

BOLETIN ECCLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

● THE PHILIPPINE ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW ●

THE NEED TO VOTE • THE REFLECTING CHURCH • HOLINESS OF THE PRIEST • THE REFORMED "ORDO MISSAE" DE COLORES: YOU AND YOUR SERVICE SHEET • THE CHURCH AND THE CATHOLIC VOTE
INDULGENCES OF THE ROSARY.

BOLETIN ECCLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

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THE NEED TO VOTE

Probably never before in the history of the country has the accent been placed more emphatically on the individual Catholic and his civic duty to register for voting than at this hour.

Why the urgency? There is of course the consideration that to vote is a matter of Christian responsibility. To vote in fact, has the highest priority among our civic duties. It is a duty—not merely a citizen's right—founded on the assumption that we must keep our country strong and defend the freedom with which we have been blessed.

In recent years our Popes have been most emphatic in underscoring the moral obligation that every Christian has, as a citizen of the State, to get out and vote.

Pius XII, speaking to the women of Rome in 1945, said: "In your social and political activity much depends on the legislation of the State and the administration of local bodies. Accordingly, the electoral ballot in the hands of Catholic woman is an important means towards fulfillment of her strict duty in conscience, especially at the present times."

The very next year—this time to the pastors and Lenten preachers—he reiterated the same fundamental Christian duty: "The exercise of the right to vote is a grave responsibility, at least when there is involved a question of electing those whose office it will be to formulate the constitution and laws of the country... particularly those laws which affect, for example, the sanctification of holy days, marriage, family and school, and those which give direction, according to justice and equity, to the various phases of social life."

These words of the Holy Father, pronounced in another place and time, when viewed against the backdrop of present national conditions acquire a more strident force and meaningful urgency. We are in the Philippines, as in other countries, living through

an era of revolution and are witnessing many strange voices and hearing many deceptive slogans. We are faced as a nation in making decisions, decisions that quite rightly demand an heroic degree of courage and wisdom, and more personal sacrifices. A thousand questions which are not merely political but, above and beyond all else, moral are clamoring, pressing for an immediate attention and solution: war on poverty, peace and order, direction of education of our youth, an ebbing sense of integrity, fairness and decency, and not the least of all, the search for identity and recognition in the society of nations.

To refuse to vote, to stand idly by and "let George do it!" is a grave and fatal sin of omission. For in these times and conditions, the selection of responsible candidates is one of the most pressing imperatives of our national life, not to say survival. It is not hard to understand this. If a democracy is to survive and remain strong, its citizens must show interest in choosing good men; otherwise, this form of government will soon fall into decadence.

Voting is an exercise of the virtue of patriotism. One can make it a good habit by using it well or can destroy its real meaning by not using it or by using it badly.

The choice is up to each individual citizen. That choice must be done come November this year.

THE POPE SPEAKS

MESSAGE
OF
POPE PAUL VI
FOR
MISSION SUNDAY
1969

*Sons and daughters of
Gods holy Church!*

Dearly beloved brethren!

WE CONSIDER OURSELF at this moment as spiritually in your midst.

Listen to Us, for the love of Our Lord.

We would like, again this year, to address a word to you all, as it comes to Us from Our heart, for World Mission Sunday on October 19, 1969. We cannot silence this message, although it may say nothing new, for it springs from the constant awareness of Our apostolic ministry, entrusted to Us by the Lord and making Us responsible to all: to all, as St. Paul says, We are under obligation (cf. Rom. 1:14), and "woe to me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16)! Before giving utterance to this message, We have heard it in Our heart from the command of Christ himself, the first Missionary, 'sent' from the Father — Christ, who rose from the dead and gave to the Apostles, and to us successors of the Apostles, his imperative mission: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21).

Our message today is this: let us try to bring out the missionary idea clearly and strongly in ourselves and around us. We should pay heed to the new importance that this idea takes on for the People of God after the Council. It is an idea that permeates the whole Church and each one of the faithful. It enters into the very definition of a Christian: "The obligation of spreading the faith," says the Council, "is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his ability" (*Lumen Gentium*, 17). And again: "All sons of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility to the world. They should foster in themselves a truly Catholic spirit. They should spend their energies in the work of evangelization" (*Ad Gentes*, 36). It is a vocation for all; it is a duty for the whole Church — if it is Catholic, by its very nature it must be missionary (cf. *Ad Gentes*, nos. 2, 6, 35). We have always known this. Already St. Augustine taught: "If you wish to love Christ, your charity must embrace the whole world" (In Ep. I Jo. tract. 10, 5; P.L. 35,2060). But the Council has brought out more clearly this pressure, this urgency of the love of Christ (cf. II Cor. 5:14), whether as a community of faithful or as single believers. No category of Christians can exempt itself from the missionary vocation: it binds even those who adopt the contemplative life (cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, nos. 5 and 11); and it binds the laity, "for the Lord wishes to spread his kingdom by means of the laity also" (*Lumen Gentium*, 36). This is what is new in the Church's consciousness: the urgent and universal duty of the apostolate.

What does this duty entail? It means that we must all unite in the general effort of the Church to spread Christ's message. We repeat: there is no room today for indifference, apathy and spiritual selfishness, as if the cause of the Gospel was the business of the hierarchy only, and of organizations that are specifically dedicated to evangelization. Every Christian who wishes to live up to his call to faith, and to the profession of his faith, must open his soul to the wind of Pentecost; the prophetic breath of the Holy Spirit should invade every son and daughter of God, born to the life of grace (cf. Acts 2:17). The whole Catholic community must become convinced of the necessity to spread the faith; each and every member of the Church must be aflame with apostolic fervour and missionary zeal.

The etymological and essential link between the two words 'apostolate' and 'mission' leads many today to apply the word 'mission' to every form of apostolic activity. We intend to use the word 'mission' here in its specific and technical meaning of activity envisaged and organized for the express purpose of evangelizing peoples who are not yet Christian, by means of persons who have dedicated themselves, and are chosen, prepared and officially sent, that is, by means of missionaries', who, in the footsteps of the Apostles, preach the word of truth and bring to birth new Churches (cf. *Ad Gentes*, and St. Augustine quoted there, *Enarr. in Ps. 44, 23, P.L. 36, 508*). That is, we are speaking now of missions in the strict sense. The attention of the faithful should be drawn to the missionary ideal, as they are defined in the Council decree '*Ad Gentes*' on the Church's missionary activity. We must mention in a special way the Holy See's Pontifical Missionary Works, which engage Our primary pastoral responsibility. These have before them the full panorama of the world to be evangelized; they are the centre of a network spread throughout the Church for the benefit of all Catholic missions; they have an awareness of missionary requirement throughout the world; and they are administered on a collegial basis and with impartial criteria of distributive justice and a charity that is awake to all needs and all opportunities to help.

The very existence of this central and official organization in the Church is a reply to a difficulty that is currently brought up in certain sectors, and which would threaten missionary activity with stagnation: that is, an emphasis on the Conciliar proclamation of religious liberty, as if this would favour an agnostic irenicism and authorize indifference concerning religious truth and the apostolic command, to which the plan of salvation is linked. Missionary endeavour, some say, is no longer necessary. The existence of Pontifical Works that are expressly designed to promote and maintain such missionary endeavour contradicts this theory today as before, for religious liberty, as proclaimed by the Council, is meant to ensure that religion will be free from undue interference on the part of any purely secular power, and also from wrong social and political exclusiveness in the religious field; it is not meant to weaken our apostolic duty but rather to provide civic conditions in which missionary activity may be exercised, with due respect for freedom of con-

science, while preaching the one true message of salvation that comes from religion.

This is a basically traditional position in the Church, but one which the Council has renewed and clarified. It makes us remember our need, beloved Brothers and Children, to refresh our missionary consciousness, on many other points as well, with the new ideas that the present time offers to our consideration. There are many such ideas: for instance, that of the progress of human solidarity, which multiplies links between peoples as civilization develops, and obliges the citizens and governments of better endowed countries to willingly and unselfishly help developing countries. We have spoken of this in Our Encyclical 'Populorum Progressio', and We may add that missionary activity claims a place of priority in this scheme of human and Christian solidarity.

Thus the concept of missionary endeavour has undergone development. There used to be something exotic and romantic in it, as if it were an evangelizing adventure in far-off and unknown lands. Today the concept is more positive and realistic, for missionary activity can now profit from experience, which saves it from projects that are too naive and experimental, dispenses it from arduous geographical exploration that is now superfluous, simplifies the missionary's practical initiation and makes his training more scientific and specific. All of this opens up new possibilities, but requires a greater supply of vocations and financial support.

The attitude of the missionary towards the countries to be evangelized has also evolved: the diversity of cultures no longer seems to him an obstacle to his preaching, but rather reveals native values worthy of respect and admiration, which should be understood, strengthened and ennobled" (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 13). The missionary is not, therefore, a stranger who, along with his faith, imposes his form of culture, but rather a friend and brother who fits in with the worthy customs of the region and provides the vivifying leaven of the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23). This missionary attitude, which is 'pluralistic' with regard to the expression of human culture and 'unitary' with regard to the oneness of faith and of the Church, has always been the norm of evangelization, as Pope Pius XII already pointed out in the Encyclical

'Evangelii Praecones' (cf. A.A.S. 43, 1951, pp. 521-522), but nowadays it is more marked than ever.

Today, as yesterday, the motive and the moral value of missionary activity remain valid. The numerous men and women missionaries in the field, dedicated to the service of spreading the Gospel, can bear witness to this. And the same qualities of the missionary remain necessary: total donation of self; willingness to face danger; patience; generous, persevering effort, even when it seems fruitless and when progress is slow; a spirit of sacrifice; the preaching of the Cross not only by word but also by example, with a willingness to suffer one's own passion. The missionary is like Simon of Cyrene, lovingly and publicly bearing Christ's cross with Him to the end.

Beloved Brothers and Children, We are reluctant to exploit these noble ideas with the usual appeal that closes this address on the missions — the appeal concerning the needs of the mission themselves, and the obligation and honour of giving them generous help. But it is our duty to do so — not in a calculating spirit, but because the divine plan of evangelization and the logic of charity make it necessary. The missionary cause needs your help; it needs your love, your prayers and your offerings. Who would deny this when the missionary cause is that of Christ himself, as He makes his mysterious way to the ends of the earth, plants his footsteps on present and future history, raises the destiny of peoples, identifies himself with each man (who without Him would be abandoned and alone), assembles his Church and leads it, as its Shepherd and Saviour, to the joy of eternal life?

"He that has ears to hear, let him hear." We make these words of Jesus Our own and, filled with gratitude and trust, We impart to you all Our Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican
on the Feast of Pentecost,
May 25, 1969

PAULUS PP. VI

DOCUMENTATION

CLARIFICATIONS ON THE NEW "ORDO MISSAE"

SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO CULTU DIVINO

August 5, 1969

Prof. N. 820/69

Your Excellency:

Thank you for your letter of July 6th, in which you asked for some clarifications.

In the new *Ordo Missae* the cassock was not mentioned because it is not a liturgical garment. In liturgical celebrations only those vestments are required which are mentioned in the *Ordo Missae*.

The alb is the liturgical garment and this would be worn for liturgical celebrations. If you so desire to use your white garments, which are very much like the alb, as liturgical garments, I see no difficulty. However, they would have to be used only for that and not as dress during the day. Hygienic purposes warrant this policy. If only the alb is used, it would be appropriate if it were without lace and the right length.

I hope, your Excellency, that I have helped with these observations. If there is anything else, please let me know at once.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Sgd.) A. BUGNINI
Secretary

Most Rev. W. Brasseur, CICM
P. O. Box 55
Baguio City
Philippines

APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE

N. 4600

September 19, 1969

Your Excellency:

In a letter Prot. N. 1009/69, dated September 6, 1969, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship has communicated the following observations in reference to the decisions made by the Bishops' Conference at Baguio last July 2-5, 1969 on liturgical matters:

1. p. 13, n. 5: the substitution of St. Paul Miki with Peter Baptista does not appear opportune because St. Paul Miki is already universally accepted as the first of the martyrs of Japan. Hence, it is proposed that "SS. Petrus Baptista, Paulus Miki et Sociorum, Martyrum" is to be said.
2. p. 13, n. 7: The new rubrics does not admit any more two collects "sub unica conclusione." The collect of the mass is always one. In the anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of the Bishop, the corresponding votive mass is to be said, if permitted by the rubrics.
- 3, p. 14-15, N. 18: The readings are to be selected only from the recently published lectionary according to the norms prescribed therein.

In sending these observations, the S. Congregation for Divine Worship is thanking those responsible for transmitting the "Acta" of the Bishops' Conference at Baguio last July.

With sentiments of fraternal esteem and kind regards, I remain

Yours devotedly in Christ,

(Sgd.) ✠ CARMINE ROCCO, D.D.
Apostolic Nuncio

His Excellency
Most Rev. Lino R. Gonzaga, D.D.
President, CBCP
P. O. Box 1160, Manila

† The Reformed "Ordo Missae" †

(Third Part and Last Part)

H. J. GRAF, S.V.D.

The Eucharistic Prayer

27. The Priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer. He extends his hands and says:
The Lord be with you.

The people respond:
And with your spirit.

Lifting up his hands the priest continues:
Lift up your hearts.

The people:
We have lifted them up to the Lord.

With hands extended the priest adds:
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

The people:
It is right and just.

With his hand extended, the priest sings or says the preface.

With the introductory dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer the Mass reaches its climax. As the name indicates, the Eucharistic Prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Therefore, the priest first invites the people to lift up their hearts to God in prayer and thanksgiving. The people are supposed to join in this prayer which the priest directs also in their name through our Lord Jesus Christ to the Father. United with Christ in the praise of the great deeds of God and in the offering of the sacrifice the whole congregation of the faithful offer through him the sacrifice.

The following are the main elements of the Eucharistic Prayer:

- a) Especially in the *preface* occurs the motive of thanksgiving. Here the priest glorifies the Father in the name of the entire holy people of God. He gives thanks either for the whole work of salvation

or selects one particular aspect of this work as the special motive of thanksgiving and praise. This selection is done in accordance with the different feasts, liturgical seasons or occasions (e.g. weddings).

- b) In the acclamation of the *Sanctus* the congregation unites itself with the heavenly choirs. It is to be sung or recited by both the people and the celebrant.
- c) In the *Epiclesis* the Church implores the divine power to come and consecrate the gifts prepared by men that they may become the Body of Christ. In the *epiclesis* the Church prays also that the immaculate victim to be received in holy Communion, may become fruitful to the communicants. These prayers in the four anaphoras of the Roman Rite have been divided into two sections, in the *consecratory* *epiclesis* before the institution narrative and the *Communion* *epiclesis* to be said after the anamnesis.
- d) We commemorate in a special manner the words and deeds of Our Lord with which He instituted this Sacrament of His Passion and Resurrection in the *Institution Narrative*.
- e) At the Last Supper the Lord gave to the Apostles his Body and Blood under the appearances of bread and wine and ordered them to do the same in His memory. The Church fulfills this commandment in the *Anamnesis*. We remember especially the Paschal Mystery of His blessed Passion, His glorious Resurrection and His Ascension into heaven.
- f) In the prayer of *oblation* the Church, especially the local Church, here and now assembled around the altar, offers in the Holy Spirit the immaculate victim to the heavenly Father. It is the wish of the Church that the faithful should not only offer this immaculate victim, but they should also learn to offer themselves with it. Thus they should come closer to their own perfection from day to day. Through Christ, their Mediator, the faithful ought to be brought into unity with God and with one another, until God will be finally all in all.
- g) Inserted into each of the Eucharistic Prayers are also *intercessions*. The Eucharist is celebrated in union with the whole Church, the

one in heaven and on earth. Therefore, this sacrifice is also offered for the whole Church, for all her members, living and dead. They all are called to share in the promised heavenly inheritance, in the salvation brought about by the Body and Blood of Christ.

- h) The final *doxology* glorifies God through Jesus Christ in the union of the Holy Spirit. It is concluded with the solemn "Amen" in which the people confirm everything that has been done and said in the Eucharistic Prayer.

The priest's gestures during the introductory dialogue to the preface and Eucharistic Prayer have been slightly altered in the new rubrics. For the *Dominus vobiscum* the priest extends and joins his hands as he does now when he says the same greeting before the collect. At the *Sursum corda* he lifts up his arms and keeps them in the same position also when he says the *Gratias agamus* and the entire preface.

Before the actual beginning of the first Eucharistic Prayer (Roman Canon) we find in the new Roman Missal the same 22 prefaces which were part of the Roman rite since summer 1968. To these prefaces we have to add the two proper prefaces of the second and fourth of the Eucharistic Prayers, the preface for the Mass of the blessing of the Holy Oils on Maundy Thursday and the three prefaces for wedding Masses. Apart from the proper prefaces of dioceses and religious orders, the Roman rite has now 28 prefaces, far short of the some 70 prefaces that were announced some time ago. They will be published in due time together with the reformed Mass orations, a great number of richer formulas for the last blessing at the end of the Mass, and antiphons for the beginning of the Mass and holy Communion. Together with that section of the Roman Missal that has been published so far, they will make up the Sacramentary (*Orationale, Sacerdotale*) that will, for the priest's use, take the place of the present Roman Missal.

Instead of being a hymn of praise and thanksgiving the preface of the Apostles had become a prayer of petition: "It is truly right and just, proper and helpful for salvation, humbly to pray you, Lord, eternal Shepherd, not desert your flock..." This situation asked for a revi-

sion in the new Missal. Now, the preface of the Apostles is a thanksgiving-prayer: "We do well always and everywhere to give you *thanks* because, as the eternal Shepherd, you never abandon your flock. You lovingly watch over and protect us..."

Changes in the Roman Canon

In the first Eucharistic Prayer (Roman Canon) a number of items have been changed, in the texts as well as in the rites. The celebrant is now given the opportunity to omit the conclusions "Through Christ our Lord.—Amen.", in the *Communicantes*, the *Hanc igitur*, the *Supplices* and in the memento for the dead. In the *Communicantes* the celebrant may omit the names of the Saints after St. Andrew. In the *Nobis quoque* the names of the non-biblical Saints (from St. Ignatius on) need not be mentioned any more.

The *Hanc igitur* is a variable prayer of petition while the *Quam oblationem* is obviously the equivalent of the consecratory epiclesis. This is the reason why the priest now hold his hands extended, as he did during the *Communicantes*. In a concelebrated Mass the main celebrant says the *Hanc igitur* alone in a loud voice. He is joined by the concelebrants only from the *Quam oblationem* on.

According to the former rubrics the ciborium with hosts to be consecrated had to be opened before the priest started to pronounce the first part of the institution narrative. This rubric has been deleted from the new guidelines. By being placed on the altar, resp. corporal, the hosts in the ciborium are destined "to become for us the bread of life" (*Offeritory*).

In the institution narrative the words of the Lord have been made uniform. We find now the same text for all four Canons or Eucharistic Prayers. While the priest slightly bows over the bread, he says: "This is my Body which will be given up for you!" The formula to be pronounced over the wine reads in all four anaphoras as follows: "This is the cup of my Blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven." At the end of the institution narrative the priest says simply: "Do this in memory of me." Also in the Roman Canon the priest, after

the elevation of the cup, exhorts the faithful to their acclamation with the words: "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith!" The uniformity in all these texts is of special advantage in the case of concelebration.

The concluding words *Per Christum Dominum nostrum* of the *Nobis quoque* have been transferred and form now the introduction of the prayer *Per quem haec omnia*, so that the *Nobis quoque* ends with... *quaesumus largitor admitte*. The priest joins his hands and says: "Through Christ our Lord you give us all these things..."

In the past the priest took his own big host and showing it with the cup to the people pronounced the great doxology. In the future the celebrant takes the paten (or the ciborium) into the one hand, the chalice into the other, and, lifting them both up, pronounces the *Per ipsum* and keeps them raised until the people respond *Amen*. If a deacon assists the priest, he holds the chalice up, the priest only his paten or the ciborium.

Changes in the new Eucharistic Prayers (II-IV)

Small changes were also inserted in the new Eucharistic Prayers. The priest makes a small bow of the body while he pronounces the words of the Lord in the institution narrative. While the deep bow of the body in the *Supplices* of the Roman Canon, the equivalent of the Communion epiclesis, has been retained, it has been abolished in the corresponding formula of the new Eucharistic Prayers (*Et supplices; Respice, quaesumus; Respice, Domine*). These prayers are to be said with arms extended.

Rite of Communion

96. The priest sets down the cup and paten and, with hands joined sings or says:
Let us now with confidence pray to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

He extends his hands and with the people he continues:
Our Father ...

The Communion rite is preceded by some preparatory rites which are to lead the faithful to holy Communion, namely, the Lord's Prayer with its introduction and embolism, the rite of peace, the breaking of the bread, the rite of commingling, the Agnus Dei and a special preparation prayer for the priest.

In order to mark the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Ordo Missae of 1965 and 1967 prescribed a genuflection after the elevation with doxology. This genuflection has been abolished.

The introduction to the Our Father remained unchanged. Together with the priest the congregation sings or recites the Lord's Prayer.

97. The priest continues alone:

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil.
Grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy keep us free from sin
and protect us from all anxiety
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

He joins his hands. People and priest together
end the prayer with the acclamation:

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

This embolism is said or sung aloud by the priest alone. It is an extension of the last petition of the Our Father: "Deliver us from evil." It has undergone considerable changes. We pray to be freed from every evil, but there is no further need to specify them as past, present or threatening in the future. The reference to the intercession of the Saints has been taken out. We conclude this prayer with an outlook to the return of the Lord in glory, inspired by TIT 2.13.

