would not have suffered this ping-pong sort of lifestyle as they age. They would be together all the time and not even death can part their ways because friendship will make them one from here to eternity.

Parents too should do well to befriend their children. While it is true that their children have the obligation to care for them especially in their old age, they may fulfill this obligation simply for what it is: an obligation! Is it not sweeter if such obligation is done affectively and not just effectively? Love is indeed an obligation. It is a universal precept that comes from Jesus himself which binds everyone to fulfill with or without affection. Parents would help their children love them with ease when they bank not only on their chronological seniority but on their likeability as friends. Unfortunately, some parents behave unreasonably with the principle that simply because they are old, they have the right to be hateful and annoying. What a hell to serve them in their old age! They are enslaving their children with their irritable disposition so that their children also feel dying with them. What a relief when death finally takes over!

Jesus adopted his disciples as his own family. He knew, however, that no family would last if its bond is purely based on blood. The spirit is thicker than blood and such spirit only thrives in a love that goes beyond the flesh: friendship. No wonder Jesus, called his disciples – indeed, all of us -- “friends”. It was not just a name. Friendship is heaven. As friends, all of us are eternal. *Amigos para siempre!* ■

MAY 24

SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION

Acts 1:1-11; Eph 4:1-13; Mk 16:15-20

The Miracle Of Ascension

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Does Jesus' Ascension point to heaven as way up there? Is heaven a geographical place where one day the Blessed will all reside as their perpetual abode? Surely, the Gospel has no intention of satisfying our curiosity inquiring where in fact heaven is. It is primarily illustrating to us a miracle which otherwise will never happen to us. This miracle reverses the law of nature which fixes gravity as a stable pull which attracts us to this world. Whatever goes up will definitely goes down. In the case of Ascension, Jesus who went down went up. Again, the going up and going down should be construed not so much as a geographical journey as much as a spiritual one. This spiritual journey does not mean a flight from the world but, on the contrary, a committed involvement in it. After all, did not Jesus before he ascended strongly commission all his disciples to “go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation”? (Mk 16:15) Instead of encouraging his disciples to fix their eyes above, Jesus brought their attention to *here* and *now*. The disciples of Jesus are supposed to be practical people, not dreamers who walk seven feet above the ground with their eyes upturned as though they are always drugged into some heavenly ecstasy. As doers of Jesus' teachings, they are expected to be part of the solution and not part of the problem of this world. Proclaiming the compassion of Jesus not only in words but in deeds, Christians continue the presence of God in this world and

belie Ascension as a permanent escape of Jesus from his mission to save mankind. Jesus after all is “Emmanuel” – God with us – and this means an incarnation that lasts not only for thirty-three years but forever. Jesus, before he ascended, constituted his Church – his Body – which for being enfleshed, makes present even up to now his incarnation. Such presence is not some mystical experience serving as though an opium which makes us forget our obligation to human history. Yes, such obligation is in itself historical: to create history in freedom. We are expected as participants of history, not simply as its passive by-standers. As creators of human history, our mandate from Jesus is to restore mankind into its original nature: created in the image of God.

To re-create this world in the image of God, we must love. For love is what binds together the three persons in the Holy Trinity as one yet in their utmost respective distinctions. The same with the universe, if only love will rule it as its law of nature, it will emerge as truly *unum versus alia*, a Latin phrase whence the English word universe is derived: literally, *one versus others*, or more properly, *unity in distinction*. What the world needs now is indeed love, a Trinitarian love, to be exact, where differences instead of creating factitious relationship foment an indestructible harmony. Such love is the absolute objective for which Jesus mandated his Church – his Body – to establish in this world. No wonder such Body has today become widespread in the world: universal, catholic. In its fold, it has embraced all nations and cultures. The diversities that entered this Body have not become a problem but instead an enthralling beauty. Love is for all its name, lovable. The Church continues to fulfill the mandate which it holds as a trust since the Ascension. Still proclaiming the Good News – the love of God, the grace of God – it helps re-create the world in the image of God. Hatred, darkness, evil, sin will never, never, win this world. From the hands of God, this world emerged, it will surely return to his hands whole and entire, thanks to the Church: the Body of Christ. Meanwhile, this Church will continue to grow until such Body will eventually become the total Christ. Indeed, *tota Ecclesia, totus Christus!* ■

MAY 31

SOLEMNITY OF THE PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-11; 1Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Come Oh Holy Spirit, Renew The Face Of The Earth!

