

If the landowner gives to his tenants what is due to him as a human being — his rights as one — such rights as to a decent human life — the right to a just compensation for his labor. And his labor should earn a decent living also for his family. If the landowner believes as a Christian should believe — that his tenants are men — human beings — little less than the angels — crowned with glory and honor, then he, the landowner, will not hesitate to give him the lease of the land the tenants till.

Once again, I risk being obviously obvious — we need our landowner and employer people to treat our worker — farmer people as people, as human beings. This attitude of giving VIP treatment to all people cannot be just tuned on and off like an electric current. It must be sincere and constant and towards all.

Pentecost Sunday (May 17)

CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

When the first Pentecost Sunday came things were never the same again, certainly not for a small group of Christians. The small group of Christians headed by the Apostles appointed by Christ was a revolutionary group. They were in revolt against the Roman Empire and its values. They were in revolt against Judaism and its values. They were preaching the revolution of love. They were for change. They instituted the change, they formed a community of prayer and common possession of earthly goods. They distributed their tasks according to each one's abilities. Everyone shared in the goods that each received. That community grew, that community was persecuted. The community was baptized in blood and suffering. Today, if we look around, we still find such Christian communities existing in various parts of the world.

But here in the Philippines Christianity, as Karl Marx often said, has become the opium of the people. We have picked and chosen the Christian principles we would like to adapt and to practise. We pick and choose principles that do not create a revolutionary community, a community for change towards hope and love. That's why we can see a Christian taking refuge in the external rites of the Church and not heed the message which the external rites symbolizes. We can see a Christian go

through the routine of going to Mass, Holy Communion and rattle all the small faults of daily life in the confessional. And yet he or she can miss out and omit the more important, the real essentials like justice, honesty, respect for the rights of others and a long, long list of positive, dynamic truths. Why? What's wrong?

Human weakness, human greed, things, possessions, usually make a Christian follow the line of least resistance. Greed and pride make him a Christian shell without a Christian soul. And so Christianity always becomes an opium, a drug, a sedative, an escape for our people. But the real Christian who is the salt of the earth, he sees the full message of Christ. He treats all people with rights — the right to live, the right to be happy, the right to be free, — rights given them by God because they are human beings with a future in God and working with Christ in transforming this world. The real Christian, the Christian who is a revolutionary Christian, sees confession as a means for self-reform with the view to be a better Christian not for his own image but towards a better relationship with others. He sees the Mass and Holy Communion as the focus of his oneness with all people, his identification with them and therefore his sharing with them of Christ and the riches Christ bestowed specially in the goods of the earth. The real Christian sees that the world and all its riches as ours to share, not mine alone to use. This will mean, if he sees this in all his daily affairs, that he will have less of the goods of the earth because he has shared them with others. But he will have more of the intangibles — peace, fulfillment, happiness deep, deep down. He will be a Soul Christian. He will put guts and blood in his Christianity. Christianity is not meant to be a wishy-washy affair; a goody-goody affair with God and us. It is life. And life is joy, life is sorrow, life is sharing, life is giving, life is receiving, life is living and life is also dying.

Trinity Sunday (May 24)

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Sometime ago I read something like this: "Before building a wall around yourself, find out first what you're keeping out and what you're keeping in."