The new acclamation does not only give the people a new opportunity for active participation, but has also an ecumenical significance. Many non-Catholic Christians conclude the Our Father always with this venerable, ancient doxology which is already found in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (*Didache*).

98. The priest, with hands extended, says:

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
I leave you peace, my peace I give you.
and grant us peace and unity,

He joins his hands
You who live and reign for ever and ever.

The people answer:
Amen.

The rite of peace is introduced by the prayer *Domine Iesu Christe* which was formerly the first of the three, private pre-Communion prayer, to be said silently by the priest. Destined, to be said aloud in the name of the whole congregation, it has been changed into the plural (*our* sins). All ask here for peace and unity in the Church and in the whole human family.

99. The priest, extending and joining his hands, adds:

The Lord's peace be with you always.

The people answer:

And with your spirit.

In a gesture of greeting, the same that he now uses for the *Dominus vobiscum* before the collect, the priest addresses the community with the well-known text.

100. Then the deacon, or the priest, may add:

Let us show that we are at peace with one another.

All make some appropriate, customary sign of peace and love.

In the reformed Mass rite the place of the rite of peace has been retained. It is however, up to the Bishops' Conference of each country to decide the manner in which the people are to show that they are at peace with one another. Different ways have been proposed in this country so far: a handshake, the "abrazo" (among men), holding hands, etc. Perhaps a simple nod of the head with a smile to one's neighbor may be an appropriate sign of peace that comes quite naturally.

101. The priest gives the sign of peace to the deacon or minister. He then takes the bread and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the cup, saying in a low voice:

May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

Either in the same way as the people do, or in the customary, stylized form of the "kiss of peace" the celebrant gives the sign of peace to the deacon or server. After the invitation to show that they are at peace with one another, the people are not supposed to wait until the "peace" is brought to them from the altar; they should start among themselves right away. The priest himself *may* (but need not; cf. no. 112 of the guidelines) give the sign of peace to the simple Mass server.

As long as we shall have pre-formed hosts, the rite of breaking the bread will always remain some kind of a problem. According to the Constitution on the Liturgy the sacred rites should be clear and within the people's power of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation (art. 34). But today the rite of breaking the bread is not functional any more. It was retained because it is traditional. In ancient times it even gave its name to the whole Eucharistic celebration. Perhaps it was also retained in view of a future change of the form of the hosts. If there is one really big host, its breaking would indicate that the many who eat from the one bread (Christ) may become one body in the Lord (cf. 1 Cor 10,17).

Equally problematic is the rite of commingling. Only because of its venerable age was this rite retained. The words which accompany it, still to be said in a low voice, have been changed; the strange word *consecratio* has been dropped.

While the explanations in chapter Three of the new guidelines of the Missal give normally clear and precise information concerning the meaning of the different rites (nos. 24-57), they offer only historical information for the breaking of the bread and none at all for the commingling.

102. Meanwhile the following is sung or said:

Lamb of God, you take away sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This may be repeated until the breaking of the bread is finished,
but the last phrase is always 'Grant us peace.'

During the breaking of the bread and the commingling the congregation recites, or preferably sings the *Agnus Dei* which thus became once again what it originally was, the *confractorium*, the song accompanying the breaking of the bread. Using the present form of hosts there is no need for a prolonged recitation of the *Agnus Dei* (except for concelebrated Masses, if the concelebrants use large hosts). The rubrics refer us here, once again, to the exhortation of the guidelines at the beginning of the new Missal, to give to the hosts a more bread-like aspect.

From the the 11th century on, for Masses of the dead the *Agnus Dei* was used as a prayer for eternal rest: "Grant them rest, grant them eternal rest!" On Maundy Thursday also, the last answer was "Have mercy on us." In many churches the *Agnus Dei* was considered to be a sign of peace, an equivalent for the kiss of peace. Because of the misuse of the kiss of peace by Judas on that day, the petition "Grant us peace" was left out. From now on, however, the *Agnus Dei* will always have the conclusion "Have mercy on us" except for the last repetition of this prayer which will be always "Grant us peace."

103. Then the priest joins his hands and says in a low voice.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
by will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit
your death brought life to the world.
By your holy body and blood
free me from all my sins and from every evil.
Make me always cling to your commandments,
and never let me be parted from you.

Or:

Lord Jesus Christ, when I eat your body
and drink your blood
may it not bring judgment
but through your love and mercy
bring healing in mind and body.

These two prayers form now the private preparation of the priest before holy Communion. The priest stands erect with his hands joined while he says *one* of them (not both). The new liturgical books provide now also official translations for these private prayers; therefore, they may in future be used in the vernacular. Here we have anew an occasion where the development went beyond the rulings of the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 54). In the both prayers the former conclusion has been omitted. Because they were suggestive of the time of moral decadence, when this prayer originated as an apology, the words *quod ego indignus sumere praesumo* have been left out in the new form of the second of these prayers. But even in their present form both formulas cannot hide their character as "apologiae," prayers to be said in the Middle Ages whenever the choir sang. In them the priest proclaimed his unworthiness.

The guidelines say that these prayers have been kept for the private preparation of the priest for a fruitful Communion. During this silent time

the people are supposed to do the same. These reasons are not convincing. Is not the Mass as such the best preparation for holy Communion? Why, then, in addition private, silent prayers? The retention of these prayers appear therefore to be the result of a compromise.

104. The priest genuflects. Taking the bread he raises it slightly over the paten and, facing the people, says aloud:

This is the Lamb of God
 who takes away the sins of the world.
 Happy are they who are called to his supper.
 He adds, once only, with the people:
 Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
 but if you say the word, I shall be healed.

As usual, the priest genuflects before holy Communion. This is normally the third and last genuflection in the Mass. The priest shows then a host to the people, holding it over the paten (or the ciborium) and says the usual words of invitation to which were added, because of the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist, the words "Happy are they who were called to his supper" which are influenced by *Apoc* 19,9. All then say, but only once, not three times, the customary *Domine, non sum dignus*.

105. Facing the altar, the priest says in a low voice:
 May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.
 He reverently consumes the body of Christ.
 He then takes the cup and says in a low voice
 May the blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life.
 He reverently drinks the blood of Christ.

Already in 1964 the formula for the distribution of the holy Communion had been shortened and simplified. Now also that for the reception of holy Communion of the celebrant has been streamlined and to some extent corrected. The words (*Domini nostri Iesu* have been omitted in each case. For *animam meam* the priest says each time *me*, because the effects of the Eucharist are not limited to the soul, but extend, according to the intention of the Lord, to the whole man, soul and body (cf. *Jn* 6,54).

106. After this he takes the paten (or other vessel) and goes to the communicants. He takes bread for each one, raises it a little, and shows it, saying:
 The body of Christ.
 The communicant answers:
 Amen,
 and receives the bread. When a deacon gives communion he does the same.

Formerly the rubrics, at least those for the purification, remarked that the priest "places in the chalice any fragments which may be found on the paten held under the chin of the communicants." This or a similar reference to the Communion paten cannot be found any more in the general rubrics of the Missal. Only for the communion under both species, if someone receives the Eucharist by dipping or with a spoon, the paten is mentioned. To distinguish it from the paten of the priest, it is called in Latin *patina*. In the communion by intinction as well as in that with a spoon there exists the danger the drops of the consecrated wine may fall to the ground. This danger does not exist in the other cases. For holy Communion under the species of bread only the use of a paten is consequently in future optional.

107. If any are receiving holy Communion in both kinds, the rite described elsewhere is followed.
108. While the priest is receiving the body of Christ, the Communion song is begun.

In the unity of their voices the communicants are to express in the Communion song their spiritual union. At the same time this song is to be an expression of their spiritual joy. When the communicants approach in procession, Communion is made, by the common singing, a real community event: not only the individual goes to receive his Lord, but the community of brothers and sisters.

This song begins as soon as the priest himself receives holy Communion; it continues as long as seems fit. If a thanksgiving hymn is to follow during the Mass, after the distribution of holy Communion, the Communion song is not to last too long. There should be some time of silence in between for personal prayer and thanksgiving.

For Communion song may be used the antiphon of the Roman Gradual (with or without its psalm), the antiphon and psalm of the Graduale simplex or any other suitable hymn (approved in its text by the Bishops' Conference). These chants may be sung by a schola alone, by a schola or cantor and the people, or by the people alone.

If no chant accompanies the Communion of the people, the new Communion "antiphon" (for the time being the antiphon found in the old Roman Missal) is to be recited.

The word "antiphon" has been placed within quotation marks, because it will be different from the text, at present found in the Missal. These "antiphons" are not to be sung; they will be short, selected lessons, usually a text from Sacred Scripture, as motto for personal meditation and reflection after the reception of holy Communion. These texts may eventually be very welcome for both poets and composers as inspirations for the creation of new Communion hymns in the vernacular.

This antiphon is recited either in common by all the faithful, or by some of them (schola), by the lector, the prayer leader, or, if this should prove necessary, by the celebrant himself. In this case he should pronounce the text after his own Communion, before he starts to give holy Communion to the people.

109. When the Communion has been completed, the priest or deacon wipes the paten over the cup, and then washes the cup itself.

Priests have always made a distinction between the cleansing of the paten and the chalice. The former was only wiped clean with the purificator, the latter was rinsed first with wine and then with wine and water. Similarly, the new rubrics prescribe that the paten and/or ciborium only be wiped with the purificator. The chalice of the Mass is rinsed with wine and water, or with water only. In view of the small quantity of wine offered by the parishes for holy Mass, the rinsing with water only seems to be preferable in this country.

For the cleansing of the sacred vessels the rubrics propose two places: the side (either) of the altar, or the credence table. After a big celebration with a number of ciboria and chalices, it is obviously better to cleanse vessels at the credence table. One may even leave them, suitably covered, and cleanse them only after holy Mass when the people have left. The same may be advisable when on Sundays one Mass follows the other and the purification within Mass would unduly delay the end of the Mass.

No prayer formula does accompany the rinsing and cleansing of the chalice. Deleted from the *Ordo Missae* are the prayers *Panem caelestem*, *Quid retribuam*, *Quod ore*, and *Corpus tuum, Domine*.

110. Then the priest may return to his seat. A period of silence may now be observed, or a psalm or song of praise may be sung.

After holy Communion (or the cleansing of the sacred vessels) the priest may return to his chair. This is the better choice, if a communal thanksgiving is held now. All may sit during this time, pray in silence or sing a psalm or hymn of praise

111. Then, standing at the seat or at the altar, the priest says:
Let us pray.

Priest and people pray in silence, unless the silence has already been observed. Then the priest extends his hands and sings or says the prayer after Communion, at the end of which the people respond:
Amen.

If the priest returned to the presidential seat it is preferable that he says there also the prayer after Communion, which is said in the same way as the collect at the beginning of the Mass: with hands joined when he says *Oremus* and hands extended when he says or sings the oration; it is, however, concluded with the short ending. The aim of this prayer is to ask for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated.

Concluding Rites

112. If there are any short announcements, they are made at this time.

This rubric is a consequence of article 353, of the Constitution on the Liturgy which suggested that instructions of a liturgical nature should be inserted at the more suitable moments of the celebration. One should, consequently avoid, to connect these announcements with the homily. If they have to be made, then their place is here, after the post-Communion.

113. The dismissal follows. Facing the people, the priest extends his hands and sings or says:

The Lord be with you.

The people answer:

And with your spirit.

The priest blesses the people with these words:

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

The people answer:

Amen.

On certain days or occasions another, more solemn form of blessing or prayer over the people may precede the above formula as the rubrics direct.

As usual, when he sings or says *the Dominus vobiscum*, the priest extends his hands. The rite for blessing the people has been simplified, however. The rite of the Mass for 1965 still contained the prescription that the priest "raises his eyes and hands, which he extends and joins, and says in a clear tone of voice:

May almighty God bless you . . ." (*Rites servandus*, no. 87; *Variationes* of 1967 no. 56). Now, however, the priest has his hands joined, when he says: "May almighty God bless you." While he continues, saying: "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" he blesses the congregation with the sign of the cross.

This form of blessing the people will not remain the only one. In the meantime some examples of the more solemn form of blessing have been published, e.g., for the ordination Mass of a bishop and for the wedding Mass. The *oratio super populum* is now acknowledged as a formula of blessing, and it gets its place in the Mass here; it is, consequently, transferred from its former place after post-Communion.

114. The deacon, or the priest himself, with his hands joined, says or sings:
 Go with the peace of Christ.
 The people answer:
 Thanks be to God.

This form of translating the *Ite, missa est* wants to bring out the rubric of the new Missal which says that this dismissal includes a mission, a sending: everyone of the congregation is to return to his own task entrusted to him by God.

The priest then kisses the altar, goes down to the level of the nave, makes the customary reverence (bow or genuflection) and leaves for the sacristy.

The Holiness Of Priests

A COMMENTARY ON THE DECREE ON THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF PRIESTS
(PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS -- NN. 12 TO 18)

● Leo A. Cullum, S.J.

1

Introduction

The Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests in numbers 12 to 18 discusses the priest's holiness. Before taking up the teaching of the decree it will be helpful to say a few words about holiness. Holiness, in its most obvious sense (what is called moral holiness) when attributed to a man consists of love of God and love of neighbor. But lest we be misled by that much abused word "love" let us say that holiness consists in devotedness, dedication to and identification with the will of God, the "interests" of God, and the true good of our fellow man because he is dear to God. Since it is devotedness it implies great self-forgetfulness, and a whole retinue of other virtues.

This devotedness to God's will is manifested in different fields according to different vocations. The holiness of a housewife will be different from the holiness of a school boy because love of God and neighbor, devotedness, will be realized in different ways. The priest's holiness, therefore, will be specified by his priestly activities. But there are two notable differences. The first is that the priest is consecrated to his activities by a special sacrament. The second is that his activities involve such an intense pre-occupation with God and spiritual values that they are themselves sanctifying in a way not verified in other vocations.

In order to make the development of the subject easier to understand it will be helpful to give a summary of the structure of numbers 12-18.

The holiness of the priest is first of all *ontological*. What does that mean? It means that the priest is set aside *con-secrated*, made a holy thing, *sacrum*, for the service of God. We may understand this from the example of the Apostles. Peter and John were holy in a way that Zachary and Mary Magdalen were not. These latter may have been holier as possessing a greater charity, but they were not assumed into the *pastoral circle* of Christ. Therefore the holiness of the Apostles was first of all, an ontological holiness consisting in their appropriation, their incorporation into the directorate of Christianity of which Christ was the central and dominant figure. The Bishops succeeded them in this, together with the priests associated with them in their ministry.

Conceivably this official association with Christ does not carry with it moral or personal interior holiness, as history abundantly proves. There have been men with this holy calling who have lived very wicked lives. Nevertheless this was contrary to the inner logic of their vocation. The ontological holiness of this elite says two things. It gives first of all an impelling reason why they should be holy. Their close association with Christ makes holiness an intrinsic exigency. Secondly, because the call is to the practice of the saving ministry of Christ, it means a sanctifying manner of life which will produce results if interior commitment is present.

We may therefore see the priest's holiness in three stages: 1) A designation to a holy mission. 2) An interior sanctity demanded by this. 3) An interior sanctity produced by it.

The efforts of the priest to acquire interior holiness whether in response to the demands of his vocation or in the sincere fulfillment of his duties will encounter certain obstacles. First there is the distracted nature of contemporary priestly life which demands a unifying principle. Secondly, there are the usual obstacles from pride, concupiscence and acquisitiveness, which have to be overcome. Finally, there is the need which the ministry has of other spiritual exercise to keep its spirit alive.

The first obstacle from multiplicity of interests, is met by seeking solely the will of God in the salvation of men. The second obstacles are met by obedience, continence and poverty. The third by the employment of various traditional practices of devotion familiar in the Church. We shall now proceed to consider these steps in more detail.

Priests Like Christ

The first two paragraphs of the Decree (12) give the key to an understanding of the holiness proper to the priesthood. Everything is based on the priest's call to the work of Christ.

By the Sacrament of Orders priests are made like Christ . . . to carry out the work of Him, the Head, with the Episcopal Order, and to build up His whole body which is the Church . . . They have become living instruments of Christ . . . whose place they take. (12)

Actually in the passage just quoted, it is said that the priest is "configured" to Christ, *the priest*. The words "the priest" have been purposely omitted lest we seem to say that priests are not made like Christ as teacher and pastor. Priests are made like Christ, the Saviour; like Christ, the Pontifex, the bridge builder between God and man; like Christ, *the Priest*, in the comprehensive sense of the word as describing Christ's whole saving mission. "He was a priest from the first instant of his mortal life, intrinsically and in all His acts," Suhard says.¹ The priest in his vocation and consecration, is made like Christ, the source of all supernatural life among men, the Head, as the same passage says. Earlier in the Decree, in almost the same words, we read: "Inasmuch as it is connected

¹ Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, *Priests Among Men*, p. 7

with the episcopal order, the priestly office shares in the authority by which Christ Himself builds up, sanctifies and rules His Body . . . Priests are marked with a special character and are so made like Christ the Priest, that they can act in the person of Christ the Head."²

Ontological Holiness

The priest therefore possesses what we have called, for want of a better word, ontological holiness. "They have," the Decree says, "been consecrated to God in a new way." (12) The priest is holy as a chalice or an altar is holy. He has been picked out and consecrated to the service of God by a special rite. This "ontological" holiness of the priest is a participation in the ontological holiness of Christ. Christ is the anointed Saviour of mankind. "The unction, by which Jesus Christ was consecrated Sovereign Priest, was the very divinity which filled and sanctified His sacred humanity at the very instant of the Incarnation."² In simple language the Incarnation was Christ's ordination. There the divinity like an anointing and a consecrating oil pervaded His whole being, giving him an *ontological* holiness, setting Him aside for the work of Saviour.

It is true as the Council says (2) "The Lord Jesus 'Whom the Father has made holy and sent into the world' (Jn. 10, 36) has made His whole mystical Body share in the anointing by the Spirit with which He has Himself been anointed." Nevertheless the priest is privileged to share in the anointing in a special way. "Priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character, and so are configured to Christ the Priest." (2) "The Father sanctified and consecrated and sent Christ into the world . . . likewise, priests are consecrated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ." (12)

Logic of Holiness

Ontological holiness in the priest — otherwise than in Christ — does not of itself convey moral holiness. Nevertheless this is its logical consequence, "priests are bound to it by a special claim." (12) The Council shows this by comparing the ontological holiness of Christ and the ontological holiness of the priest. The ontological holiness of Christ led to three other phases of His work. 1) First — there was His full dedication to His work; He "gave himself for us that He might redeem us." (12) 2) Secondly — there was His death in the fulfilment of His task, by which, 3) thirdly, he entered into His glory.

This too, is to be the pattern of the priest's life, consecrated as he is by his ordination to his mission. 1) He devotes himself entirely to this service. 2) He has to die in fulfilling it: "mortify in himself the deeds of the flesh." (12) and, 3) finally, in this way to grow in sanctity and perfection.

The ontological holiness of the priest therefore makes definite demands upon the priest himself. He is not a cup of gold nor a block of marble, consecrated to the service of God, which remain interiorly unchanged. The priest is a rational, free agent whose actions should reflect His consecrated condition.

² Subard. p. 8

Sacramental Grace

But this is a very lofty obligation, to be a co-Saviour. It is far beyond any man's powers to accomplish. Here is where the power of the Sacrament is felt. With their consecration the priests receive a grace, and a promise of the help they need to live as worthy representatives of Christ the Head. The Decree assures them that they have this. "Every priest is enriched with a special grace." (12)

Pius XI in *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* says: "The priest through the Sacrament of Orders receives new and special helps. Thereby if, by his free and personal cooperation, he will loyally further the divinely powerful action of the grace itself, he will be able worthily to fulfill all the duties, however arduous, of his lofty calling. He will not be overborne but will be able to bear the tremendous responsibilities inherent in his priestly duty."³

Therefore though the calling is sublime, the priest will by the special grace he receives, be able to live worthily of his office. Since Christ wants him to act for Him the Head, Christ will enable him, if he tries to do so, "to imitate the perfection of him whose part He takes." (12) In inviting a man to the priesthood Christ undertakes to remove those obstacles to this vocation which weak humanity presents, by making him a sharer in His own holiness. This is the wonderful grace of the Sacrament of Orders; it communicates a spark of the Sanctity of the Head.

Priests Aid Bishops

We have just mentioned the close connection between the Bishop's Order and the priest's. The priest is a co-worker of the Episcopal Order. (12) He is a kind of extension of the Bishop. "They make him (the Bishop) present in every gathering of the faithful." (5) A consideration of the Bishop's peculiar vocation (and field of holiness), and the priest's connection with him will therefore be very helpful in understanding the priest's proper holiness.

Lumen Gentium tells us that Bishops preside over the flock in the place of God. They are its shepherds, teaching, conducting sacred worship, providing for government. Christ our Lord is in the midst of the faithful in the person of the Bishop. Through him Christ preaches, administers the sacraments, directs and guides the people of God. (20 & 21)

This is the vocation of the Bishop, to be the Good Shepherd for the flock of Christ. But the Second Vatican Council consistently describes the priest as the helper, the co-worker of the Bishop. "The Bishops therefore assume care of the community helped by priests and deacons."⁴ Christ is present to the faithful through the Bishops "and the priests are their assistants."⁵ In other words, the Bishop is present through the

³ No. 25, J. Hussein, *Social Wellspring*, II (1943) p. 406

⁴ *Lumen Gentium* nn. 20

⁵ *Ibid* 21

priests. "Thus, established in the order of the priesthood, they are co-workers of the Episcopal Order in the proper fulfillment of the Apostolic mission entrusted to the latter order by Christ." (2)

Alter Christus?