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

To reduce everything that this world needs into just one – love – sounds naïve indeed. But this solution is naïveté only to those whose lifestyle is as complicated as sin. Sin is always complicated. It thrives in lies which cannot be sustained in the singular. One lie will infallibly lead to another, then, to another until the liar already loses track of the lies he told and made others believe to be true. Love, on the other hand, simplifies. Faced with differences, love respects the uniqueness of those various entities concerned and as a result, creates a wholeness which can be characterized only as harmonious. Such harmony is simple not with simplicity of imperfection but with simplicity of perfection. To illustrate, amoeba is simple but with simplicity of imperfection. This simplicity is exemplified in the amoeba because the amoeba is constituted by one cell, no more no less. Being unicellular, it is easy to exist and be sustained in existence. Its vital routine follows only such primitive operations as feeding, excreting, and splitting to multiply.

Love is definitely not simple with the simplicity of imperfection which the existence of amoeba typifies. Love is simple alright but with simplicity of perfection. Simplicity of perfection faces all differences, no matter how many these might be, and weaves them together into an exquisite tapestry. Thus, the harmony it creates – a unity in diversity – is a work of marvelous beauty. Love is at once equated with simplicity, harmony, and beauty. From it, this adage emerges as justified: simplicity is beauty. Now, we realize why this world is so ugly. It is marred by sin which for all its complexities destroys simplicity, harmony and beauty. Is this ugly world the world which God intended to create? Absolutely not. When God created this universe, he looked back at his works one

by one and exclaimed repeatedly “good!” (Gen 1:1-31). But just as Adam and Eve introduced with their sin ugliness into this world, the Son of God became incarnate and as light, shows us what beautiful life in this world should be. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. This tripartite confession of faith in the Paschal Mystery is a vision of beauty: an absolutely beautiful life first in Jesus, then, in all of us who lead our lives in imitation of Christ. Here, in this Paschal Mystery, we see all opposition between suffering and joy, between defeat and victory, between death and life blended so harmoniously that with the exception of sin, everything now stands to benefit in the saving plan of God. In this Paschal Mystery, love conquers all. The Spirit absorbs matter and adopts it as his temple. The flesh ceases to be accursed because the Spirit brings it with the soul to be united together in God’s glory. Thank to Jesus, his death, life and resurrection – indeed, the Paschal Mystery! -- the Spirit comes down and hovers again over the world, and just like in the beginning of time, pour out love into this creation to make it beautiful and lovely again.

The work of beauty is the work of grace. To be truly beautiful is indeed to be graceful. Grace is the gift of God, the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit – Pentecost – is therefore the restoration of beauty in this world. Since simplicity is beauty, simplicity is the lifestyle enjoined to all who are resolved to contribute to the restoration of beauty to this sinful ugly world. But what is simple to God appears very complicated to us, humans. Thus, we are attracted to what is seemingly simple – the simplicity of utmost imperfection in sin. It looks so simple because it is the road wide and easy. Habituated in this easy indulgent life of sin, we develop a heart hardened by evil. We become rocks, always drawn into this world, falling fast at the short bidding of gravity: sin. To get out of this mess, we need to fly, we need to be spiritual. The principle of spirituality is needless to say the Spirit. The Spirit appeared to us as dove, as tongue of fire. Well, all these are as light as the wind, and fly like a bird. For us, sinful people whose hearts are hardened by sin, we cannot but behave like rocks. Rocks are so heavy they cannot but fall. As rocks, we can only gravitate around sin and become docile to its biddings. So, we cannot fly. To fly, we have to be light. But how can we fly when we are burdened with sins? And those sins: they are heavy baggage indeed! So, during the celebration of Pentecost, we cry out to the Holy Spirit again: Come, Oh

Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful. Free us from this heavy burden of sins. Simplify our lives with grace. Transform our hearts as hard as rock into hearts as light as a feather and lithesome as fire. Then, we can fly and join you hover over the earth and renew the face of the world. With you, Oh Holy Spirit, what a beautiful face this creation will indeed have!