One writer⁰ on this subject has objected to the much quoted expression "Sacerdos alter Christus," "The priest another Christ." He objects not because it is incorrect but because it fails to bring out the precise and proper manner in which a priest is "another Christ." The priest, this writer insists, is Christ present to his flock as *shepherd* from whom the sheep are to receive the truth they are to believe, the means by which they are to be saved and sanctified, the manner of life to which they are to conform. We may say of any Christian, "Christianus alter Christus." It is only of the priests (and of course the Bishop) that we can say, "Sacerdos alter Christus caput corporis mystici."

Priesthood of Laity

It may be objected that every Christian is consecrated to God in Baptism and is in fact consecrated to a priesthood. The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* says, "the laity too share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ." (2) And in another place: "Incorporated into Christ's mystical body through Baptism . . . they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people that they may offer spiritual sacrifices." (3)

It is true that the Council speaks of the priesthood of the laity, but it also takes pains to distinguish this from the priesthood received in Holy Orders. The laity, as the Council says, offer "spiritual sacrifices." But they are not intermediaries between God and man; they need an intermediary. This is Christ, whose role the priest re-enacts in the Church. We may understand the difference, if we remember the man at the Sheep Pool (Jn. 5, 2-9), to whom Christ said: "Do you wish to be well again?" "I have no one to put me into the pool," the man replied. *Hominem non habeo*. But he had a man, Christ. The faithful have things to offer, spiritual sacrifices, and in that lies their priesthood, but they need a man to make the offering. If it is true that all Christians are to offer their actions as a sacrifice to God, they only do this effectively around the Sacrifice of the Altar, which priests are specially ordained to consummate. "Through the ministry of priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ the sole mediator. Through the hands of priests and in the name of the whole Church, the Lord's sacrifice is offered in the Eucharist in an unbloody manner." (2)

There is therefore this difference between the Christian call to sanctity and the priestly call to sanctity. The priests are those within the

⁰ A. Manaroche. "L'Eglise en son Temps" in Vauthier "Pretre qui es tu" *L'Ami du Clerge*. Feb. 22, 1968, 113-124

body of the faithful who especially, we may say *ex officio*, accomplish their sanctification by working for the realization of sanctity in others.⁷ The priest is an *alter Christus* in his total dedication to bringing others to live their own peculiar vocations in a Christlike way. "Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10, 31)

Thus, though priests are also sheep, they are more specifically shepherds, caring for the sheep. *Lumen Gentium* says: "The ministerial priest . . . molds and rules the priestly people." (10) And therefore, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* says: "To the acquisition of this (Christian) perfection priests are bound by a special claim; they have been consecrated to God (and) . . . have become living instruments so that they accomplish His wonderful work . . . to build up and establish His body which is the Church." (12)

Cardinal Suhard states this special character of the priesthood as follows: "The priest is not merely a baptized person. He is not a lay person vested with a temporary function, but a man set apart from the faithful,⁸ at once pontiff and head in the community of the baptized."⁹ "The priest is neither the equal nor the delegate of Christians. He is their father. . . . The right and primary role of the priest is to beget, form and watch over the militant laity."¹⁰ *Mystici Corporis* says, "It is through them, that Christ's apostolate as Teacher, King and Priest is to endure." (17)

Pius XI's Encyclical on the Priesthood, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* speaks of the priest having power over the Sacramental Body of Christ, the Mystical Body, and the Ministry of the Word. Though the language is somewhat different the idea is the same. The priest has power over the Mystical Body to guide the faithful and, with authority, to administer them the double food of the Eucharist and the Word. He is therefore *alter Christus* in the sense that he is *alter Christus caput Ecclesiae*. He is to the people of the Church what Christ was to the multitude on the hillside above the Lake of Genesareth. Christ taught them, directed the manner of their presence, fed them. (Jn. 6, 1-15) To carry out this work today in a Christlike way is the specific holiness of the priest.

Thus the priest is what one writer beautifully describes as "the sacrament of God's initiative."¹¹ "Because of us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven." This loving invasion continues, now by invisible grace of which the visible sign and agent — the sacrament — is the priest. It is he who administers to men the Church, the Mass, Penance, the means of holiness. He continues God's attack. He is the Good Shepherd, who goes after the sheep. He is a new real presence.

⁷ Of course the laity also achieve their sanctity in apostolic zeal. "There is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole body." (2) But their calling is not to responsibility for the people of God as such.

⁸ When it is said that the priest is set apart, this is not to be understood as separating the priest from the people. It distinguishes but does not separate. "By their vocation and ordination priests . . . are indeed set apart in a certain sense . . . But this is not that they may be separated from the people . . ." (3).

⁹ I.e. pp. 16 and 17

¹⁰ *ibid* 46 & 47

¹¹ H. Denis, "Points de Repère", cited by Vauthier. Cf. *Supra*. pg. 8

Therefore the very nature of the priesthood, what it is, reveals, points the way to its peculiar holiness. The Decree will go on to explain this at greater length (13), but it now concludes that since the priest is co-Saviour, he will be sanctified simply by being faithful to this role. There is no need to look far afield for *means of sanctification*. The priesthood itself is, if zealously lived, the priest's main means of sanctification.

"And so it is that they grow strong in the life of the spirit while they exercise the ministry of the Spirit and holiness, as long as they are sensitive to Christ's Spirit. . . . For by their every day sacred actions as by the entire ministry . . . they are directed to perfection of life." (12)¹²

Need of Holiness

And yet by a kind of a paradox the very activities which are the source of a priest's holiness themselves require holiness for their effective performance. It is of course true that God can bring about the salvation and perfection of men through the ministry of unworthy priests. But normally this is not the way God works. "Ordinarily," the Decree says, "God desires to manifest his wonders through those who because of their sensitiveness to the action of the Holy Spirit, their intimate union with Christ and their holiness of life, can say with the Apostles: 'It is now no longer I that lives, but Christ lives in me.'" (12)

The Council says that it has this last consideration very much in mind when it exhorts priests to pursue perfection. For the Council has three broad general objectives: renewal of the Church, spread of the Gospel, and dialog (as it is called) with the contemporary world. These goals are in effect goals of the People of God. It largely depends on priests whether the People of God will really achieve them, and this in turn hinges greatly on the holiness of the priests.¹³

II

Priest Sanctified in Work

The priest therefore is set aside for a holy work and this demands holiness in him. But his work also produces holiness. The Decree has said several times that the priest is made holy in his work. In number 13 the Council undertakes to show in detail how this is true.¹⁴ The Council divides these ministries into three: teaching, sanctifying and governing; the priest as prophet, priest and king.

¹² "In the first place the Shepherds of Christ's flock ought to carry out their ministry with holiness, eagerness, humility and courage. . . . They will thereby make this ministry the principal means of their sanctification." (*Lumen Gentium* 41) This is said of bishops but it is obvious from the context that it applies to all priests.

¹³ Earlier the Decree had recommended certain "natural" virtues as helpful in establishing salutary relations with men: "goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of character, zealous pursuit of justice, civility (*urbanitas*)."¹³

¹⁴ For a fuller understanding of the ministry of priests, and therefore of the concrete instruments of their holiness, we should consult numbers 4 to 6 where these ministries are described.

It will be helpful at this point to note an ambiguity which occurs in the use of the word priest. This ambiguity is felt in the previous paragraph where we say that the *priest* is prophet, *priest* and king. Priesthood has a wider and narrower usage. The *presbyteros* has three functions: teaching (or prophetic), sacerdotal (priestly or sanctifying), and royal (governing or pastoral). A brief sentence in the *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church* brings this out. "The 'presbyters' are prudent fellow-workers of the episcopal order and are themselves consecrated as true priests." (15)

The Decree undertakes to show how this triple role of the priest will inevitably lead the sincere and zealous man to holiness: "Priests will attain holiness in a manner proper to them if they exercise their offices zealously and tirelessly in the spirit of Christ." (13) Obviously it is not a mere mechanical discharge of their duties which will bring about this effect. The offices must be an expression of faith, *sincere*, self-sacrifice, *indefesse*, and love of God and neighbor, in *Spiritu Christi*.

Teaching Makes Holy

First the Council says that the *teaching* ministry, if so exercised, will lead to the holiness of the priest who exercises it. The various expressions of this ministry are described in some detail earlier in number 4. Here the Council is content to point two activities of the priest in this teaching ministry which will, almost by their own nature, draw him to holiness. First he will daily read and hear the word of God.¹⁵ Clearly this will be necessary. "The task of priests is not to teach their own wisdom but God's word." (4) The presumption is, too, that he will burn with zeal to plant this word in the hearts of others. If so, obviously, he will be no less desirous that the word take root in his own heart. "If they are at the same time preoccupied with welcoming this message into their own hearts, they will become even more perfect disciples of the Lord." (13) Reading and hearing this will inevitably involve meditation upon the sacred text, in view of the need of seeking the best manner of presentation. "Preaching is often very difficult in the circumstances of the modern world. . . . It must apply the perennial truth of the gospel to the concrete circumstances of life." (4) With such meditation priests will perceive the riches of God's truth and be won by it.

Secondly, the priest as teacher will realize his own helplessness; and this for two reasons. First, left to his own resources he is incapable of saying anything supernaturally eloquent. Secondly, the hearts he is addressing will remain closed to his efforts unless the Holy Spirit touch them. Priests will thus be thrown upon "Christ the Teacher," and think of themselves and their work as simply an aspect of the charity of God, of the work of salvation, and identify themselves with Christ.

Sacerdos

This is, therefore, the first way that the ministry of the priest makes him holy. The second role of the priest is *sacerdotal*, the sanctifying role. Again, earlier in number 5 this function of the priest is discussed

¹⁵ Though Abbott's translation says here "They should every day read and listen to the word of God," (13), the Latin is simply declarative: "cotidie legunt et audiunt". The Council was at pains not to be too exhortatory, "preachy."

in greater detail: "God who alone is holy and bestows holiness willed to raise up to himself as companions and helpers men who would humbly dedicate themselves to the work of sanctification." (5)

It is the teaching of the Decree that priests in performing this sanctifying role, sanctify themselves if indeed they have the necessary dispositions. "As ministers of the sacred realities . . . priests represent the person of Christ in a special way."

The Latin says: "sacrorum ministri" and the meaning is "holy things or actions" that is, the liturgy principally, but also other non-liturgical functions by which the faithful become holy. In *Mediator Dei*, Pius XIII spoke with commendation of several such non-liturgical actions: "There are other exercises of piety which while they do not pertain strictly to the Sacred Liturgy, nevertheless have a special power and worth so that they may be considered in a certain way to be grafted on the liturgical order. Prayers which are accustomed to be offered during the month of May to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, or through the month of June to the Most Sacred Heart, and likewise novenas and tridiums, and stations of the Cross and other things of this kind." (211) He had previously spoken with praise of the Rosary (203), and of days of recollection and retreats. (207)

Though these are among the "sacred realities," the Decree is thinking principally of the Liturgy, as its examples show. The priest will himself become holy in ministering sacred actions because in these he represents Christ in a special way. Why is that true? Christ's *whole* activity on earth was and is to make men holy. His *teaching* was no mere theology, but a means to make men know and worship God. His *kingdom* also exists for this. The prophetic and royal roles are therefore subordinate to the priestly role of rendering due homage to the heavenly Father. It is for this reason, as we have said above, that the whole salvific activity of Christ is priestly, a mediation between God and men, a mission to bring mankind to a proper attitude toward the Most High God.

This is why the priest, in trying to make men holy, "represents the person of Christ in a special way." Trying to bring men into the proper relation of *latría*, love and obedience to God is the most Christlike of the priest's roles. If Christ "gave himself a victim to make men holy," it was as the crowning point of a whole life spent in the same purpose. "Hence priests are invited to imitate the realities they deal with." These realities have as their whole meaning the sanctification of men through Christ's redemption death. A priest can hardly minister them sincerely without fully endorsing this purpose and pursuing it in a spirit of sacrifice. And if he does, he will himself be holy.

The Mass

The first sacred "reality" by which the priest will be made holy is the Sacrifice of the Mass, his principal duty. And the reason why it is his principal duty is because the whole work of redemption is continued in it. The Mass continues to accomplish the aims of Christ: to give praise and thanksgiving to the Father, to make propitiation for sin, to ask for grace. The priest who is aware of what he is doing, will become holy in this awareness. He will be inspired to rise to the demands of the social act, which he is performing *for Christ* in His mystical body.

And it is for this reason that the decree goes on to urge priests to celebrate daily, even if there is no "congregation" present.¹⁶ The act retains the same character, the same social significance and rich fruitfulness.

A second reason why the Mass is sanctifying for the priest is that, while acting in his social capacity, he is also an individual offering himself to God every day.¹⁷ Receiving holy Communion he is united more closely to Christ the Head and grows in charity like him, "who gives Himself as food for His faithful ones." Spiritual writers have often observed that whereas when men eat ordinary food they change it into themselves, when they eat this heavenly food they are rather made like to It.

The Sacraments

The second liturgical action is the administration of the sacraments. "The purpose of the Sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, to give worship to God."¹⁸ They are therefore also a means by which Christ carries on His work of salvation and love. The priest who recalls this and tries to lose himself in Christ's intention will grow in charity. Certainly this is an effect of the sacraments that the priest easily forgets. The long hours in the confessional, the lines of Communion, the baptisms, marriages, sickcalls, easily become matters of duty, loyally performed, it is true, and therefore rich in merit, but lacking their full effectiveness as a means of personal sanctification. The priest must try to see what they really are, see, that is, with the eyes of faith, that every time he raises his hand in absolution, or pours water in baptism or places the Body of Christ on the tongue of a Christian, or performs other sacramental rites, he is continuing Christ's work of saving love, bringing people to Christ, promoting worship of the Father. Thus understood each sacramental act is rich in grace for the priest and makes him holier.

Penance

Speaking of the Sacraments the Council has a special word of praise for the Sacrament of Penance. It "especially" exercises this sanctifying influence on the priest with emphasis on their disposition, "when they show themselves always and entirely ready." It is in this generosity and faith that the administration will accomplish its richest results. Penance is probably singled out for special mention because it does, quantitatively speaking, play such an important part in the priest's life. Secondly, it easily becomes routine and drudgery. Finally frequent confession has been under attack in certain quarters, and so the priests are by implication urged to show themselves always and entirely ready to administer it.¹⁹ Towards the end of this commentary we shall see that priests themselves are urged to confess frequently. It should be consoling for the

¹⁶ There is reference here to a recurring error that "private" Masses are wrong. There are really no private Masses. The error was rejected in *Mediator Dei* (13) and in *Mysterium Fidei* (St. Paul Publications Edit. P. 17) However, it dies hard.

¹⁷ The priest is elsewhere urged to "instruct the faithful to offer to God the Father the Divine Victim in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and to join to it the offering of their own lives." (5) How can they fail to be the first converts of their own instruction?

¹⁸ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 69

¹⁹ *Mystici Corporis*, 99; *Mediator Dei*, 208

priest to remember that the long hours he spends in the "box" makes him very pleasing to God, if he tries to penetrate this ministry with a spirit of faith and charity.

The Divine Office

The third classical division of the Liturgy is the Divine Office. The priest, the decree teaches, in performing this public prayer of the Church is doing something which sanctifies him. It is surprising that this should be said; surely the Office is prayer, and prayer is a sanctifying action. However, the point is emphasized because this is special prayer. This is the prayer of the Church. "What we call the 'Divine Office' is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, which is offered to God in the name of all and for the benefit of all, when it is performed by the priests and the other ministers of the Church and by Religious delegated for this work by the institution of the Church itself."²⁰

It would be unrealistic to say that priests do as a matter of fact, get much help from their Office. For many it is a daily grind. It seems that recognition of the official public character of the act would enable priests to say it better and derive more profit from it. However, the main thing is this: the Divine Office is *in itself* a sanctifying action of special efficacy. That we do not so exploit it, means that here — even more perhaps than in the celebration of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments — we have to awaken our faith to what we are doing. To be the mouthpiece of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, to carry on officially the prayer He Himself offered and offers to His heavenly Father makes us holy if we enter into our task sincerely.

A second fact — not mentioned in the Decree — is that the Office is largely Sacred Scripture. Now, reading of the Scripture is recommended by the Council to all the faithful as a means of holiness. The Divine Office provides this for the priest. But the words of the Constitution on the Liturgy are important. "The better to achieve this ideal, let them take steps to improve their understanding of the Liturgy and the Bible, specially the Psalms" (90) The Church is now introducing changes in the office, which, it is hoped will make the fervent (and therefore more fruitful) recital of the Office less difficult.

In summary, the "priestly" actions of the priest are themselves powerful influences leading him to holiness. If he performs them sincerely, he will not only sanctify others; he will inevitably sanctify himself.

Pastor

The third function of the priest is to rule. The details of this activity are described earlier in number 6. Here in number 13 we read that "guiding and nourishing ('pascentes' — acting as pastor to) God's people" they will grow in charity, faith and hope. How will that happen?

²⁰ *Mediator Dei*, 161; cf. also *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which says that Christ introduced into this earthly exile the hymn sung in heaven, and joins mankind to Himself in singing this divine praise. He continues this through the Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the world, not only by celebrating the Eucharist, but also by praying the Divine Office. (83)

The model of priests as pastors is the Good Shepherd, of whom Christ said, "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." If, as a matter of fact, priests look to Him as their model they will entertain towards the souls entrusted to their care such a generous love that they will be ready to make great sacrifices for them. Even the possibility that they will die for them is not ruled out. Not a few priests have, even in our times, died for their people. It would not be hard to document this from contemporary mission history in Africa, from the heroism of chaplains in Vietnam, of priests in atheistic countries and elsewhere. The last world war gave many examples of such heroism, such charity, such holiness.

Secondly, their office of pastor will increase their own faith. They are to form their flock in faith, not merely to *teach* them about God but to awaken in them a total *commitment to God*. They can hardly do this unless they excel in faith themselves, their own hearts filled with faith.

Finally, since the people will look to them for support in their troubles and reverses, the priest must be a tower of strength, full of confidence and hope in God, so that he will be able to communicate his strength to those who rely on him. Of him as of Peter it must be said, "You in your turn must strengthen your brethren." (Lk. 22, 32). So the very exigencies of his pastoral office require that he be a man of great faith, hope and charity. And this is to be holy.

There is also a self-denial involved in the very office of pastor. This has already been pointed out above where it was suggested that he must be ready on occasion to give his life for his sheep. But it will be a *constant* demand. The office of ruler having as its end the good of the flock and not the good of the pastor, he must sacrifice his own convenience in pursuit of the general welfare, of more abundant results, and of new and more efficient methods.

Spiritual Unity

In what has been just said about the priest's ministries as a source of holiness, it is understood that no mere mechanical discharge has this efficacy. There must be an *interior* orientation to Christ whom the priest represents. And here there arises a practical difficulty. The multiplicity of tasks that clamor for fulfillment do not permit the priest to collect his thoughts. He is almost by the nature of his hectic life forced to remain on the surface of things. He is doing about all that he can hope to do, if he gets through his work. He is business man, educator, social worker, builder. He has many organizations to moderate, meetings to attend, civil obligations to meet.

In some measure he can reduce this confusion to order by organizing his life, and eliminating the emergency, impromptu character of the demands upon him. Also fidelity to prayer will give his interior motivation a certain durability under this pressure. But neither of these solutions is enough.

The solution must be sought in a certain simplification of approach. The priest must follow the example of Christ who found His unifying and interiorizing principle in seeking the will of His Father in the salvation of men.

Christ is still doing the will of His Father in the salvation of men, but now through His ministers the priests. Hence Christ's principle should continue to be the principle of unity, achieved now in His mystical body through His priests. In the midst of the distracting demands upon their time and energies, this single profound motive — the will of the Father in the salvation of men — will give the interior simplicity that is needed.²¹

And this one, simple attitude will be especially nourished in the Sacrifice of the Mass. We have seen this above. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the continuation of Christ's redeeming work, which was to bring men to the Father. So the priest who understands his Mass will receive from it each time an impulse informing the diverse activities of the whole day. There is a beautiful simplicity about this. The one embracing motive energized in the one great priestly act, reducing order out of chaos, commuting the hectic clamor to a clear steady note of divine praise.

These considerations might seem to lead to the conclusion that the Mass is all the spiritual life a priest needs. In a sense this is true, but the Mass itself requires a receptive soul. "The priest must through prayer penetrate into the mystery of Christ." (14) We shall see more of this below.

Doing God's Will

Of course what has been said supposes that what the priest is doing is really God's will. And therefore a kind of preliminary investigation must be undertaken to ascertain whether this is true and whether the motive is applicable. *Is he doing God's will in the salvation of men?* This will not normally be a matter of doubt for the priest. God's will in the salvation of men is easy for him to find: in his office, his flock, his lot in life. (15) However, where there is doubt, he must have recourse to the interpreter of God's will on earth, to the Church, what is called by the decree the "laws of the Church's evangelical mission." In the concrete, the Church which will make this decision must be his Bishop.

"Pastoral love requires that the priest always work in the bond of union with the bishop and his brother priests lest his efforts be in vain." (14) With this unity will come consolation and joy. Outside of it there is only frustration, however consoling the results may seem.