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JUN 7

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Dt 4:32-34. 39-40; Rom 8: 14-17; Mt 28:16-20

When Love Is Substantial

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Love as a word has become a cliché. Often used, love is uttered without meaning. Love child, love car, love bus, love chair, love boat, name it and love can be added to sublimate even the most abject object. Why not? Love is all we need. We long for it and yet, we really do not know it from actual experience. Our human love even if it is professed out of noble desire is humanly speaking open to a mixture of intentions. Not all of these intentions are pure. When we are about to reach out in love for the beloved a host of ugly heads pop out to destroy what was once a sublime beginning. Our feelings confuse us so that we do not actually know whether we are truly in love or just plainly in lust. The fact is in the state of sin, humans are not capable of loving. Sin is after all a reversal of values. In sin, we reduce persons into objects and thus, love is reduced into a mere function. As a consequence, we love not for the sake of the person himself/herself. We love persons as things and thus, destroy the very nature of loving. Well, the whole history of thought approves the objectification of love. That is why even the most lofty philosophies of antiquity, say that of Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle never reject slavery as curse to humanity. Even to these noble minds, persons could be a property and treated like beasts of burden which may be discarded when they could no longer serve their purpose in society. In their pagan philosophy, they could not be blameworthy. Their philosophy for all its depth and height

could not recognize the real worth of person and its genuine appreciation in love. Like things, persons were to be used for they were simply accessories to our self-survival. In Christian Philosophy though, person cannot be objectified. For, persons are to one another a vocation to love and an invitation to be loved. Person means co-persons because the substance of person is love. And love is never for things but only for persons.

Only in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the reality of person stands fully appreciated. The person embodies a substantial relationship. For interpersonal relationship cannot but be substantial. Interpersonal relationship cannot be reduced into mere object-to-object connection. The latter is mathematics, the former, spiritual. And the spiritual is mystical: a reality which baffles our mind because it is immersed in a mysterious paradox. How can the Holy Trinity be a God in three distinct persons? Precisely because the Holy Trinity is a substantial relationship, God who is love (1Jn 4:8). The Father and the Son are so in love with one another that in their unity they cannot be counted as two but one. Their loving relationship is incredibly substantial (not functional) so that their love itself assumes a personality: the Holy Spirit. Unbelievable! -- but this is only so to us, sinners, because our love is not interpersonal but inter-corporal or in one short brutal phrase, plainly carnal. Our unity as humans becomes a farce. We look like two worms wriggling against each other to force either one of them out of its place. At the surface, our conflict looks territorial; in reality, it is our disobedience to God. We refuse to become his image – the Trinitarian communion. In this communion, unity and distinction, reverence and equality are not just functions to one another but a substantial interpersonal relationship. Do you find the foregoing language hard to swallow and the reality it represents difficult to digest? Pray to God to lead you to the experience of true love and you will see God as he really is: the Holy Trinity, the God who is love! ■

JUN 14

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Ex 24:3-8; Heb 9:11-15; Mk 14:12-16, 22-26

From Mystery To Mystery

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

As though last Sunday's solemnity – the Holy Trinity -- is not enough, this Sunday comes with another mystery – the Body and Blood of Christ. The mystery of the Holy Trinity may be mistaken for a mathematical problem, which in fact it is not; but the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ is even worse. It presents an idea so completely repulsive that we may think that this invitation to eat the Body of Christ and drink the Blood of Christ is a seduction to perform a murderous crime. Eating the Body of Christ, drinking the Blood of Christ – are not all these cannibalistic?! Once again, to dispel such revolting reaction to the surface meaning of this invitation, we are told that behind these ordinary words lie a most profound reality – well, call it a mystery. Mystery, mystery, mystery – is this not a cheap way for clerics to dissolve doubt by imposing to us an alibi which actually is just a magic formula? After all, are not magic and religion one and the same?