Our present Pope has compared the highly personalized apostolates that are proliferating in the Church, often with great good will, to springs that rise in the desert, watering and invigorating a limited area, giving an appearance of luxurious growth, and then sinking into the sands, without ever joining the main stream of the Church's saving action. Since bishops are men they are limited and their decisions will not always be recognizable as the best for the salvation of souls. But this

²¹ Christ's unifying principle, "the will of the Father in saving men," is beautifully illustrated in the Samaritan woman incident: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.... The fields are white for the harvest." Jn. 3. 34-36

is Christ's Church and the way it works. If the priest accepts this design of life, "he will find the unity of his own life in the very unity of the Church's mission. Thus he will be joined with the Lord." (14) Unacceptable though it is to some, it still remains true, and the Council insists on it. In some parts of the world, "underground" Churches have come into existence, but they are not spiritually viable, cut off from the center of life. The Decree says simply their efforts are a waste of time, borrowing St. Paul's expression "in vacuum current." (Gal. 2, 2)

The holiness of priests therefore is mainly in the performance of priestly ministries, with the proper disposition. This disposition can be maintained by finding always in their work (whatever form it takes) the will of God for the salvation of men, a disposition which each day should find new vigor in the Mass where they continue that sacrifice in which Christ offered himself to the Father for the salvation of men.

III

Special Spiritual Needs of the Priest

If it is true that priests are made holy by the very exercise of their ministry, it is also true that this supposes a loyal performance with the right disposition. But in the face of competing values such a performance is not easy, and so the Decree says that there are certain "virtues most necessary for the priest's ministry." (15) They are briefly, poverty, chastity and obedience, and they are discussed in numbers 15, 16 and 17.

It is sometimes implied that poverty, chastity and obedience are a kind of monopoly of religious. This is certainly false. Every Christian must possess these three attitudes in some measure, even to save his soul. For what are they? They are a Christian's response to the great threats that endanger the soul's salvation. First there is the danger of avarice for material things. Second, there is the danger of lust from the reproductive instincts. And finally, the danger of pride in self-love, self-will opposing God's will, especially when this is proposed by His representatives. Every Christian must be sufficiently master of himself in the face of the allurements of material things, of the attraction of sex and of the desire of independence to be able to respond to God's will, and as far as necessary to silence contrary tendencies. So in this sense, poverty, chastity and obedience are the universal ornament of all Christians. For the loftier ideals of the priesthood and its more complete self-dedication to God these virtues will be needed in a more perfect measure. No priest can reach his proper perfection except in great obedience, chastity and poverty.

Obedience

The decree begins with obedience, first in a wide perspective of submission to God's will and of humility, then more specifically in subordination to superiors. It says, "Among the virtues which are demanded in a very high measure for the ministry of priests is that disposition of soul

by which they are always ready to seek not their own will but the will of God." (15) There are two reasons in the priestly ministry for this great need. First it is a *supernatural* ministry and secondly it is *ecclesial*. As a supernatural work it is completely beyond the priest's powers to perform. He will be aware that only as long as he subordinates himself to God's plans can he hope for any measure of success.

The second reason for obedience is that the work is ecclesial. Obviously the priest must seek God's will where he is, in His ministries, in serving the souls entrusted to Him. But these are *entrusted* to him. The ministry of souls is not his *private* enterprise, but a ministry of the Church. It will therefore be carried out in obedience to the Pope, the Bishops and other superiors. It is only in this way that it can be a work of the Church, namely be woven into the *unity* of one work, done by priest with priest and priest with prelate. In this way all work to build up Christ's Body.

However, this does not mean that priests are to exercise no initiative or originality. On the contrary their very enthusiasm for the work of Christ in His Church, namely the very root of their obedience, will make them alive to new opportunities, and ways of doing things. These they should propose for the consideration of their superior, urging the merits of their suggestions for the good of souls. Obedience and humility on the other hand, make them ready to accept what the Bishop decides.²²

It should be pointed out that there is nothing in this responsible obedience which is unworthy of the dignity of man. Man's greatest dignity is in being the son of God. Seeking only God's will untrammelled by other bonds, he possesses a freedom unlike any in human experience. This is what is meant by the freedom of the sons of God, a peculiarly Christlike attitude. He became obedient to death.

Celibacy

The second evangelical counsel which is indicated for the ministry is perfect and perpetual continence. Of this the decree says that it was recommended by Christ, has been, and is, in fact, practised by many of the faithful, and has always been held by the Church in high esteem for priests. The reasons why it has been esteemed of great value for the ministry are all connected with *pastoral charity*, which celibacy signifies, stimulates and renders effective. This is chastity "for the kingdom of God," embraced in the generous conviction — a conviction encouraged by Christ and His Church — that it enables the soul to be united with Christ. It thus is a *sign* of identification with our Saviour in his redemptive mission. This identification in turn will be a *stimulus* to zeal in the works of His mission. It will consequently be a source of great *spiritual fruitfulness*.

²² On the relation of bishops and priests: "The bishop should regard priests as his brothers and friends... He should gladly listen to them, indeed consult them and have discussions with them about those matters which concern the necessities of pastoral work and the welfare of the diocese." (17)

It is of course not necessary for the priesthood, though possessing a many-sided appropriateness (*multimodam convenientiam cum sacerdotio habet.*) Why is celibacy so appropriate for the priesthood? We can, it seems, distinguish five reasons in the Decree. The first is because the priesthood by its very character is concerned with *another kind of life*, to the begetting of children in God "not out of human stock, or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself." (Jn. 1, 13)

Secondly, celibacy is in fact a *practical measure* for the propagation of this new spiritual life. It is a new consecration to the ministry, enabling the priest to render a service that is singleminded, unencumbered and efficient. This is not of course to say that celibacy itself is easier, but that if celibacy is pledged and observed, the service of God becomes easier. It is the mind and experience of the Church that celibacy will normally be observed, and, if it is, its effects will be salutary for the service of God.

A third reason is what is called in our day, "witness." Celibacy is a sign to the world of the priest's nuptials with Christ, and of the priest's desire to effect in the Church those nuptials by which the Christian people, as St. Paul says, are given to the one spouse Christ. The priest's own celibacy is a kind of first fruit of this desire.

Fourthly, a celibacy is a reminder that this life is a prelude to another life. Here the priest begins, in faith and charity, that life where men neither marry nor are given in marriage. It is thus an eschatological reminder.

And finally, celibacy is "in imitation of Christ." This recalls what *Lumen Gentium* says about the religious life. "The counsels have a special power to form Christians to that poor and chaste life which Christ our Lord and His Virgin Mother chose." (46)

It must be admitted that these reasons, though possessing considerable persuasiveness, are not categorical. Their cogency must be sought in faith, and this is what the decree says, they are based on the "mystery of Christ and His Church." Celibacy is a testimony to the superiority of spiritual things over the values the world esteems. Marriage is good and is not in conflict with the life of the spirit. Nevertheless it is helpful that some Christians should call men's attention to the higher demands of the spirit. It is this confidence in celibacy as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's wise provision for the Church that persuaded the Council to reaffirm it. It is not indispensable, but it is holy and fruitful for priests and their work. It is not too much to ask of men called to the priesthood.

The Decree urges priests to "recognize this surpassing gift." Celibacy therefore, is a gift, a vocation, something that comes from God. As in the case of the priesthood itself, one may feel morally certain about celibacy if he has embraced it with mature reflection, prudent advice, and a period of testing. Subsequent difficulties are no sign that a vocation was not present. The vocation carries with it the guarantee of sufficient grace for perseverance.

St. Bernardine of Siena says:

There is a general rule applicable to all extraordinary graces given to men. It is this. Whenever the divine favor chooses someone for an extraordinary grace, or some sublime state, it gives all the helps which are necessary for that person and his office, and does so generously.²³

Priests must therefore think correctly about this virtue. They must recognize it as a mystery to be approached with faith. "Many men today call continence impossible." (15) This is perhaps because they think of it in purely human terms. The priest on the contrary knows with faith that it is not only possible but relatively easy, but under certain conditions. First he must dedicate himself to it magnanimously and wholeheartedly. A half-chastity, what Rahner calls peeping through the fence, is the beginning of defeat. Secondly, since it is a grace, it needs prayer, on the part of the priest and on the part of the faithful, which God will not fail to answer. Finally, it is folly to rely on God unless one uses the means that are at one's disposal. "Let priests make use of all the supernatural helps which are available to all. Let them not neglect to follow the norms, especially the ascetical ones, which have been tested by the experience of the Church, and which are by no means less necessary in today's world." (16)

It will not be out of place to apply to priests what the Council says to religious regarding chastity.

Religious do well to put their faith in the words of the Lord. Trusting in God's help rather than their own resources, let them practise mortification and custody of the senses. They should take advantage of natural aids for mental and bodily health. As a result they will not be influenced by erroneous claims that complete continence is impossible or harmful to human development. Moreover, a certain spiritual instinct should lead them to spurn everything likely to imperil chastity.²⁴

The Council had the courage to call for mortification and custody of the senses. Certainly it is folly to expect without them to preserve chastity in any state of life.

Poverty

Having treated of chastity, which in the concrete is the problem of preserving celibacy unsullied and unassailed, the Council takes up poverty. Since poverty is an attitude towards material things and might seem something merely negative, the Council affirms the goodness of human values and created things. One of the preoccupations of the Council, especially developed in *Gaudium et Spes*, was to rescue and rehabilitate human values, which had been imperilled by a false notion of unworldliness.

²³ Sermon on Saint Joseph

²⁴ *Perfectae Caritatis*, 12

The first sentence on poverty sounds strangely out of context, but what the Decree is trying to say is that priests should not fear to use and enjoy the gifts of God, especially in fostering warm social relations with others. Beneath this is the suggestion that recreation and relaxation are not to be suspect, especially as aids of charity. There is, it seems, a gentle apologia here for enjoyment of the arts, of games and sports, and similar pleasures. These, too, are God's gifts.

Having uttered this caution against Manicheanism, the Council does not, however, wish to be interpreted as content with low standards of asceticism. "Still," it says "they (priests) are not of this world. Using the world as though they used it not, they will attain to freedom from excessive concern and become more sensitive to the divine voice." (17)

Created things and human values *on the one hand* are good yet they are not without their danger, and so a priest must acquire a certain skill in the use of them. He must achieve liberty with regard to them, what St. Ignatius Loyola called, "indifference" or "detachment." Thus he will be able to use them — for use them he must and should — rightly with the spirit that St. Ignatius made famous under the expression *tantum-quantum*, or as the Council says: "a right use of goods according to God's will and (rejection) of whatever would be harmful to their mission." (17)

The Decree then indicates in a general way what the uses are to which a priest may dedicate the material things he possesses. It distinguished between goods which are *strictly ecclesiastical* and property *acquired through some ecclesiastical office*.

The general rules for the use of *strictly ecclesiastical goods* are "norms of Church law and the nature of the goods." (17) The Decree gives as specific examples of their legitimate use, divine worship, the decent support of the clergy, and the works of the social apostolate, especially helping the poor. The second division is *wealth acquired on the occasion of some ecclesiastical office*. This should be devoted, first, to the decent support of themselves, which includes their obligations to their family and to others with whom they live, and to the carrying out of their duties; also provision for future old age and sickness. If having done this anything is left over, it should be applied to the needs of the Church or works of charity. Therefore priests may not consider ecclesiastical office as a means of enriching either themselves or their families. They should not fix their heart on riches, and should avoid all avarice and every appearance of doing business.

Regarding property which in no way has ecclesiastical origin, priests will be guided first of all by principles common to all Christians. *Gaudium et Spes* has some general norms:

Attention must always be paid to the universal purpose of created things. . . . A man should regard his lawful possessions not merely as his own but also as common property in the sense that they should benefit not only himself but others.

The right to a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. . . . Men are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods . . . let all individuals . . . undertake a genuine sharing of their goods. (69)

If this advice is given to men in general, how much more so to priests who take the place of Christ, who lived simply and showed such a concern for the poor. Priests are in fact invited — though they have no strict obligation thereto — to embrace voluntary poverty to become more like Christ and to fit themselves for their sacred ministry. Christ gave an example and this was followed by the apostles.

Some kind of sharing of resources is also recommended, after the example of the early Christian community. In any case, whatever the form of their life, priests and bishops²⁵ should avoid anything which would give offense to the poor or savor of vanity. Especially their homes should be easily open to all. Moreover the poor have a preferred place in their ministries. "Let them gladly spend themselves and be spent . . . even in the more lowly and poor tasks." (15) "A priest has the lowly and poor entrusted to him in a special way. The Lord Himself showed that He was united with them and the fact that the Gospel was preached to them is mentioned as a sign of Messianic activity." (6) By the same sign priests will be known as, and truly be, Christlike ministers of the Gospel.

Means of Fostering the Spiritual Life

It has been seen that the priest should foster union with Christ, and that in the midst of the many duties that oppress and distract him, he must join himself to Christ as an instrument of the Father's will in the Salvation of men. There are now some practical measures pointed out by the Decree that will be very helpful if indeed not indispensable for this union. Some of these are old, some new. Some are recommended, some are enjoined. But in any case, they are all the fruit of the Holy Spirit's action on the People of God.

First and foremost is constant nourishment from the two-fold table of Sacred Scripture and the Mass. In recommending to the priest the reading of Holy Scripture no perfunctory perusal is meant.²⁶ Nor is there question of scientific study such as might be transacted in a seminary class. What is meant is the "lectio divina," dear to the Benedictine tradition. The recent thirty-first General Congregation of the Society of

²⁵ Though this decree treats of priests, it was felt in the Council that an exhortation to poverty from the bishops would sound better if it included the bishops. In the *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office* in the Church, they are urged to "give an example of holiness through charity, humility and simplicity of life." (5)

²⁶ "All clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scripture through diligent holy reading and careful study, especially priests of Christ. . . . lest any of them become 'empty preachers of the word outwardly, who are not listeners to it inwardly.'" *Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation*. 25.

Jesus indicated this as one method of fulfilling the Jesuit's obligation to mental prayer. It is the prayerful reading of the Bible, not primarily an intellectual exercise, but a savoring of God in His revealed word.

The priest's union with Christ is also perfected by frequent confession, which in turn is made fruitful by a daily examination of conscience. It is clear that these confessions will ordinarily be confessions of devotion. Thus the Council gently takes sides against the critics of such confessions. Spiritual reading is also a help to the priest in seeing God's action and His will in the various events of life. Since this is mentioned in addition to reading of the Scripture, we may take for granted that there is question here of the "spiritual book" in its traditional sense, like the writings of Lean and Marmion, to mention only a few masters of the spiritual life. By spiritual reading the priest becomes daily more docile to the mission he has undertaken in the Holy Spirit. In other words, if one is to appreciate spiritual values, find holy joy in works of zeal, he must keep *in tune* with the language of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual reading is a great aid to this; it not only affords communion with holy thoughts at the actual moment of reading, but it leaves echoes through the day.

Our Lady is given in the Decree as an example of such docility. Surely her history is one of docility, and it is not far-fetched to associate her docility with spiritual reading. Something like "lectio divina" must have been her frequent occupation. The Council has a brief but beautiful passage here on Mary and the priest.

They (priests) can find a wondrous model of such docility in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Led by the Holy Spirit, she devoted herself entirely to the mystery of man's Redemption. With the devotion and veneration of sons, priests should lovingly honor this mother of the supreme and eternal Priest, this Queen of the Apostles and Protectress of their ministry.

Our Blessed Mother's own vocation brings her very close to the priest. She is Mother of the Mystical Body and closely associated with her Son in His redemptive work. Priests are very like her; their role too is *parental*. Suhard says of the priest that he is the father of Christians ... "The right and primary role of the priest is to beget, form and watch over the laity."²⁷

Bishop Guilford C. Young who writes the commentary on this decree for the Abbott edition of the Conciliar Documents felt that some explanation was needed for the omission here of mention of the Rosary. He says that the Decree was directed to priests of the whole Church, "and in the Eastern Churches our Lady is honored by other prayer forms."

Whatever may be the truth of that, the Rosary is sufficiently implied in the longer treatment of devotion to our Lady in *Lumen Gentium* which says:

This Most Holy Synod admonishes all the sons of the Church, that the cult, especially the liturgical cult of the

²⁷ *Supra* pg. 10

Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered. It charges that practices and exercises of devotion toward her be treasured as recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of the centuries. (67)

If the Rosary does not fit that description, it is hard to conceive what devotion to our Lady would. The Rosary is indicated there almost as explicitly as if it were spelled out.

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament are recommended. Here again we have an echo of *Mysterium Fidei* which, because certain unsound teachings on the Holy Eucharist had begun to win support, reasserted firmly the excellence of the worship of Christ reserved in the tabernacle.

Retreats are commended, praised, and there is not only question of the "annual retreat" but of all similar exercises, like the monthly recollections promoted in most dioceses. The Council does not say how often retreats are to be made, nor does it specify any method. Very probably when the new Code of Canon Law is published it will contain more specific directives in this matter.

Finally, mental prayer and other forms of prayer are recommended. *Lectio divina*, as described above, certainly is mental prayer, but it need not be the only kind that priests perform. Therefore the traditional methods of prayer of various schools of spirituality retain their place of honor.

There are many problems in which the priesthood in our day is involved. But there is none which will not be solved by holiness. The degree and character of involvement in the "world," dialog with the laity, relations with prelates, — the holy priest will be able to meet these problems, not without headaches, it is true, but without ultimate disaster. The priesthood is a supernatural vocation, it is God's call and the priest is God's representative. Whatever the work he undertakes in good faith under his superior with a pure intention for God in the discharge of his priesthood must demand God's protection.

DOCTRINAL SECTION

THE REFLECTING CHURCH

(The Church in the Documents of
The Second Vatican Council.)

● R. T. BANABAN, C.S.S.R.

Introduction.

Theology is the systematic contemplation of God in the Revealed Word, Jesus Christ. It seeks to enter into the knowable spheres of God, in order that through this knowledge of faith, it may aid man to know and to belong "to the kingdom of God that has come into this world" (Lk. 11:20). Theology must remain moored to that Word made Flesh, Dead and Risen, whose visible extension is historically-realized in the structured Church. It is then the dimensions assumed by the Church as she travels through history which will give theology its direction, depth and relevance.

Because of the centrality of the concept of the Church to the whole of theology, this paper will undertake to analyze the emerging dimensions of the Church as she is presented today. The main area of study will be the dogmatic constitution "Lumen Gentium", in the light of which the other constitutions, decrees and declarations of the Second Vatican Council can be properly understood. "The Second Vatican Council was a council of the Church about the Church... reflecting on her nature."¹ This need to reflect is an urgent call and Pope Paul re-echoed the Council's desire "to set forth more precisely to the faithful and to the entire world the nature and encompassing mission of the Church" (Lumen Gentium, n.1) * when he declared in his inaugural encyclical "Ecclesiam Suam" that "the Church in this moment must reflect on herself to find strength in the knowledge of her place in the divine plan; to find greater light, new energy and fuller joy in the fulfilment of her own mission; and to determine the best means for making more immediate, more efficacious, and more beneficial her contacts with mankind to which she belongs... She has to do this in order to deepen the awareness she must have of herself, of the treasure of truth of which she is heir and custodian and of her mission to the world."²

¹ RAHNER, K. *The Church After The Council*, New York, 1966; p. 60.

² PAUL VI. "Ecclesiam Suam", *The Pope Speaks*, August 6, 1964.

* Lumen Gentium in subsequent quotes will be abbreviated to LG.

This inquiry into her nature is with a view "to renew ourselves so that we maybe found increasingly faithful to the gospel of Christ".³ The Council then sets out with a dual aim of renewal and fidelity. To achieve this goal, there was no need to forge a new idea of the Church; it was enough to recover the true idea of the Church as established by its Founder.⁴ This paper aims to present, what is believed to be the Church's major re-discovery: her nature as sign. And secondly to trace out the theological significance of this in terms of the Church's dimensions as found in the documents of the Council. "Lumen Gentium" will give us the Church's nature in the heights of the Trinity. "Gaudium et Spes" will situate the depth of her involvement in the world of man and his history. The decrees on Ecumenism, Missionary Activity and on Oriental and Non-Christian Churches will amplify her breadth; and finally some statements on her eschatological length, when the dimensions of the Church will be made fully co-extensive with the Divine Design of the Father.

The Sacramental Character of the Church.

"By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind. She is also an instrument for the achievement of such union and unity."

—Lumen Gentium, n.l.—

The Second Vatican Council undertook the task of renewal through self-understanding. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it sought its identity and mission in the modern world. From this reflection, she emerged seemingly with a new image of herself, with a new vitality, a new outlook and a new dimension. In an age of increasing indifference to religion, the Council's declarations about the Church and her mission brought notice and interest. Not only did the Church surprise the world and the other Christian communities but she also surprise herself with all the dynamism and unsuspected resources working within her. And yet, on analysis it can be said that the Church has not uncovered anything new about herself. If anything seems new, it is the emphasis given to what she has re-discovered. "The only difference is that what was uncertain has been clarified; what was meditated on, discussed and in part controverted, now reaches serene formulation."⁵ And one formulation which is of major theological import in ecclesiology, and on which hinge many of the insights of Vatican II is the Council's re-discovered concept of the

³——— "Message to Humanity," ABBOTT, W. (ed). The Documents of Vatican II New York 1966, p. 3.

⁴DULLES, A., *The Dimensions of the Church*, Maryland 1967, p. 1.

⁵PAUL VI, "Address on Promulgation of 'Lumen Gentium' quoted FLANNERY, A., *The Church Constitution*, Dublin 1966, 1966, p. 7.

Church as "sacrament or sign". With great boldness, the Council proclaimed in her opening paragraph of the dogmatic Constitution that the Church "is a kind of sacrament or sign". The same formula first appeared in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy where it simply said: "... there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church" (Lit. n.5).⁶ And then with greater assurance of its authenticity as a theme of the Church, the formula appeared repeatedly. "That for each and all she may be the visible sacrament of this saving reality" (LG. n.9); "... He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through His Spirit established His Body, the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation" (LG. n.48). Similar thought is expressed in various places in "Gaudium et Spes" Ecumenism and Oriental Churches. Therefore despite the failure to develop this thought fully, the Council has given room for further theological exploration. "Moreover, this theme links up with the authentic tradition of the Fathers. It must be understood and interpreted in this context... to give us a taste of the full riches of what is really meant by this sacramental character of the Church."⁷

An understanding of the Church as a sacrament or sign will be but an echo and enrichment of the many biblical images used to portray her. The Council made extensive use of these images. The Old Testament successively referred to her as the sheepfold, vine-yard, building of God, Temple, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the Spouse of the Lamb. Further clarification and extension of these images came with the definitive revelation of the New Testament and the Church was referred to as the "Body of Christ", the Bride of the Lamb, a Mother, Spouse, the Community of faith, hope, and charity. (cf. LG. nn.6-7). These images are used to capture the full reality of the Church, but all these only serve to highlight her nature as a "mystery". The mystery of the Church is manifest in her very foundation... (LG. n.5) "her life is hidden with Christ in God..." (LG. n.6). For this reason, her designation as sign is most apt. It points to her mysterious nature, but this very designation, far from 'determining' her boundaries through membership, creed and worship, as of old, broadens the Church's dimension so as to be truly opened-ended, able to embrace in various degrees of intensity, the whole of humanity. Sign also suggests her divine origin and goal, her temporal as well as her eternal values, in the same reality. And all this without prejudice to that visible and structured fulness in which she now historically subsists. "The Church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies therefore within the nature of the Church to be always open to new and greater exploration."⁷ And explore it theology must, in order

⁶ GROOT, J., "The Church as Sacrament of the World", in *Cancilium*, January 1968, p. 28.

⁷ Future reference to the Decree on the Liturgy will be indicated by *Lit.*

⁷ PAUL VI, "Opening Allocution to Second Session", *The Pope Speaks*, Sept. 27, 1963.

"to shed on all men that radiance of His which brightens the countenance of the Church" (LG. n.1). And for our guiding light in this exploration, we will depend on this re-discovered concept of the reflecting Church, namely: the Church as Sacrament or Sign.

The Father's Divine Design.

"By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father created the whole world. His plan was to dignify men with a participation of His own divine life... He planned to assemble in his holy Church all those who would believe in Christ."

—Lumen Gentium, n.2—

By such an expression of the Council situates the Church's origin and proclaims the sign-character of the Church. In the Father's intention, the Church in its initial stage, will be an assembly of believers, which, in relation to the whole of creation, stands as a sign of the saving and unifying presence of God. The initiative is from God involving Himself in man's history. The divine design encompasses all of created reality, with mankind and its history at the centre of the whole scheme. Once the sign-character of the Church is presented in this way, the Council's designation of the Church as a sacrament will be immediately understood to be broader than the more technical and exclusive liturgical meaning usually given to the 'seven sacraments'. The sacramentality of the Church "refers to a transcendental reality, invisible in itself, but manifested in ways belonging to this earth".⁸ This sacramentality is often equated with St. Paul's use of the word "mysterion". Broadly it means divine and saving intervention in human history. It is a saving presence of God, "an entering of the living and loving God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, into communion with mankind in order to exercise within mankind his power of life, love and justice and so establish his reign on earth."⁹

The Church's origin as a sacrament stems from this divine design of the Father to create the whole world. He will imbue creation with his presence, making man "the image of God", the crown of this work. "But God did not create man as a solitary. For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential" (Gaudium et Spes n.12)* Therefore the whole of creation—in man—is the bearer of this saving design of the Father to intervene historically in his own creation, thereby creating a union, through presence, with it

⁸ SCHILLEBEECKX, E., "Editorial" in *Concilium*, Jan. 1968, p. 3.

⁹ GROOT, J., "The Church as Sacrament of the World" p. 28.

In this way, the whole of creation is constituted a sign of God.¹⁰ There is, however, a progressive concentration of this saving action of God on the community of man, in the course of history. And even within this community there was a further isolation of one group as a sign of the rest. First after the creation-covenant is the singling out of Man, Adam, as the image of God; Abraham, a choice among many, to father a nation, Israel; and finally the definitive adoption of a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (1 Pet. 2:9). And so the divine design of the Father burst forth in time in the form of a community with a history of predilection. It is by origin divine but in form earthly—namely, in the assembly of believers—in order to be present to the world, and by this presense signify the salvation in unity, for which it was chosen. This is the concept of the "mysterion", the concept of the sacramentality of the Church. It is in this gradual revelation of the divine to creation, then the choice of mankind, the narrowing down on the assembly of believers, which marks the Church as sign of unity of all created reality, and through her, the unity with God. She will articulate this presence of God to the universe and to mankind and at the same time be the voice of both the universe and mankind in acknowledging thanks and praise.

This presentation of the Church's sacramentality "may be considered the official laying to rest of the legalistic ecclesiology of the Counter-Reform... The Council reaches back beyond the twelfth century and defines the Church as "being in the nature of a sacrament in Christ."¹¹ By designating her as a sign, not only captures her sense of mystery but also does away with the closed-in attitude of a closed-in society and makes her what Michael Novak terms as "The Open Church", putting her in her proper perspective in relation with the universe and mankind. "It is distressing that the community which preaches the most intense charity towards all men often appears to divide its own members from the rest of mankind."¹² In the Father's plan, the assembly of believers is meant to represent the unity of creation; it is a unique sign in that not only does it represent all creation but it actually has begun to achieve this unity when, in a more defined, incarnate way, this Plan of the Father was undertaken by the Uncreated Word. In this mission of the word, yet a further stage of uniqueness is made manifest regarding the sign-character of the intended Church. "By her relationship with Christ... she is also an instrument of such union and unity" (LG. n.1).

¹⁰ LYONNET, S. "The Redemption of the Universe", *The Church*, New York, 1963 pp. 136-155).

* Future reference to *Gaudium et Spes* will be indicated simply by GS.

¹¹ O'NEILL, C., *The Mystery of the Church*, FLANNERY, A. (ed) *Vatican II The Church Constitution*, Dublin 1966, p. 30.

¹² DULLES, A. *The Dimensions of the Church*, p. 1.

Christ and the Church.

"Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ... determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ... He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ... that he would bring everything together under Christ as head."

—Ephesians 1:4ff—

Since the Council is a pastoral council by intent, the concept of the Church as sign was not presented in an abstract way. She is a sign in as much as she is "a people, made one in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (LG n.4). In many ways this focus on the people as the Church is another revived concept, moving away from the too hierarchical concept insisted on by theologians of the Tridentine era. Thus Cardinal Bellarmine neatly defined the Church "as a group of men bound together... under the rule of the legitimate pastors, and especially of the one vicar on earth, the Roman Pontiff".¹³ Much of the Church's mysterious dimensions disappear when one can too readily point to who belongs to the Church and who does not. Her sign-role too becomes obscure to the point of being meaningless because of the strict division imposed. It takes on the appearance of a closed society, which is the very contradiction of God's will for it. But, inadequate though such a definition might be, it is not altogether mistaken since a definitive revelation of a structured, hierarchical Church has been made. And in it alone will the plan of the Father be fully realized, and in the words of the Council "subsist." This came about in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son, through whose vicarious redemptive Sacrifice, this unity will be achieved. "All men are called to this union with Christ, from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and toward whom our journey leads us" (LG. n. 3). "Henceforth, the whole of mankind is confronted with this (Christ-Event) in order to partake in that salvation and to become itself the sacramental expression of it."¹⁴

The Father conceived this saving plan, and the Son, is the Plan conceived, for he is its perfect expression; He alone can fully express this plan, in Him alone can that plan be realized. The whole divine design is therefore crystallized in Him, He is the Prime Sacrament of all, He is actually the embodiment of all that is created; indeed all creation has its being in Him. And since if creation is for the purpose of manifesting the Father's intervention, and all creation is centered in Christ, Christ becomes the sign of that ultimate unity, not only of the Father with the rest of creation, but the unity of all creation as well. Christ in "realizing" the divine plan in himself, has become "the saving reality the one and only saving primordial sacrament ... the Sacrament

¹³ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁴ GROOT. J., "The Church as Sacrament of the World", p. 29.

of God."¹⁵ "He is the image of the invisible God and in Him all things came into being. He has priority over everyone and in Him all things hold together." (LG. n. 7). The primacy of the Word in all creation, His assumption of the Father's divine plan, carries our understanding of the sacramentality of the Church further because, as the Word became incarnate, assuming a creaturely form, so has the assembly of believers taken on an historical entity. The humanity itself of Christ becomes visibly extended to this assembly when Christ has been established as Lord in the risen glory of Easter. This assembly becomes the Body of Christ. "As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also the faithful in Christ" (LG. n. 7).

The Father's divine design was efficacious, creative. And so it was carried out by the Word through his total obedience to the Father. And since the very idea of the "mysterion" was to manifest God's saving intervention in an earthly manner, Christ was constituted the redeeming Messiah in his paschal sacrifice, by which His Body and His humanity, was to respond in an obedient "Amen" both for himself and vicariously for all the created order as it is summed up in Him. It is at this stage of the unfolding of the divine design, that Christ as it were is "frozen" as Lord of all creation, and as such mankind becomes definitively riveted to him. Through Christ's paschal glory, the assembly of believers enters a more incarnate phase, at once the sign of the triumphant Lord, as well as the sign of creation's groaning till it is perfected. In the Christ-Event "the final age of the world has already come upon us. The renovation of the world has been irrevocably decreed and in this age is already anticipated in some real way" (LG.n. 48). But the actual birth of the Church, fully constituted in her sign-role, is yet to be finalized, actually realized, and extended. The union between mankind and Christ cannot be accomplished only through Christ's vicarious sacrifice. The community of mankind has to incorporate itself truly to the constituted sign-Christ. Only when it is thus incorporated will mankind cease to be simply an amorphous part of the created order and really become a witness to the saving grace at work, and be a brotherhood in Christ. For this, however, mankind needs to receive the Spirit of Christ, Who is Christ's response of love and obedience to the Father's mission. With the advent of the Spirit, the sacramental character of mankind will acquire its final earthly dimensions-centered on the Church which is now fully constituted a sign.

The Abiding Spirit in the Church.

"Because the Church is a Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed reality, she possesses the qualities that are distinctive of the Spirit of God; openness, freedom, inwardness, growth, diversity and fullness of life."¹⁶

¹⁵ SCHILLEBEECKX, E., *Christ the Sacrament*, London 1963, p. 47.

¹⁶ McNAMARA, K., "The Holy Spirit in the Church", FLANAGAN, D. (ed) *The Meaning of the Church*, Dublin 1966, p. 29.

"When the work which the Father had given the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might forever sanctify the Church, and thus all believers would have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit." (LG. n. 4). The Church then, while properly the Body of Christ, comes into being and is energized by the abiding presence of the given Holy Spirit. "The Church is not simply a Christological, it is also a Pneumatological reality."¹⁷ It is the spirit that gives the Church her visible structure in that He alone unites men into the Body of Christ through faith and baptism. The disciples of Christ were properly constituted as such when "Christ poured out on them the Spirit promised by the Father. From this source, the Church receives the mission to proclaim and to found among all people the kingdom of Christ" (LG. n. 5). Only with the advent of the Holy Spirit is Christ properly the mediator "sustaining here on earth His Holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity— as an organism with visible delineation through which he communicates truth and grace to all" (LG. n. 5). In a beautiful analogy, the Council portrays the Church in her visible structure as serving the Spirit of Christ, in the same way that the assumed nature of Christ's humanity is inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word. (cf. LG. n. 8).

The sign-character of the Church reaches yet another phase—and in history its final phase— when the full revelation of the Father's divine design is manifested through the humanity of the Son, Who, in achieving His risen glory, imparts to the assembly of believers (who will henceforth signify Him) the Abiding Holy Spirit, Who is in turn the full and authentic expression of the redemption of the world. "The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church... bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons ... and gives her a unity of fellowship and service" (LG. n. 4).

Finally it is through the Holy Spirit and in Him that the Church becomes that unique sign, in that now not only does it signify unity but "also is the instrument of that union and unity." Unlike other signs the Church not only points to the full reality of God's unifying saving design but it is so united to that reality, that it partakes of its creative efficacy. And in terms of salvation-history, this comes about when the "community of faith, hope and charity" are gathered together "reliving" God's saving intervention on their behalf, through the sacramental, liturgical action. The acts of Christ the Man is also that of the Uncreated Word; these historical actions of Christ are possessed also of the eternity of the Word. The liturgy then is the community's re-creating of Christ's actions and partakes of that over present efficacy coming from the action of Christ the Man, hypostatically united to the Word. In virtue of the priesthood they share with the High Priest, the community articulates to the whole world the unity it signifies and which is achieved through

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 29.

it. In this repeated articulations the Church communicates with the world. Herbert McCabe, O.P. in an interesting article develops this theme by making an analogy of the Church with language and communication. He concludes: "Now we are the Church. I mean by virtue of our participation in the sacramental order, we become ourselves the language of God in the world. We become the medium of communication between the Father and men. I mean that the Church does not exist so that its members may be in contact with the Father but so that mankind may—so that the Word may—become secular. The Father is not, you might say, interested in Christians, he is interested in people; the Church is the sacramental expression of that interest."¹⁸

And so the Father's divine design is realized in and given expression through the Church. She stands as the dual sign of: the presence of God in man's history (and their consequent union) and also the unity among men. From the beginning the Church was chosen as the primordial sign of unity: the unity of creation, the unity progressively explicitated in view of Christ, through chosen "remnants" of the community of mankind; she is the sign of the union finally effectually uniting man with God and with one another—through the Spirit of Christ. And because of her intimate relationship with Christ, she is both an accomplished sign-reality, suffused with the glory of the Risen Lord, and an accomplishing community still wending its ways to the fullness of truth and grace.

This analysis of the sign-character of the Church as founded in the mystery of the Trinity, in its eternal self-giving, is the background of Vatican II's presentation of the Church. On this sign-character hinge many of the insights of the Council, not only in her self-understanding and mission but also in the relevant principles which must activate her in her present historical situation. The council has given us its vision of a reflecting Church. A Church whose history is embedded in the mystery of the Trinity; a Church caught up in time, slowly unfolding with the rhythm of creation. The Council even suggests a Church with a mood, a mood of reflection and assessment, inspired by an abiding, and sanctifying Spirit but burdened with imperfections of a people, chosen but sinful. We see a Church with an urgent mission to be truly universal yet hesitant on how to approach elements already reflecting qualities of oneness with her. We see a respectful Church, seeing unifying values already at work outside her heretofore known boundaries. We are given an image of a Church summing herself up as a sign, a universal, all embracing sign whose new found dimensions are as extensive as the whole creation. We see a "Christ-Church" both incarnate and glorious.

¹⁸ McCABE, H., "The Church and the World", *The Meaning of the Church*, FLANAGAN, A. (ed) Dublin, 1966, p. 67.

II

In the first part of the paper we dealt with the theological significance of the Church's rediscovered concept of herself as a Sign. In the second part we will try to see how the Council uses this concept to depth herself, and thereby reflect her sign-character to herself. We will glean through the documents how the Church will address herself to the world, to other Christian communities, and to non-Christian communities.

One underlying principle of 'operation' resulting from this awareness of herself as a sign of unity, is the Church's readiness to accept and appreciate all intervention of God. Hence "Gaudium et Spes" looks at the 'signs of the times,' appreciating man and his diversified and evolving cultures, his scientific progress; social and economic as well as political movements which serve to bring about a community of brotherhood. In short, the Church expresses how she values the dignity of man, and her interest in all his secular involvement. "In the exercise of all their earthly activities, they can thereby gather their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory" (GS. n. 43). This readiness to stand as the unifying reality of all that exists, gives new direction to theology. Among other things, the Council appears to have reformulated her understanding of religious freedom, her concept of missionary mandate, ecumenism, education, secular involvement, her liturgy, her hierarchical makeup, her earthly dimension. She can, for example, see a more authentic meaning to her hierarchical structures, and especially in the collegiality of the episcopate, as itself an expression of her unifying sacramental nature. She sees herself eminently as standing aloft as the sign of unity in her celebration of the liturgy which she calls "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed . . . the fountain from which all her power flows" (Lit. n. 10). In the liturgy she truly is an instrument and a sign of unity. This applies specially in the liturgy of the Eucharist which is "a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace . . ." (Lit. n. 48). These and many other principles are the overflow of the Church's fresh awareness of herself as a sacrament.

The Church then is the sign of union with God, and of unity among men. She is so because she is a mystery whose very foundation is the unity of the Trinity: "The highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit" (Ecu. n. 2). As a sign she is "like a standard lifted high for all the nations to see." (Is. 11:10). We will now turn to see how she is a standard lifted up for herself to see, for the world in which she finds herself.

and for those who have not yet heard the gospel of Christ. As she confidently undertakes to "explain to everyone how she conceives her presence and activity in the world of today" (GS. n. 2), she is posing a challenge to her own resources to be "living witnesses to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity ..." (LG. n. 12).

Sign unto Herself.

"The Church is in the world, and by the effect of her presence alone she communicates to it an unrest which cannot be soothed away. She is a perpetual witness to Christ who came to shake human life to its foundation, and it is a fact that she appears in the world as a "great ferment of discord."¹⁹

—Henri De Lubac—

Many have observed that the calling of the Council can only mean that the Church is in crisis. The Church is in crisis, not unto extinction but unto awakening as to her true nature. To many she has increasingly fallen into the temptation of complacency, content simply to safeguard the treasures of revelation entrusted to her, and preoccupied with keeping the undesirable incursions of the world from contaminating her. With the Council she has reawakened to her being the sign of unity. This unexpected "reawakening" is but another facet of the Church, namely that she is at the same time a "ferment of discord." This must not be understood in an alienatory sense, but rather in that continuous purification, shaking off foreign incrustations that accrue to her in her earthly pilgrimage. Through this shaking-off process she is insuring her fidelity to her sign-character. Only in this way can she claim that she adheres to her fundamental, pristine conception, pointing to the total reality to which all are destined to belong. The Council has done this when it calls the Church to self-renewal, and by it to be a witness to the world. She herself urges the world to shake off untruths, pretenses and barriers, and in this way she is acting as a "ferment of discord"; this will allow both to travel through history more ready for the final summons to unity.

Discussing the Church's witness to herself will be done by reverting to three biblical themes essential to the Church. They are martyrion, diakonia and koinonia = witness, ministry or service and fellowship. Our aim here is to show through the pages of "Lumen Gentium" how the Church wishes to project herself under these three aspects, first to herself, then as extended to the whole world.

¹⁹ DE LUBAC, H., *The Splendour of the Church*. London, 1956, p. 133.

Her Witness Role.

"Lumen Gentium" calls attention to many aspects of ecclesial witness, but always insisting that his witnessing is most effective through self-awareness and renewal. In effect the Council is throwing the weight of responsibility where it belongs: to the people of God. "This sacred synod turns its attention first on the Catholic faithful" (LG. n. 14). Too long has it been shouldered by the hierarchy, priests and religious, almost to the exclusion of the laity. Now, the Council says witness belongs to the whole Body of Christ, because each is in possession of the unifying Spirit, and each is in turn possessed by the Spirit of Unity, and therefore in each one, there is realized the concept of the Church. However, this order of grace is as yet an invisible mystery, and must be given visibility, namely through corporate witnessing-the Church. But, having human elements, and involved in human history, there are times when this witness role is at a low ebb, and the world does not feel her humanizing influence. "The Church, at once visible assembly and a spiritual community, goes forward together with humanity, and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does. She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society" (LG. n. 40). But this very leaven is "but an assemblage of men who always fall short of what God requires of them and who therefore need forgiveness."²⁰ The Council expressed this by borrowing a phrase from the classic Protestant formula "ecclesia semper reformanda" (Edu. n. 6). But this need for reform, even from sinful slips, must not be looked upon as a shame but in fact be a test of the Church's faith in the mystery of her nature. "The Church as she actually lives, suffers and in many parts rot, remains also for us a test of faith."²¹ And this must be so because such is the history of mankind since "men had fallen in Adam" (LG. n. 2). Adam's failure to ratify the proffered covenant with God was the beginning of mankind's history of disunity, a disunity which will remain like a scar in him despite the healing action of Christ. Man will continually need this reminder that he is meant to be one with God and with his fellowmen, and carries with it the responsibility of conversion. In the Church and the World being witness to each other in this regard, the Body of Christ too benefits because ecclesial witness is enhanced.

For this important responsibility, the baptised need to be radicated in the Church, attentive to the stirrings of the Spirit within her and at the same time aware of the signs of the times. It is the particular apostolate of the laity to balance the interplay of his secular involvement with his religious purification. He becomes a powerful instrument, witnessing to the universal call to holiness: "Established by Christ as a fellowship of life, charity of truth, they

²⁰ DULLES, A., *Ibid.*, p. 8

²¹ RAIJNER, H., "The Church, God's Strength in Human Weakness," in *The Church* New York 1964, p. 9.

are also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all and are sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world and salt of the earth" (LG. n. 9). Lest however, this task appear to be too great for accomplishment there is the reassurance that "The Church is strengthened by the power of God's grace promised to her by the Lord, so that in the weakness of the flesh she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain a bride worthy of her Lord" (LG. n. 9). Similarly in the decrees affecting bishops, priests and religious, this call to renewal appears in various guises. "The profession of the evangelical counsels, then, appears as a sign which can and ought to attract all the members of the Church to an effective and prompt fulfillment of the duties of their Christian vocation" (LG. n. 44). They are like "blazing emblems" (Rel. n. 1) forcing others to take note of this purification unto witness.