What is the difference between magic and religion? We resort to magic to bind God to our will. We practice religion to bind us to the will of God. Notwithstanding this glaring difference, both have the same appearance so that we tend to confuse one for the other. Both make use of gestures and words -- rituals – to effect their respective aims. No wonder that anyone untutored in genuine theology may regard the ritual executed by a truly ordained minister of a particular religion as simply magic in action. In our case – the Eucharist – we celebrate the ritual of partaking the Body and Blood of Christ – to effect communion with Jesus and thus, we become his Body, we become his Church -- his mystical Body -- we become the Church in the world, we become Jesus' ongoing incarnate presence in the world. As members of Jesus' Body, we are in communion with the grace of Jesus so that we become like him – obedient to his Father, loving as his Spirit and human as we are, heirs to God's Kingdom. Surely, the event dramatized in the Eucharistic rites is not a ready-to-go order

from a fast food counter. To become other Christ both as individual and community is a struggle that lasts a lifetime until the Kingdom of God is finally fulfilled. It involves a commitment both individual and communal, which entails no mean sacrifice but a holocaust, the sacrifice of Jesus himself on the cross and perpetuated precisely in the Eucharist. Is this magic? Obviously not. Magic works like a juke box: insert a coin, and it will play your tune according to your bidding. Or a hat, where with some hocus pocus, the magician can draw a rabbit, a bouquet of roses – in fact, anything according to your whims. Now, we see the difference between true religion and magic. The Eucharist is paid with the Body and Blood of Christ and to us who participate in it, the challenge to self-sacrifice is the same as Christ's. In the case of magic, there is no challenge involved at all. Just toss a coin and presto! – you have your rabbit. The Eucharist will ask us no less than our lives to be united with Jesus as a sacrifice. Magic will simply ask for our money, no more, no less. The Eucharist, in short, is life. Magic? Oh, that's entertainment! ■

JUN 21

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Job 38:1, 8-11; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Mk 4:35-41

God Is Not Dead; He Is Just Asleep!

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

We always want things done the easiest way. And the easiest way is to pass the buck to others to finish the job which actually is ours to accomplish. It is most convenient to have God who is almighty. Then, he takes care of everything. “Bahala na ang Dios” is a typical Filipino attitude which encourages us to be lazy. We rely on God to do the living for ourselves. With God busy with creation and re-creation, now, we can relax without interruption. Jesus in today's Gospel-Reading reverses our expectation. Jesus slept and the disciples got the experience of hell in the midst of a terrible storm. How could God afford to sleep while his disciples were struggling to save the boat and survive the storm? God sleeping? – is this not scary? Satan never sleeps; so, the disciples expected that God should be awake all the time too.

“Satan never sleeps”. I heard this statement once before in a different context of course. I was not in a boat tossed and turned by gigantic waves menacing another Titanic. Just a casual encounter with a parishioner who extended an invitation which she raised as an emergency call and therefore, should be responded to right away. Unfortunately, it was Monday – my free day – and I was not in a disposition to be alarmed even by this so-called emergency case. The emergency case was actually a renovated house wanting to be blessed and accordingly, should be blessed right away – yes, on that Monday! I smilingly requested her to reset the house blessing on another day since after all the supposedly emergency was not truly emergency. The world would not fall even if her house missed a blessing on that Monday. Most of all Monday was my free day. She was so disgusted with my answer that she could not believe that here was a priest who could easily dismiss a house blessing simply for the sake of his free day. “Satan does not have free day, Father!” she exclaimed. “Remove my free day – my dear – and you will have two Satans” I told her.

The problem is many people take “free day” to mean an empty day. A free day is more precisely a day of leisure – a day to focus one’s attention on matters so personal which have no place in the daily routine of a busy pastor. A free day is in fact never empty. It is actually a day filled with activities closest to one’s heart, e. g., playful relaxation, meditative reading, deep contemplation, renewal of familial relationships, or whatever that enriches our lives priestly or lay.. But our world has grown accustomed to frenzy. We are doing everything so much in a hurry that we do not have time to pause to find out whether our words and deeds are in accord with God’s will. Call this free day *leisure* and leisure does not mean a waste of time. Leisure is in fact the foundation of civilization. Leisure is a creation of a womb as it were lodging an incipient civilization to take stock and eventually get stronger. No wonder all education – and civilization cannot stand without education – begins in monasteries. For there the monks and nuns have enough leisure to engage in activities that are really important. Close to nature and closer to God, these contemplatives, as Jesus said, have taken the better part. And nobody – simply nobody – can take this away from them. (Lk 10:42) The problem with the disciples was they thought that they were there in the company of Jesus only to row the boat.

Unaccustomed to leisure, they missed the contemplative attitude to realize the meaning of the storm in their apostolic vocation. They were called to be men of faith. Men of faith never lose hope. That even in the midst of storm, they will have to continue on rowing knowing that Jesus is in their company – yes, even while asleep! No turbulence can drown Jesus. He showed it in his triumph on the cross. During that time, Satan thought the world was his. What a recompense for all the time he never slept! God died and the whole creation fell into the hands of Satan. Jesus slept but did this mean the world was out of his control? The disciples thought a sleeping God was a disabled god. Satan thought the same and believed that he could then steal heaven and earth from God who was fast asleep. Jesus proved Satan and the disciples all wrong. Jesus was asleep alright but he was not dead. Salvation after all takes time. It indeed takes time for man to get converted. But don't worry. Man will eventually change heart and with God's grace turn away from sin and start living the Gospel. Yes, the life of man is not just storm from beginning to end. A great part of it is in fact peace and tranquility. That is why Jesus can afford to sleep. He relies on the power of his grace and the propensity of man to respond to it in time. Just wait – all these take time. ■

JUN 28

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24; 2Cor 8:7, 9:13-15; Mk 5:21-43

Scandalized By Grace

ENRICO GONZALES, OP

Scandalum is a Latin word which means an obstacle, an obstruction, a stumbling block, anything misplaced which tends to trip the foot of a pedestrian. To many people of his time, Jesus appeared a big *scandalum*. They considered him at least a puzzlement, someone who absolutely baffled their minds. What did Jesus mean when he declared for example that the little girl – the daughter of Jairus – was asleep? (Mk 5:39) As soon as he said this, the people who were once weeping and wailing suddenly laughed at him. (Mk 5:40) Never seen a sudden shift

of emotion? You bet, but this is an outright reaction to Jesus who amazed them to no end. Was Jesus kidding? If he did, this was not the right time and the right place. The child was dead period, and there was nothing Jesus could do to cure her. Jesus the Doctor was no longer needed unless Jesus himself was a mortician. Jesus took no offense of the ridicule of the crowd and insisted to see the allegedly dead girl. He was behaving not just like a Doctor of Medicine, he was acting as God! He demanded from the leader of the synagogue just two things, one; not to fear; and two, believe. (Mk 5:36) Why not fear? Well, fear paralyzes. Have we not witnessed others or experienced ourselves possessed by fear? We could not talk, much less shout, we could not run, we could not think, we could not do anything at all, except to tremble in the same spot where we were standing. We were dumbfounded and literally at that. So, Jesus cautioned anyone of us expecting from God a miracle never to fear, for miracles do happen but not without the cooperation from us. But how can we cooperate with God when are paralyzed with fear? We must not fear; instead, we must believe. Thus, faith is the second and the most important condition. One may indeed not fear but likewise, not believe. Unbelief, besides fear, is also one cause of inaction. Jairus, the leader of the synagogue, the father of the little girl must have believed, and so, Jesus, recognizing this faith performed the miracle. The faith of Jairus which became more outstanding in the backdrop of the majority's incredulity, made him a father once again. He surely did not perform the miracle itself – Jesus did – but without his faith, Jesus would not have brought back life to his daughter again. In a sense, Jairus, with his faith, became a co-creator with Jesus of his daughter's life for the second time.

We all believe in miracles because we believe in God. Those who do not believe in God can never witness miracles happening to others much less to themselves. With their lack of cooperation with God, they are condemned to inaction. Skepticism never leads to a decision, to action, to change. It is in fact his fear of change, of conversion to be precise, that causes the unbeliever to deny God. Grace for them is an impossibility -- or a scandal, to say the least. ■