This emphasis on internal witness as the most effective way of revealing more clearly the nature and mission of the Church, offers theology a challenge. Here is a felt need affecting the reflecting Church, and theology can supply the light of development. For example the decree brings out as never before, the vast resource there is in the laity. Hence a theology on their state, their apostolate, their charism; a development of the *sensus fidelium*: "The Body of the Faithful cannot err in matters of belief" (LG. n. 12). There are ample leads for theology to help unfold the Council's insight on her witness-role.

Fellowship in the Church.

It can be truly said that the Council ushered in the age of fellowship, of community consciousness. One only need to look at her "people of God" theme, the "community of mankind" theme and the many efforts she makes to reach out to other Churches and communions, and statements of her being one with them in "joy and hope" to feel fresh direction in her growing consciousness of herself. For one thing, this sense of community moves away from the too individualistic view of redemption. Salvation comes precisely in being incorporated into the community of believers: "All men are called to belong to the new People of God" (LG. n. 13); "All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the People of God—a unity which is a harbinger of the universal peace it promotes" (LG. n. 13). Fellowship is essential to the Church because it witnesses to Christ, the head of the *koinonia*, Who is Himself the rallying point of unity. "This characteristic of universality which adorns the people of God is a gift from the Lord Himself. For this reason the Catholic Church strives energetically and constantly to bring all humanity with all its riches back to Christ its head, in the unity of His Spirit" (LG. 13).

The Church manifests this fellowship in an eminent way when she acts as one in the sacred liturgy, particularly the Eucharistic liturgy "which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life . . . strengthened anew at the Holy

Table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's people which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament" (LG. n. 11). By her liturgy she is witnessing to herself the achieved and perfect union with God, as well as the unity among the worshippers. In this she presents herself to other Churches and communions and to the whole community of mankind, the goal to which they are going. While claiming this, the Council hastens to add that the fellowship, especially in worship as found outside the Catholic Church, is often a source of grace and union. (Theology receives another impetus for study in this matter.) These communities are "related in various ways to the People of God, and in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit" (LG. n. 15). This concept of fellowship is an offshoot of her principal rediscovery of herself as sign. And it widens her dimensions by looking at herself as walking in fellowship with the rest of the community of mankind. Instead of emphasizing the elements of division, the Church now looks at fellowship, no matter how incipient, as an omen of a unity to be aimed at. Once again, much theological study can be devoted to this emphasis on fellowship.

The Ministry of Service.

Henri De Lubac quotes Karl Barth as saying that "if the Church has no end other than service of herself, she carries upon her the stigma of death."²² This truth must have been before the Council too. "The Council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which that family lives" (GS. n. 2). She is aware of her duties "to read and interpret the signs of the times in the light of the gospel" in order that she can "respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come and about the relationship of one to another" (GS. n. 4). The Council realizes that the Church has one fundamental ministry, the service of the Word: "to bring good news to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart" (LK. 4:18). But while she is outgoing in her service, the Council rightly feels that she must define more clearly to herself the basis and goal of such service. And most importantly clearly define the scope of the service of the ministers ordained to carry out this service. And since the Will of the Lord is that the good news be spread through the apostles, the Council now turns its attention to their successors and helpers.

Chapter 3 of "Lumen Gentium" deals with hierarchical structure of the episcopate. Here in some way, theology has come to completion. Vatican I concerned itself almost exclusively with defining papal prerogatives and giving scant notice to the episcopate. Vatican II turns its focus on the bishops as

²² DE LUBAC, H., *Ibid.* p. 165.

focal points of unity in their office. "In the bishop, Our Lord ... is present in the midst of those who believe" (LG. n. 21). The Decree traces the historical foundation of the bishop's eminence in the Church: "In order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He placed blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in Him a permanent and visible foundation of unity of faith and fellowship" (LG. n. 18). He is in his person, a sign of unity. And so just as undoubtedly Vatican I was a council of the papacy, Vatican II is hailed as the Council of the episcopacy.

The doctrine of episcopal collegiality can be summed up thus: Just as, by the Lord's will, St. Peter and the other apostles constituted one apostolic college, so in a similar way the Roman Pontiff as the successor of Peter, and the bishops as successors of the Apostles are joined together" (LG. n. 22). And as a college therefore, the episcopal body is subject of supreme and full power, together with its head, the Pope, over the universal Church. But supreme power is not the main focus of the doctrine of collegiality. "The real and primary meaning of collegiality is the reality of the many in the one, the plurality of the many local churches within one Church."²³ The very institutionality of the Church becomes a sign of unity, and it serves the members of the Church to see this. "This variety of local churches with the common aspiration is particularly splendid evidence of the catholicity of the undivided Church" (LG. n. 23).

So important is the role of the bishops in the eyes of the Council that it ended the theological dispute about the nature of episcopal consecration declaring it a sacrament, and indeed "the fullness of the sacrament of orders ... the apex of the sacred ministry" (LG. n.21). In thus presenting the role of the bishop too monolithic picture of the Church is avoided. By drawing attention on the local community ruled over by a bishop, the Council presents a more faithful image of the Church according to the will of the Lord. "In any community existing around an altar, under the sacred ministry of the bishop, there is manifested a symbol of charity and unity of the Mystical Body, without which there can be no salvation. In these communities, though frequently small and poor, or living far from any other, Christ is present" (LG. n. 26). Theology gains a further dept in such a presentation, as it sees the mystery of the Church in each local diocese, each local Church ruled by a bishop. In the words of Karl Rahner: "The Church alone, in contrast to all other societies, has this unique characteristic that she can appear as a microcosm of herself in any one place."²⁴ What the constitution has to say of priests and the

²³ RYAN, S. "Episcopal Consecration: The Fullness of the Sacrament of Order" in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, October, 1965, p. 296.

²⁴ CUNANE, J. "The Local Church." FLANAGAN, D. (ed). *The Meaning of the Church*. Dublin 1966. p. 74.

restored order of deacons amplifies the importance of the local church and the service and ministry of the bishop. And in so enlarging on this, the Church's service outside her own structures will become more widespread and be more truly catholic.

And so the Church renews herself through self-understanding. She looks within and works upon her elements, giving each an understanding of his individual role as witness to each other within the community of the Church. And this witness overflows and gives strength and authenticity to the witness of the community to the rest of creation. "Lumen Gentium" has opened out new horizons in this gesture of being a "ferment of discord" to herself. Through it she is enabled to situate herself in her relations with the world. Her task now is "to accord a genuine, an entirely unfeigned recognition to the real values that separated brethren and the secular world independently possess and . . . make a humble and ministerial offer of what we can give, in the hope that it will be freely accepted."²⁵

The Church as Sign to the World.

"That the earthly and the heavenly city penetrate each other is a fact accessible to faith alone. It remains a mystery of human history, which sin will keep in great disarray until the splendor of God's sons is fully revealed. Pursuing the saving purpose which is proper to her, the Church not only communicates divine life to men, but in some way casts the reflected light of that life over the entire earth."

— "Gaudium et Spes, n. 40" —

"Lumen Gentium" has looked into the Church's inner self and rediscovered that the unifying principle of her nature is her sign-character. We see in the pages of the pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, how this sign-character overflows into the world as a necessary consequence, since the Church as a "community realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history" (GS. n. 1). We have said above that one major result of the Church's self-understanding is her readiness to appreciate and accept realities and values which she finds in her pilgrim state. "Gaudium et Spes," is perhaps the most eloquent expression of this appreciation. It truly sets forth another dimension of the modern Church, namely the depth of her involvement in man, his world, and history and culture. The document itself disclaims that it is proposing anything new which redefines

²⁵ MACKAY, J. "Tradition and Change in the Church," FLANAGAN, D. (ed) *The Meaning of the Church*, Dublin 1966, p. 48.

her involvement in the world. It claims simply "to present teaching already accepted in the Church, relying on the Word of God and the spirit of the Gospel!" (GS. n. 91). Nevertheless, there are characteristics of the document that point to the Church's new awareness of herself in her relations with the world. The whole document is called a pastoral constitution but is replete with dogmatic truths. Its tone is not that of the *Civitas*,²⁶ but as being at the service of the family of man. It addresses itself, "not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ but to the whole of humanity" (GS. n. 2) offering its service of "scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel" (GS. n. 4). It believes it gives mankind this service because "it raises anxious questioning about . . . the meaning of his individual and collective strivings and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity" (GS. n. 3).

This paper set out merely to establish that whatever "new dimensions" the Church has assumed since the Council, spring from her realization of herself as the sacrament of union with God, and unity among men. For this reason it will content itself with picking out the salient features in the document that shows this. "*Gaudium et Spes*" complements the picture of the Church in realities which pertains to man in his life here below and which confronts him whether he is a believer or not."²⁷ The constitution itself describes its focus of attention "on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which that family lives. It gazes upon the world which is the theater of man's history, and carries the marks of his energies, his tragedies, and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker's love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ" (GS. n.2). By so addressing the world, the Constitution presses home its relevance to the total structure of life, and not be considered a supererogatory reality, that may or may not be seriously taken account of. The whole tone of the document implies that the Church is to be taken as a secular reality ("it is in the world's interest to acknowledge that the Church as a historical reality" (GS. n. 44) incarnate and meaningful to all the activities of man "his joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties . . . indeed nothing human fails to raise an echo in their (Christian's) hearts" (GS. n. 1). The Council is very much aware of the trend in modern secular thinking; it is equally aware of the rejection of absolute supernaturalism, traditionally associated with the Church. In this constitution, the Council has successfully instituted dialogue with this mentality

²⁶ CAMPION, D., "Introduction to '*Gaudium et Spes*'" ABBOTT, W. (ed) *The Documents of Vatican II* New York 1966 p. 185.

²⁷ DULLES, A., *Ibid.* p. 66.

when it sets out to say that there is a positive relationship between earthly realities and the sacral order. "While we are warned that it profits a man nothing if he gains the whole world and lose himself, the expectation of the new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age" on this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns, it will be brought into full flower" (GS. n. 39). This is the secular dimension which the Church has assumed, a dimension so consonant with her as leaven in the world." In so doing, however, she in no way dims her sacred character but in fact it becomes more visible and is truly made sacramental.

"*Gaudium et Spes*" speaks to men in this world. Chapters 11-45 deals with man, his vocation, dignity and goal. It declares "...the pivotal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will" (GS. n. 3). And in the whole of its treatment on man and his activities, the document is deliberately recognizing the positive traits in him. Here one can glean the effort of the Church to reach out to man in his present milieu. "One is struck by the document's evident openness to fundamental elements in the intellectual climate of 20th century civilization, to the dimensions of human culture, opened up by advances in the historical, social and psychological sciences".²⁸ While registering awareness of all these advancements, however, the Council is not prevented from noting that these very advancements create for men many problems such as over-socialization and its consequent dehumanization, loss of identity. The Church is aware of this and sympathetic but in a most humble admission she proclaims that she has not "always at hand the solution to particular problems" (GS. n. 33). However, it goes on to assure that in what man cannot find a solution from his experiences, the Church can offer him the light of revealed truth. And this is precisely her mission and her contribution to the world today. "The Church brings to mankind light kindled from the gospel, and puts at its disposal those saving resources which the Church herself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives from her Founder" (GS. n. 3). And so while the community of man is brought together by common endeavour for progress, this coming together is also for the good of the Church because her mission is "that the kingdom of God may come, and the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass" (GS. n. 45). The document speaks at great length on the activities of men and nations. But its great insight which throws light on all the Church's teachings

²⁸ CAMPION, D. *Ibid.* p. 185.

stems from her acceptance of the historical development of the world, giving its progress great positive values. The document goes so far as to say that this very same experience of the world, which helps to bring the community of mankind together, is contributory to her own mission of doing the same under the leadership of Christ. This interdependence of two autonomous societies is a healthy prospect for arriving at the fullness of truth and grace already at work, in both.

The whole slant of the document is on man as he is open to communion with God. Man is paramount because "he gathers to himself the elements of the material world. Thus they reach their crown through him and through him raise their voice in free praise of the creator" (GS. n.14). For this reason man must be guaranteed his freedom to follow this exalted call. His conscience "is the most secret core and sanctuary of his being. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (GS. n.16). For this reason he must enjoy liberty of conscience, the free pursuit of his human dignity and creativeness. While the document decries atheism, the Church calls for a sincere and prudent dialogue with atheists, conscious of the weighty questions they raise. (cf. GS. nn.20-21). In the Council's call for consecration of the world, as being the special apostolate of the Christian, he is directed to do so not by apartness or withdrawal, but through involvement in it, and this witness to the congruity and complementarity of the Church in the world. At the same time it cautions against indiscriminate identification because by virtue of her mission and nature "she (the Church) is bound to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic or social system" (GS. n.42). The most notable advance which was formulated by the Council on this matter is the recognition of the autonomy of secular values, with which she lives and from which she can profit. This however, with a view of bringing all these values to perfection. "The Church and the world coexist in polar tension. Neither can get along without the other, but each retains its own nature and principles."²⁰

Much was said on social justice, politics, economics and the proper development of cultures. All of which she undertakes to fill with her unifying dynamism, in her consciousness of herself as the sign of that unity which allows honest dialogue. "By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all men of whatever nation, race or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that brotherliness which allows dialogue and invigorates it" (GS. n. 92). And as such, she shows herself as the one reality capable of embracing the universality of men, serving them and their diverse activities, in their progress, as well as their anxieties and longings. Like the world in regard to its history, "the Church's pilgrimage follows a tortuous route; it struggles against

²⁰ DULLES, A., *Ibid.* p. 84.

internal weaknesses and external affliction" but unlike it, she can always confidently" count upon new outpourings of the Holy Spirit."³⁰ With a vision such as this, theology embarks on a more dynamic view of the Church; she is a living, historical reality and as such is subject to human fallibility, in great need of new and ever deepening insights into her nature, presence and mission in an evolving world. In a magnificent conclusion the document reiterates the very reason she has undertaken this dialogue with the world. "By thus giving witness to the truth, we will share with others the mystery of the heavenly Father's love. As a consequence men throughout the world will be aroused to a lively hope—the gift of the Holy Spirit—that they will finally be caught up in peace and utter happiness in the fatherland radiant with the splendour of the Lord." (GS. n. 93).

The Church's Ecumenical Breadth.

"Gaudium et Spes," in reaching out for relevance in the world has taken for the spanning element—man. Man's very nature effects an interdependence between the Church and the secular complex. The total experience gained through this mutual assistance helps to give man a total personality and identity. Man is then acting out the unifying, sacramental intent given him by God. But the baptised can give an even deeper level of unit. The Council gave Christian baptism an unusually big prominence (cf. LG. nn. 11, 14, 33). It is baptism which consecrates man into the worshipping body of Christ, and baptism too is man's response to proclaiming his faith in Jesus Christ. It is the beginning of the Christian life, it is the call to the apostolate and the Church's mission, the share in the priestly, kingly and prophetic role of the Lord. And most important, the documents make baptism the rallying point for Christian unity with the Oriental Churches and in some measure some of the Western communions. "The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who being baptized, through which they are united with Christ ... In some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit" (LG. n. 15).

Pope John XIII envisaged an ecumenical council, and Vatican II fully fulfilled this inspired vision. Because the Council was drawn to that one unifying, sacramental reality of the Church, that it gave the modern Church an image in which all can find a home. And it is still ever striving to unify all, and in so doing fulfil its mission. "The church, rather than containing the totality of salvation, points towards it, and strives by its prayers and labours to actualize God's kingdom among men."³¹ Christ is the salvation of mankind, baptism in Him is the salvation of the Christian community. And since the Church is Christ's body, she must enfold all those who are baptised in Him. The ecumenical movement depends for its possibility on Christian

³⁰ DULLES, A., *Ibid.* p. 30.

³¹ DULLES, A., *Ibid.* p. 27.

baptism. Although in the past, the Catholic Church recognized the validity of baptism as administered in other Christian communions, she was too wary of accepting the consequence of such recognition. However, with ecumenism she has, I believe, dropped her reticence, and saw the many baptised. And her present mood is to highlight these common elements rather than insist on the many and great differences that exist. She still laments this division. "The divisions among Christian prevent the Church from effecting the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her sons who, though joined to her by baptism are yet separated from full communion with her" (Ecu. n. 4). Though many objections were made about the patronizing tone of the document, as many were amazed not only that such a document was produced, but also at the tone of humility and contrition with which the Council approached the question of the division. "Thus, in humble prayer, we beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Ecu. n. 7). Ecumenism in the mind of the Council is not an end, but only the beginning, since very real differences make ultimate union impossible at the moment. Instead however, of making union the ultimate view of ecumenism and in so doing to ignore differences, the Council urged fidelity to the various heritage of the Churches and communions. For her own part, she sees this self-renewal as the most fruitful start from which to embark on the quest for unity. "Every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity of her own calling ... Church renewal has notable ecumenical importance" (Ecu. n. 6).

The decree on Ecumenism has enhanced the sign-character of the Church. In it the Church once more shows her widening vision of herself, able to embrace in charity and brotherhood men who follow Christ according to their imperfect lights. The "ecumenical movement means those activities and enterprises which according to various needs of the Church and opportune occasions, are started and organized for the fostering of unity among Christian" (Ecu. n. 4). These activities are stirrings of the Holy Spirit, active in the baptized to end the evil and painful consequences of disunity. In the preamble, it laments that "this discord openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature" (Ecu. n. 1). Not only is disunity such a scandal to the non Christians, but it impedes the growth and self-expression of the Church itself. "Since the Church is one, and any curtailment of its development is a restriction imposed on it as a whole, a certain impoverishment of religious life ensues even for those who are fully her members, so that the Church is simply deprived of a certain measure of growth that should be hers. To this extent her vitality is diminished and her efficacy as a sign in the eyes of the world is impaired."³²

³² McNAMARA, K.. "Notes and Comments-Decree on Ecumenism," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, April 1965, p. 132.

True to the dynamic vision she has of herself as a living part of world history, the decree here does not intend simply to call for the return of the erring to the fold of truth' which she claims subsists in herself in its fullness. Rather it urges a forward movement of mutual appreciation of goals, which will come through study, and prayer. The decree urges a constant fidelity to the "common endowments that go to build up and give life to the Church... written word of God; the life of grace, faith, hope and charity, interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as 'visible elements,' in some cases sacraments" (Ecu. n. 3). In the study of experts the decree cautions against "words, judgments and actions which do not respond to the condition of separated brethren." It also avoided defining membership but instead speaks of "brotherhood in the Lord" and "incorporation into Christ," thus not allowing technicalities to hinder the dialogue from starting. And this however, without prejudice to the truth. All this studious effort at stressing positive elements that will contribute to mutual understanding and respect is certainly "a remarkable development—fully in line with Christian principles—in the traditional concept of brotherhood or fellowship."³³ Even in the methods suggested to achieve this unity, there is vibrant hope that this movement will be blessed. And since the Church in the divine design keeps unfolding with the world history, and is therefore in the hands of God, the council ends thus: "This synod declares its realization that the holy task of reconciling all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ transcends human energies and abilities. It therefore places its hope entirely in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Ecu. n. 24).

There now remains for the limited aim of this paper, the tracing out of theological emphasis found in the decree which will help contribute to the Church's awareness of her sign-character. And these can be gleaned more from the practical principles of application rather than on any dogmatic advance the decree has put forward. Apart from what has already been analysed above which helped to widen our vision of the breadth of the Church, the decree points more on how to begin making this an effective communion. Progress of future ecumenism is guaranteed through mutual awareness of the advances in studies "... biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God, and catechetics, the apostolate..." (Ecu. n. 6). Simply by working together, there is already shown some kind of unity. Added to this there can be prayer, mutual understanding through discussion, theological dialogue, and common service, especially in missionary areas; these offer an exciting programme for the Catholics and their brothers in Christ. What theology cannot as yet achieve, "spiritual ecumenism of self-renewal, repentance, prayer together ... as well as educational ecumenism of getting to know each other at

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

all levels... and also social ecumenism of common service to mankind in the name of Christ will undoubtedly approach the unity to which their Lord is calling Christians."³⁴

More is said about real unity with the Oriental Churches. This is expressed in the esteem in which the Roman Church holds these venerable seats of Christianity. The decree urges preservation of the various rites for these too, manifest "unity in diversity." Other things set forth in the decree have in some ways been discussed in the principles of ecumenism and in the nature of the Church set out in "Lumen Gentium."

The Missionary Church and the Non-Christian Communities.

The reflecting Church has come to some 'new' understanding about herself, in her rediscovered sign-character. But all this will be fruitless if the efforts do not materialize in giving the Church her true identity as "light of all nations ... shedding on all men that radiance of His which brightens the countenance of the whole Church." Her renewals will be unavailing if she does not go out "to proclaim the gospel to every creature" (LG. n. 1). And so we finally look at the missionary activity of the Church, especially to the non-Christian communities and see how this apostolate has profited by the Church's "new Pentecost."

The redeeming values inaugurated by Christ are recognized by the Council, to be at work in the world; for this reason there will not be that same anxiety to transform the "secular" to a sacral order. This is a new outlook, a more incarnate view of the divine design, which includes in its scope all created order. And in many ways there are vestiges of the divine in creation, since all came to be through the creative Word of God. This mentality pervades the whole pastoral Constitution, which avows that man is the focus of its attention since he is "the image of God" and in him alone can the fullness of God's redeeming presence in the world be manifested. This reverent regard for man, his culture and his aspiration finds an echo in the pages of both decrees, or Missionary Activity and on Non-Christian communities. And yet one cannot mistake the sense of urgency felt by the Church to go out and proclaim the gospel of Christ to these. But it is not for the purpose of conversion, in the old accepted sense of the word, but rather a bringing out of the "secret presence of God" (Mission, n. 9) that is there. The whole tone of the Church's mission must be that the unbaptized "be shown the real truth about their condition and their total vocation" (Mis. n. 8). The Church's efforts must not be viewed so that she will draw in, but she must go out and in so doing "undertake a new Epiphany of God's will" (Mis. n. 9).

³⁴ McDONAGH, E., "Notes and Comments-Decree on Ecumenism," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, April 1965, p. 150.

The missionary essence of the Church comes from the universal salvific will of God. This will be concretized in the visible Church but is not exhausted by it. The Church achieved this state of glorification with the glorified Lord. But this same Church, by reason of her sign-character is still in its pilgrimage, and so is operating to achieve the final glory of its own incarnate nature. It cannot therefore ignore its present state where it exists simultaneously with men who are not yet on her level of salvific awareness that has come with the Lord Jesus. The Church must continually extend its light to these men, offering and inviting them "to enter into a salvation that is the completion of their own salvation-situation"³⁵ Karl Rahner sums it up thus; "When the Christian now preaches Christianity to the non-Christian, he will no longer proceed so much from the idea of transforming the other into something which he plainly has not been heretofore, but rather he will attempt to bring him to himself."³⁶

The decree uses the biblical image of the "gentes" to further emphasize the urgency which she wants to convey with regard to the mission. It must be a mission of presence, a presence that unites and effects unity. All her activities must show herself as this sign-character of unity, able to embrace whatever is native to the people and to the geographical place. "Missionary activity therefore must consist first of all and specifically in setting up this sign among more and more people who have not yet known Christ through a Church firmly established among them"³⁷ This, rather than a preoccupation with individual conversion or mere numbers or statistics as the primary task of the mission, stems from that rediscovered theme of a dynamic People of God involved in History. And more fundamentally it stems back to that Pauline basis for mission, namely the *mysterion* conceived in the mystery of the Trinity. "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father" (Mis. n. 2). One thought to conclude this section is the Church's appreciation of the non-Christian religions: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true in these. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct . . . which often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men" (Non-Christians, n. 2).

By way of summary, Vatican II presented us with a reflecting Church, and in that same pose she is very much a living sacrament of the saving presence of God in man's history. We saw her seek to discover herself in the mysterious heights of her trinitarian foundations. So bound with her Founder, Jesus Christ, she took on an incarnate form and a hierarchical structure and

³⁵ SCHIÖNENBERG, P. "The Church and Non-Christian Religions", FLANAGAN, D. (ed) *The Meaning of the Church*, Dublin 1966 p. 107.

³⁶ RAHNER, K., *The Church after the Council*, New York, 1966, p. 64.

³⁷ HILLMAN, E., "The Main Task of the Mission" in *Concilium* March, 1966, p. 4.

is sealed unto eternity by the abiding presence of the Spirit. Suffused in her divine origin and goal, she is constituted the leaven and soul of the created world, which is itself bearer of the action of God, in His total plan of unifying all created elements through man, who has been redeemed by the New Man, Jesus Christ. The vision of the Church as a "people of God" is extended to those others who have been dignified by the name of Christian through their faith and baptism. And all the baptized combine to present the Church to those who have not yet heard the gospel of Christ, as the unifying promise of God to all men. The whole vision of Vatican II regarding the dimensions of the Church is one of expansion, even when the Council is ever so conscious that fulness subsists in that community of fellowship in faith, hope, charity which historically is linked with the Catholic Church. Yet her dimensions will not be complete without mentioning her length, namely her eschatological reality: she is a pilgrim Church ever faithful to her call to holiness which comes to her in her "Amen" to the will of the Father to make all men be in fact, what they were meant to be, the family of God. With her missionary activity she is accomplishing indeed her true nature and mission as sign of union with God and unity among men.

Apart from this sacramental presentation which is surely the major unifying insight, enabling the Church to "determine" her dimensions, Vatican II gave theology fresh leads in the study of the Church. It is true that nothing new has been put forth, but new emphasis have been given on some aspects of the Church, which will need the clarification supplied by theology, as well as the living sense of faith of the faithful. Karl Rahner enumerates these areas at great lengths.³⁶ A look at these will convince one that rather than completing the study of the Church, the Council has only uncovered aspects of the Church to meet urgent needs of the moment. Much of what the Council has stated are inklings of the full reality as yet hidden in the mystery of her being. It is sufficient to say here, that there is a significant development in the area of ecclesiology, after Vatican II has presented us with some "new" images of the Church. Theology, as a service to the reflecting Church must further probe the expanded dimensions opened up by Vatican II. It will seem strange to end on a point that was not once mentioned in the whole paper, but then without Mary, the Church will be deprived of yet another 'dimension.' In a way she cannot be included in the consideration of the dimensions of the Church, no matter how expanded it may now look, because she is beyond the dimensions of the Church insofar as she is the reflection of the Church in its glory achieved fully. "In the most Holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle." (LG. n. 64).

³⁶ RAHNER, K., *Ibid.* p. 91.

DOCTRINAL SECTION

DE COLORES

You and Your Service Sheet

— *First of a Series* —

• GUILLERMO TEJON, O.P.

Your Service Sheet is a little paper that, because of frequent use, probably looks old and shabby.

To a non-cursillista that little paper means nothing. To you it means a lot.

That little paper can be called your lifeboat. It contains the things you need to keep your soul afloat amidst the storms that plague the ocean you have to travel on your way to heaven. It is an anchor that makes your spiritual life deep-rooted and prevents your supernatural ambitions from being scattered to the four winds.

Hang on to your Service Sheet; and the boat of your spiritual life will never sink. Keep your Service Sheet; and you will keep your life in Grace.

The things contained in your Service Sheet were explained to you in the rollo *Life in Grace*. Many of them were new to you. They are to most cursillistas. And, even after the Cursillo, cursillistas have many questions to ask about them. That is why today we are going to touch on some of these questions, and try to give them clear and concrete answers.

Following the Order of the Team Reunion, let us discuss briefly each of the practices of Piety, Study and Action of your Service Sheet.

I. — YOUR PIETY

1. — Your Morning Offering

Your alarm clock wakes you up in the morning. You feel sleepy and would like to stay in bed. But then you remember that the new day is a gift from God, an opportunity to serve Him. So, without giving way to laziness, you get up and offer that first sacrifice to the Lord.

Because of your love for God you would like to be with him every minute of the new day. The day belongs to God; and you would like to dedicate it entirely to Him.

However, you know that throughout the day you are going to be busy with many things. There are family, professional, and business matters to attend to. Besides, even if you had nothing else to do, you could not possibly be thinking of God the whole day. We are too feeble-natured for that.

How can you therefore combine your desire to be with God all the time and the duties that life in this world imposes on you? — By offering all the activities of the day to God. In this way you make sure that you are always with Him and that everything is done for Him.

The Morning Offering does this wonder for you. The Morning Offering turns your day into a continuous prayer.

In the Morning Offering you thank God for having looked after you during the night; you also thank Him for the Grace of the new day; you tell Him that everything you will do during the day will be for Him, that you want every moment of the incipient day to be dedicated to His service; that, out of love for Him, you are ready to accept whatever trials the new day may have in store for you.

The Morning Offering is short. But it must be sincere.

Don't ever let it become the meaningless routine of the man who gets up from bed sleepily, mumbles a few yawny words and hurries to the bathroom...

Kneel down for a few moments, and speak to the Lord...

You don't have to follow the Morning Offering of your Guide Book. You can improvise your own. The important thing is that you mean what you say.

The Morning Offering should be a *daily* practice of piety. No one can truthfully say that he has no time for it.

If you happen to oversleep, you can make your Morning Offering while you shave or on your way to the Office.

Don't you want your children to greet you in the morning and tell you that they will be good on this day, that they will do well in school?... Your Morning Offering is your "good morning" to God, your Father!...

You also want your children to remember you once in a while during the day, to run to meet you when you come home for lunch or in the evening after the day's work; don't you?

Throughout the day please try to remember your Morning Offering. Renew it mentally once in a while. Especially when you are confronted with an obstacle: when you have to talk to people for whom you feel a particular dislike; when you are about to do a difficult job; when you are tired, and on the point of losing your patience; when you notice that your spiritual strength is decreasing ...

A Morning Offering well done will fill your heart with satisfaction, and set the pace for the day.

You know from personal experience that if you are lazy in the morning, you are liable to be lazy the whole day. If you forget God in the morning, you will probably forget Him for the rest of the day.

Moreover, you should not lose sight of the meritorious value of the Morning Offering. The Morning Offering sanctifies everything you do throughout the day. Thus the whole day becomes a continuous source of supernatural merit. You gain for yourself countless additional actual Graces. And the reward that the Lord has promised to those who serve Him faithfully — to you — will always be on the increase.

2. — Your Meditation

Don't be scared by the word. And stop thinking that meditation is only for monks and contemplative nuns. Don't say: "I cannot meditate..."

Actually, everybody meditates. You meditate often.

When your mind thinks of how wonderful your wife and children are; when, as a result of this, your heart feels like loving them more and your will makes you decide to do your very best to take good care of them and make them happy ... you are meditating!

Transfer this to the spiritual world. Let your mind think about God, let your heart love Him and your will decide that you have to do your very best to please Him... And you are meditating!

Meditation is just that: to think, to love and to decide to please the One we love; that is, God. In other words, meditation is a loving thought.

Meditation is called mental prayer, because it is the mind, not the lips, that prays. Remember that prayer is not the mere uttering of words. Prayer is communication with God.

Our mind concentrates on God, on His perfections, on the wonders of His Creation, on His love for us, on one of the mysteries of the Life of Christ, on the examples of Christian virtues given to us by the Saints, etc. . . . The result of this concentration is that our mind increases its knowledge of God.

However, meditation is not just an act of the mind. It is not just study or research. The knowledge that our mind derives from that concentration is expected to arouse in us an admiration for the things we contemplate, and therefore to increase our love for them and for God. Our heart comes into the picture with an act of love.

But real love is fruitful, not sterile. Real love is measured, not by sighs or beautiful thoughts or words, but by deeds. If we know God better and love Him more, it naturally follows that we must be ready to do more for Him. Our will has to be moved to please the God that our mind knows and our heart loves.

To meditate is to think and to love; especially, to love. Remember St. Theresa's saying: "It is not a matter of thinking much, but of loving much."

Very often cursillistas ask this question: *How am I going to meditate?* There are several ways. The following is one of the most fundamental methods. You will find it easy and practical.

You start by placing yourself in the presence of God. In order to do so you should get away from the noise of the world, and try to forget everything except your meditation.

Then you invoke the Holy Spirit to guide you in your meditation. For this you can use the prayer found in your Guide Book. Or you can say an Our Father or compose your own prayer.

Now read slowly from a book. Pause once in a while to think about what you are reading, trying to understand its meaning.

Let the truths, the lessons, the ideas taught you in your reading penetrate gently — but deeply — into your mind, heart and will.

Finally, decide to put those ideas into practice.

End your meditation by thanking God for the opportunity He has given you to think about Him, and by asking Him for the graces necessary to carry out your resolutions. You can use the prayer of thanksgiving of your Guide Book, or make you own.

Here is a concrete example. Let us suppose that you are reading the story of the denial of Christ by St. Peter, as related in the Gospel of St. Mark (14, 27-31; 66-72). Reading the story you will find out that Peter denied Christ because he was too sure of himself, and placed himself in the way of a proximate occasion of sin. Lesson for you: You should not be overconfident. You should avoid occasions of sin. Resolution: Think of people, places, things that are or may be occasions of sin for you; and decide to stay away from them.

By the way, resolutions, to be effective, have to be specific, concrete. General resolutions, like "I'll do my best to behave", "I'll avoid occasions of sin" will take you nowhere. Your resolutions should be something like this, depending on circumstances: "From now on when Mr. So and So invites me to a nightclub I'll refuse to go with him"; "I'll not go out alone with *that* woman anymore"; "next time I meet a poor man in the street I'll remember Christ and try to help him"; "tomorrow, when I go to the Office, I'll greet *that* man who is always talking against me", etc. . .

Many resolutions never amount to anything because they are too general and vague. That is why it is said that "the road to hell is paved with good resolutions". Do not let your resolutions go that way! . . .

Another important thing. Please do not make too many resolutions in your meditation. One is enough, as long as it is carried out.

Unfortunately, there are cursillistas who do not seem convinced of the need they have of meditation. I hope you are not one of them. If you are, allow me to ask you these questions: As a Christian, aren't you expected to imitate Christ? How will you imitate Christ if you do not know Him? And how will you know Him unless you think about Him, his teachings, the virtues He taught us, the wonders He has worked in His Saints? . . .

Meditation provides you with the examples that you are supposed to follow in your daily life. If you see Christ practising humility, you feel like being humble; if you see one of His Saints excel in love for his neighbour you feel like being charitable; if the subject of your meditation is mortification, you feel attracted to the practice of self-denial . . .

It would be wrong to conclude that you know Christ well just because you took up Theology as part of your curriculum in College, or because you are a member of a study club. From such study your mind draws theoretical knowledge. This is necessary; but it is not enough. As I said earlier, not only the mind, but also the heart and the will must come to know—and to accept!—Christ. Only meditation can do this for you.

Meditation is a must in the life of a cursillista. Can you truly say that you love Christ if you do not think about Him? Will you believe that your children love you if they never—or seldom—think of you?...

How often should I meditate?—How often should you think about the persons you love... The ideal thing would be to make meditation a *daily practice*.

If you meditate only once a week you will not acquire the habit of meditating. Meditation will not really become a part of your life. And, quite possibly, you will not meditate for many weeks...

Besides, the oftener you meditate, the greater—and faster—progress in spiritual life you will make!

How long?—Not so long that your meditation becomes an unbearable burden; not so short that meditation is impossible! For the average cursillista five or ten minutes a day would be right. The length of the time you dedicate to your meditation will increase as your spiritual life grows. In this, follow the advice of your spiritual director.

Where should I make my meditation?—You can have your meditation at home, or in the Church. The place does not matter, as long as you are away from noise and distractions.

What book should I use for my meditation?—Please discuss this with your spiritual director. He knows the state of your soul, and is in a position to advise you on this matter.

In general, any book of a spiritual nature can be used for meditation.

But don't forget that a book is only an aid to meditation. If the book does not help, if it becomes a handicap, put it aside. If your mind and heart are so full of the idea of God that you can meditate without a book, by all means do so. However, it is advisable to keep a book always close by just in case it is needed.

When shall I have my daily meditation?—It depends on your schedule. Choose the most suitable time. By "suitable" I mean the time when you are least liable to be distracted and more able to concentrate. Early in the morning, before Mass, is a good time. It is also a good preparation for Mass and Communion.

Once you have decided when, where and how long to meditate, stick to your decision. Do not change it lightly. If one day you meditate in the morning, and the next day in the evening; if on Monday you do it in the Church and at home on Tuesday, chances are that you will soon stop meditating.

Do not make the mistake of saying: "Today I do not feel like meditating. I'll skip or shorten my meditation; and I'll make up for it tomorrow"... Tomorrow you will also feel lazy. If you develop this habit, your meditation will be short-lived.

Sometimes meditation is difficult. The mind refuses to concentrate, the heart seems to be dry; the will, weak...—Don't squeeze your brains nor force your heart and will violently.... But don't give up your meditation!... Tell God that you find it hard to meditate; but that, for His love, you will do your best. Then pick up your book, and read slowly the whole length of your meditation.... Even if the whole thing looks useless to you, it is not. Actually such meditation is exceptionally meritorious in the eyes of God because it entails a special effort on your part.

Love is not measured by the emotion or happiness we find in doing something; but by our readiness to sacrifice for the one we love; in this particular case, by your readiness to go on thinking about God in spite of the fact that you find it distasteful.

On the other hand, on some occasions you will experience an unusual happiness in your meditation. And you would want to extend it. You can do so; but on condition that such an extension is not detrimental to your other duties and that it does not mean that if the next day you find it difficult to meditate you are going to say: "Never mind; I can afford to forget about meditation today because yesterday I meditated for twenty minutes, instead of ten"...—Make sure that in your meditation you seek God, not yourself!...

HOMILETICS

● D. TITHER, C.S.S.R.

NOVEMBER 2nd — 23rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Remembering The Departed

"WELCOME INTO YOUR KINGDOM OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS AND SISTERS." (*Pref. Euch. II*)

Yesterday, many of you visited the cemetery. You prayed for your dear departed that God would speedily take them home to Himself if, indeed, they are not already there. As the Bible says: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be freed from their sins." (*2 Mch. 12,46*).

The thoughts of a Christian in regard to the dead are, and must be, utterly different from the grievings of the pagans "who have no hope." We know that we will see them again, where "sorrow will be no more, nor mourning, nor grief; where God will wipe the tear from every eye," and this hope bears us up. The truth that we can help and relieve them, especially at Mass and Communion, is one of the deepest consolations of our faith. The assurance that they are, or soon will be, safe at Home, a Home that can never be broken up, and that one day we will be there with them — makes grief bearable.

Actually, our separation from them is more apparent than real. The love that united us with them in this life continues beyond the grave. We know that they are more alive than ever, that they are near us, present in that real, but unseen world which surrounds us. That is what the Communion of Saints means.

But the chief thought that makes our approach to death Christian is this — Christ's death as our representative has taken from death its worst bitterness, and His Resurrection has guaranteed ours. "Dying He destroyed our death, and rising He restored us to life." As one of the Prefaces for Sunday puts it: "By suffering on the cross, He freed us from unending death, and by rising from the dead He gave us eternal life." (*Sunday Pref. II*.) Perhaps, our funeral rites have been somewhat gloomy not the prayers so much as the sombre black color. The Council has called for a complete reform of the burial rite in order to show more clearly that a Christian's death is a going home with Christ, that we are so identified with Him as to make our death a sharing with Him. In many places, even here in the Philippines, black is usually

no longer the color of the funeral vestments, and the mourners wear clothes that show, in spite of their natural grief, a real joy that a brother or sister has gone Home, or is surely on the way there.

A suggestion — should you arrange to have Mass said for a dead relative or friend during November, or at any other time, don't ask for a Requiem Mass in black. Instead, request that the third Eucharistic Prayer be the one chosen on that day. All the Eucharistic Prayers include a commemoration of the departed, and two of them allow a special intercession mentioning the name of the deceased right there in the heart of the Mass.

Listen to this. It is from the third prayer. "Remember N., whom you have called from this life. In baptism he (she) died with Christ: may he (she) also share His resurrection, when Christ will raise our mortal bodies and make them like His own in glory. Welcome into Your Kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in Your friendship. There we hope to share in Your glory when every tear shall be wiped away. On that day we shall see You, our God, as You are. We shall become like You and praise You forever through Christ our Lord, from Whom all good things come."

In this prayer, inserted into the Mass of the day, our dead are remembered where remembrance is best. It is prayed during that most sacred moments when Christ's death — the death that made all other deaths bearable and His Resurrection, the guarantee of ours, are being recalled and made present, and when their eternal promise is being anticipated in joyful hope.

One last point — our offering of condolence must be charged with hope. We carry Christ with us. Therefore, be Christ. Carry His message of hope into homes of mourning. Even if we say little, with a hand-clasp or a sign of heartfelt sympathy, let us say it in words of Christian hope.

"In Christ the hope of a blessed resurrection has dawned for us, the promise of future immortality overcomes any sadness at the prospect of death. For Your faithful, O Lord, life is not taken away, it is changed. The house of this earthly pilgrimage is destroyed to become an eternal Home in heaven." (*Preface of tomorrow's Masses.*)

NOVEMBER 9th — 24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Dedication Of St. Saviour

"TODAY THIS HOUSE HAS RECEIVED SALVATION." (*Gosp.*)

One day, Jesus was entering the town of Jericho. News of His coming had brought out a large crowd which thronged the streets to see Him. One of them was Zacchaeus, a Jew, but a traitor to his nation. A collaborator with the enemy, he was one of their tax-gatherers, grown rich by preying on his own people, guilty of fraud and extortion. But,

like any other man, he was searching for some meaning in life. He wanted peace and happiness and he was not finding it in his ill-gotten wealth. So he joined the crowd pressing on to see Jesus. Being short, and no doubt ashamed to be conspicuous by going to the front, he scrambled up a tree, much like a small boy who wants to see a parade.

Never forget that nothing, not even the least event in the life of Jesus, happened by chance. He stops, so does everyone else. He looks up at Zacchaeus, He calls him by name: "Zacchaeus, come down." Feeling ridiculous, and perhaps fearing a public rebuke for his bad life, Zacchaeus slides down. Then Jesus speaks, not to condemn but to convert—to reveal what kind of a Father God is: "Zacchaeus, today I must come to your house to dine with you."

Incidents like this are not just events that occurred 1939 or so years ago. They are happening *now* especially in our lives. Let us not think of ourselves so much as living *since* Zacchaeus, but *as* Zacchaeus. Vat. II tells us: "In the Holy Scripture, the Father Who is in Heaven constantly meets His children and speaks with them." What God's word tells us about Jesus and Zacchaeus in today's Gospel is true about ourselves. Only the externals are different.

There is a lot of Zacchaeus in all of us. "If we say we have no sin, we are liars and the truth is not in us." So, when you hear or read; "At that time Jesus said to Zacchaeus. Today I must come to your home," remember what it means: At this time Jesus says to me: "Today..." He says it, now and here, to each one of us. Each one of us as a living temple is the one dwelling place. He is most interested in entering. He is urgent: "I *must* come." We must consent to let him enter our lives.

Perhaps, if we are honest, we can see ourselves likewise in the indifferent crowd: "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner:" Like the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son, we resent seeing others (to whom, God help us, we feel superior), blessed by God. Maybe like those in the parable of the vineyard, we feel jealous of those who begin at the eleventh hour. If we ever forget that Christ came precisely "to save those who were lost," God help us.

Rather, let our conversion, like that of Zacchaeus, be thorough and complete. And let it take the same course as his did—in generous and constant concern for our less privileged brethren.

On Tuesday you will go to the polls. I'll not tell you whom to vote for, since of course—I've no right to do that. But, as the Council reminds us (*L.G. No. 76*), our right to vote is truly sacred, so is our duty to vote. Patriotism is a Christian virtue: "Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," said Our Lord. Love of our country is an extension of the love we owe our neighbor, which is a manifestation of our love of God. It does not stop there, of course, but our charity will never become worldwide if it does not start with concern for our country's welfare. So, in our choice of candidates we must consider one thing only—the overall good of our nation. If each and every citizen realized that electing our government officials is very much a religious act, then we would choose those whom before God and regardless of party lines or personal considerations, we sincerely believe will serve our nation best.

Don't say, "What's the use of voting? All politicians become corrupt anyway." To think or talk that way is to deny the Incarnation of Christ, to forget what happened to the world when God the Son left His heaven to set the world right. "The hand of the Lord is not shortened." What happened to Zacchaeus will happen to us, as individuals and as a nation, if each one of us does his part.

Pray today at Mass, as we've been praying for some months now in the Prayer of the Faithful, for honest, clean and peaceful elections. God love you.

NOVEMBER 16th — 25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ecumenism

"IN MERCY AND LOVE UNITE ALL YOUR CHILDREN WHEREVER THEY MAY BE." (*Præx Euch. III.*)

The Council, in its decree for priests, insists that high among his duties is that of gathering God's family together as a brotherhood of living unity, leading all through Christ and in the Holy Spirit to God the Father. So, since the Mass we are offering is the very source of community, let's consider the unity that God wants among Christians.

Everything human began when man was created in the likeness of God's Trinity (unity in diversity), and will end when God gathers the Whole Christ, Head and members, to Himself. God made us precisely to gather us all into one intimate union with Himself, which naturally means union with one another.

Today's Gospel tells of the Church as a sort of grain of mustard seed destined to become a tree, and as a leaven intended to permeate the mass of mankind. Jesus spoke of the unity He willed for His Church, and He prayed that we be united like the living loving unity of the Adorable Trinity Itself.

For too long, this wish of Christ has been frustrated by the scandal of a divided Christendom, split up into many denominations. To say that the condition of mankind today demands that Christians show a united front, that we must get together in order to survive, is not the whole truth or the main truth—it is the will of Christ, expressed clearly, that all may be one. The same will that urges us to pray and work for the reunion of Christians—one fold under one Shepherd.

Some Protestant denominations have formed the World Council of Churches to study reunion and pray for it. (7 of these are represented in the Philippines, alongside 361 registered religious sects that are not yet affiliated, but which we hope will become so.) And then came Pope John and his Council. At his election, the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox said: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." In 1964, the same Patriarch met Pope Paul in Jerusalem to discuss reunion. Earlier this year the Pope spoke to the World Council of Churches,

Any study of the Council documents shows how much we must long for reunion, how sorry we must be that the break-up ever happened. There have been faults on both sides—fear and suspicion, stressing the things that divide, rather than those which unite sincere Christians.

We must clearly realize what the ultimate aim of ecumenism is—not a loose federation of Churches, but the unity in doctrine, in worship and in government for which Christ prayed. While we cannot compromise essentials, we must as followers of Christ, practise charity. We must learn to disagree without being disagreeable. It would be naive to think that reunion, will happen soon, but a start has been made, doors have been opened and God grant they will never be closed. Each of us has a responsibility here, to get nearer and nearer to Christ, and so hasten the day when He, the Source of all Unity, will make possible what, humanly speaking, seems impossible.

It will come a no surprise that when the final revision of the Mass begins on the Sunday after next, many ecumenical elements will be encountered. For instance, at the placing of the bread and wine on the altar, the formula is that of the Jewish blessing of bread and wine. This is a gesture of openness to the race from which Jesus, through Mary, sprang; the first people chosen by God, the race with whom the Old Covenant was made, and sad to confess, not always treated in the past with Christian charity.

Then after the Our Father, we will have the embolism but it will end differently: "As we await the blessed hope and return of Our Lord Jesus Christ," and then all will join in the acclamation (on the cover of the new Community Massbook): "for Yours is the Kingdom and the Glory forever." This has been used by Protestants and long before them by the Orthodox at the end of the Lord's Prayer. These words somehow got into the Bible. How? From the early Catholic liturgy of the Mass, over 1500 years ago. The addition will be a message to our separated brothers that we long for the day when we will all be one.

Thank God, we're already working together on projects for the betterment of mankind, as exemplified by the relief of the starving during the Nigerian war. And on special occasions, we hold special services of prayer together with them, begging God our common Father for unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

May the new form of the Mass bring about the attitude necessary for reunion.

NOVEMBER 23rd — 26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

End Of An Era

"HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY BUT MY WORDS WILL NOT PASS AWAY." (Gosp.)

Today, the last day of the Church's year, marks the end of an era. It will be the last time that Sunday Mass will be celebrated in the intermediate style of the last few years. Next Sunday, the first Sun-

day of Advent, a new era begins. The Mass we've been expecting so long begins next Sunday. By a coincidence, it's exactly 400 years since the last big revision and enriching was made on the Mass-rite, back in 1570, the year before Manila was founded.

The changeable elements in worship can and must be updated with the passing of time (*Cons. Lit. 21*) not for the sake of change itself, not to return to the past just for the sake of the past; but to make sure that what is said and done is truly significant for the people of today.

The first thing you will notice about the new Mass formula next Sunday is its noble simplicity. Any celebration that takes too long to get under way tends to become boring. Hence, the Mass as of next Sunday will begin with a hymn sung by all during the entrance procession. There will be no more prayers at the foot of the Altar, no more introit, but just a joyful greeting to Christ our High Priest, the invisible Leader of the assembly. Instead of an offertory that had gradually grown into a "little canon," a much more simplified placing of the gifts on the Altar will take place.

Another feature is a certain flexibility. The Council declared that the Church has no desire to impose a rigid uniformity (*Ibid 37*). Certain choices (optional prefaces, choice among 4 eucharistic prayers, 5 possible formats for the common admission of sinfulness, etc.), are available for each celebration. The unity of the Church does not demand uniformity down to the last detail in non-essentials.

It will take some weeks before we grow used to everything in this final form of the Mass, but its outlines are easy to grasp. The Mass can be simply but accurately described as an invitation followed by a response, and its format follows these two elements.

The invitation takes place in the liturgy of the word. Christ Himself speaks to us in the readings and sermon. Next Sunday we will see how God's invitation to his family is given the importance it deserves.

Having listened to God's invitation, we are ready to respond by joining in Christ's Sacrifice. This is not so much a matter of offering Christ again to His Father — He is with His Father — it is rather that He gives us an opportunity of offering ourselves along with Him. We have been involved in His eternal response to the Father ever since our baptism, when the Holy Spirit raised us up into Christ's life and activity. This inclusion in Christ's response is intensified when he comes among us sacramentally at Mass, and invite us to seal our response by joining in the sacred meal.

After next Sunday, Mass without communion will appear strange indeed. When the nature of the Mass as a sacrificial meal is made clear, we will know that to come to Mass without eating is like accepting our Father's invitation and then refusing to eat. Communion should be the climax of our response.

If we keep these two elements, invitation and response clearly in mind, then we will see where everything fits in. *But*, and this a big "but" the whole historic event of next Sunday will somehow escape us unless we recall that the primary purpose of it all is to worship God our Father better with complete dedication and unlimited surrender. Only then shall we be able to depart from Mass intensely ready to promote, in every way, His interests in the world.

NOVEMBER 30th — 1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Meaning Of Advent

"THE TIME HAS COME, OUR SALVATION IS NEAR" — (*Reading II.*)

Since Advent begins today, it is reasonable for us to ask ourselves just what the purpose of this period is. The word Advent means a coming which naturally is the coming of Christ. But which coming? His birth in Bethlehem 1,969 years ago? No, that has happened and cannot happen again. We are not living in the Old Testament times and looking forward to the coming of Christ. We are not trying to re-live the weeks before His birthday. That would be quite unreal.

His coming that is taking place now is the advent he makes to us in His word at Mass, His Sacrifice, most particularly at the Communion time. He was already with us before Mass, and He will remain with us after Mass. This is the coming that has meaning and value for us here and now. While it is true that it began when He came in person 1970 years ago, His coming is still continuing on through the Church which is a continuation of Himself and His activity in the Sacraments.

What then do we look forward to during Advent? What we call His *second* coming, is His majesty at the consummation of the world. The first reading today, describes it in most exhilarating terms — the unity and peace that will be ours when the Lord judges the nations, giving His awards to a multitude of peoples. (*Is. 2:15*) There will be no more wars, no more misunderstandings.

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us that the last times are already under way, that we are in the new and everlasting covenant which will have its climax in Christ's coming in glory. Meanwhile, He tells us exactly what our preparation should be — unselfish love of others. The startling phrase: "He who loves his neighbor has done all that the Law demands is explained by enumerating the 10 commandments, and showing that they are all summed up in loving our neighbor as ourselves. (*Romans 13:8*). Have charity fulfill *all* the demands of the law" — (*Ibid. 10*). As an incentive to His concern for others, he

reminds us with pressing urgency of the times in which we live, that the dawn of Christ's coming in glory is at hand.

With even more insistence, Christ's own words in the Gospel reading tell us to be always ready for we do not know the day or the hour of Christ's coming. But, it is not to be in a spirit of dread or paralyzing fear. God is our Father, an ever-loving Father, and Christ whom He sent to be our Redeemer, is one of us, our Brother. No father could be pleased if his children lived in a nightmare of fear of him. Nor could an elder brother be pleased if his younger brothers and sisters thought of his return with anything but joy and eagerness. Being always terrified of God our Father and Christ our Brother is an incredible perversion of the Christian message. The response of love, (and the Scripture assure us that "perfect love casts out fear") is the response of children to a loving father or a perfect brother.

At all times we look forward to His second and final coming but particularly each year at Advent. Just listen to the Preface in today's Mass: "Father, all powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give You thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. When He humbled Himself to come among us as a man, He fulfilled the plan You formed long ago and opened for us the way to salvation. Now we watch for the day hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ our Lord will come again in His glory. (*Pref. Adv. 1*).

We stir up our hope by recalling all that God did for mankind throughout history, especially sending His Son "for us man and for our salvation." Moreover, we remember His particular goodness to us in calling us at baptism to become one with Christ and join in His work, preparing ourselves and all mankind to welcome Him now and at the end of time.

COME, LORD JESUS.

The Church and the Catholic Vote

• ROBERTO LAZARO

With the approaching national elections, the ever recurring question arises once more among the Catholic circles in this country: Is there a Catholic vote in the Philippines? The question is a very critical one, considering that the country is predominantly Catholic, and the Catholic vote can easily decide the country's political climate and, in fact, shape the nation's destiny.

But is there such a Catholic vote?

From our election experiences, Catholics have always voted as independent, free citizens who refuse to be pressured against their better judgement. There were attempts in the past from some ecclesiastical superiors to impose their high office upon the will of the Catholic voters in support of a particular candidate. And there could have been a number who heeded the appeal as a natural reaction as members of the Catholic community or in deference to their superiors. But the general voting trend, as indicated by the resounding defeat of favored candidate, showed that Catholics in the Philippines vote for other reasons than the will of the religious superiors.

There is not one single factor which can be pinpointed as the consideration for a Catholic voter's choice of his candidates, just as there is no such single factor as the consideration for any other free Filipino voter's choice. There are among them those who are partisan, there are the independent voters, and there may even be the voters by convenience or voters for material gains. In other words, they vote not as Catholics but as private individuals who cast their votes for their own reasons.

This does not, however, mean that Catholics cannot be solid in matters of election. As free and independent individuals, they can choose to unite and vote as a group by common agreement

or motivated by a common cause. Not necessarily as a solid Catholic vote but solid just the same. Soc Rodrigo, it may be remembered, first ascended to his political height through a strong vote from his Catholic followers, students for the most part. Manglapus also had a strong Catholic following in his senatorial candidacy, although he failed to garner sufficient Catholic support in his bid for the Presidency.

Now, what do all these mean? Simple. Give the Catholic a candidate who appeals to his better judgment and he will vote for that candidate. He is generally no different from any other voter. His final choice is swayed, not necessarily by his Catholic principles but by a subjective sense of values. Which is neither Catholic nor uncatholic but simply being a private individual.

In dealing with the Catholic voter, therefore, the Church, if it is to be an active force in the political life of the country, must delve deeper into the Catholic individuality than the mere presumption that Catholics are members of the fold who hear the master's voice. The Church must first develop the Catholic before it can generate the vote. There can never be a solid Catholic vote unless there is first a solid Catholicism in this country.

This problem is not only ticklish but outright confusing and complex and elusive if not altogether impossible. The present crisis in the faith has made matters worse. The very purpose for which the Vatican Council II was held, that is, to overhaul the Church to make it more responsive to the social needs of the times, has caused dissensions and misunderstandings on what the social role of the Church precisely is. To speak of a Catholic vote under these conditions within the Church can even be impertinent, if singled out as an isolated case to be resolved without relating it to other problems which must be resolved together with it. Problems in the Church are inextricably interrelated, the Church being a whole, a single society whose members are the concern of this whole and therefore whose problems are not isolated from the problems of the whole. An isolated question as, say, the Catholic vote must be viewed from the context of the life of the Church as a society, from the context of its principles and from the context of the very spirit which moves that Church in its existence and operations as a human society and as a mystical body. The process is a long, long one and there should be no mistaking about this . . . no lapsing into the traditional presumptions of the Church administrators about Catholics and catholicism.

The issue is more basic than it is generally believed to be. It involves the individual in his very being and in his conscience. This is what determines his better judgment. His way of voting depends on how his conscience is acculturated. If his conscience is not formed according to Catholic standards — upright conscience in the words of Pope Paul VI — it will be formed by other forces. A Catholic conscience for the Catholic voter and for the Catholic candidate for a public office is what it takes, basically, for the development of a solid Catholic vote. Without this, the vote of the Catholics will be guided by the situation in which they live, not as Catholics, but as any other member of society.

The priest is the personification of Church authority and is the central figure in any Catholic community. Upon him therefore devolves the role as the principal agent in the generation of the Catholic vote in his community. This is not a simple task. Here again, we return to the need for developing the Catholic as a voter as well as the Catholic as a candidate who deserves the trust of the voter. This is a task which cannot be accomplished from the ambo alone. The priest has to go beyond the altar rails down the aisle and beyond that aisle through the streets and alleys, through the slums and dead-ends, through villas and shanties, through cities and towns and barrios, to the home and the heart of the man. The home of a man is where he is, and his heart is where his conscience lies. He who penetrates this home and gives that man a sense of belongingness wins his heart and his conscience. Can the priest win that heart and that conscience for Christ, for Catholicism? Where the priest fails to do this, there is a need for the priest to reappraise himself, to ask whether he himself belongs.

When the youth of our present generation react against the Establishment, we can only trace the reactionism to a search for belongingness. There is a dissatisfaction with what is, which is an indication that they recognize some ideal concept of what should be. They find themselves in a situation to which they do not fit and therefore search for that something, that ideal concept, which for them does not exist, but which can and must exist if they have to create it themselves. So we have all around us a state of youth unrest.

Irresponsible aggressiveness, we say. Immature and immoral. Is it really irresponsible to react against irresponsibility? Immoral to react against immorality? What has our society done to give our youth — not only our youth but our citizenry in general — a sense of belongingness, a sense of individual and national dignity!

The social revolution of the youth is but a foreboding that the general citizenry is already in a state of internal rage, tempered perhaps by the maturity of the elders or the plain apathy of those who would rather witness social corruption than get involved.

Short of a violent, bloody reaction against established order, which is without order in the present state of things in this country, we need a solid vote to topple the immoral among those in power and set up a new structure if need be, or change leadership to a better one. This solid vote must come from a responsible sector. Unfortunately, this sector does not exist yet. It still has to be formed. Not by recruiting members to join a force ready to strike any time. By no means. This sector has to grow by a natural growth, by formation of the individual intellectually, emotionally and morally, by a process of growing up into maturity as human beings with right sense of values we call objective morality.

The Church that age-old institution that has led nations for centuries, that has itself experienced periods of corruption and eras of perfection, is the best agent of change in our present society that very badly needs a change. The Church has all the facilities, potentialities and experience to effect this change by developing its members in its true spirit of Christian charity and social maturity. These members, when developed into individuals with a collective conscience responsive to the objective needs of their society, and provided with prospective leaders who are equally formed with the same social conscience, will constitute the solid Catholic vote we have been searching for. Until then, we have to rest content with, or be resigned with discontent to, the present chaos gradually gnawing into the most intimate fibers of our social structure, and perish with it to give way to a new generation which perhaps knows better.

CASES AND QUERIES

THE INDULGENCES OF THE ROSARY

I am a rabid — if the adjective may be permitted — believer of the efficacy of the Rosary. Perhaps it is my age and my love for history more than the deeper conviction of the theology of the Marian prayer. But a couple of days ago, I received the jolt of my life; a priest, in an informal conversation, somewhat vaguely mentioned something about the Church's changing attitude regarding the Rosary. In effect, he said that the Church "almost" had taken whatever attraction the Rosary has by substantially taking away the indulgences attached to its recitation.

Dumbfounded at first to hear my favorite devotion downgraded, I ended up so confused. Will you please enlighten me about this whole thing?

Let us begin with a little history.

In the Apostolic Constitution *The Doctrine of Indulgences* of January 1, 1967, Paul VI introduced notable changes in the discipline of the indulgences and established new norms in the process. Three main objectives were taken to guide the whole work:

- (1) introduce other more theological modes for gaining partial indulgences;
- (2) arrive to a more equitable diminution in relation to plenary indulgences;
- (3) reduce and adjust to a new and more dignified form the so-called *real* and *local* indulgences.

The revision of the Enchiridion of Indulgences had to be done then "with a view to attaching indulgences only to the most important prayers

and works of piety, charity and penance." (n. 13) The Sacred Penitentiary, the body commissioned to carry out this revision, presented to the Holy Father on June 28, 1968, a much shorter and carefully prepared new Enchiridion of Indulgences.

Regarding the recitation of the Marian Rosary, norm 48 says: "A *plenary* indulgence is granted, if the Rosary is recited in a Church or public oratory or in a family group, a religious or pious association; a *partial* indulgence is granted in other circumstances."

More concretely, in order to gain a plenary indulgence in the recitation of the Marian Rosary, one must take into account the following norms:

(1) The recitation of a third part only of the Rosary suffices; but the five decades must be recited continuously.

(2) The vocal recitation must be accomplished by pious meditation on the mysteries.

(3) In public recitation the mysteries must be announced in the manner customary in the place; for private recitation, however, it suffices if the vocal recitation is accompanied by meditation on the mysteries." (*ibidem*)

I should like to call attention to several points which can serve to clarify the provisions. *Firstly*, the use of a blessed rosary is not mentioned here as a necessary requirement in order to gain the aforesaid plenary indulgence. *Secondly*, in virtue of the norm 24, §11, he who recites the Rosary fulfilling all the conditions above-mentioned may acquire plenary indulgence *everyday*. *Thirdly*, the Rosary, recited *privately* in a *semi-public* or *private* oratory, has no attached plenary indulgence; while when recited *privately* in a *Church* or *public* oratory, one can gain a plenary indulgence as long as the conditions above-mentioned were fulfilled. *Fourthly*, the Rosary, when recited in *common* by the members of the family, or a religious congregation or pious association, has an attached plenary indulgence, *servatis servandis*.

Consequently, instead of feeling depressed by the new provisions on the indulgences of the Rosary, we should be happier. The new Enchiridion of indulgences gives such importance only to *three* other pious exer-

cises, namely: (a) adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament during at least half an hour; (b) the devout reading of Holy Scripture for the same length of time; and lastly, (c) the pious practice of the Way of the Cross.

It is indeed both enlightening and refreshing to see how much importance the Church is giving to the recitation of the Marian Rosary. The mere fact that it is being afforded the singular honor of being bracketed — in relation to indulgences — with these three devotions, proves the consistent high esteem of the Church for Mary's Rosary.

● FR. L. Z. LEGASPI, O.P.

It does not happen everyday, but mark it well: the red letter days will be:

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THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

MSGR. OVERBEKE PROMOTED BISHOP

Pope Paul VI has promoted the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Albert van Overbeke as first bishop of the prelature of Bayombong and titular bishop of Calabria, it was announced recently by the Catholic bishops' conference of the Philippines.

Msgr. Overbeke was formerly parish priest in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, the superintendent of Catholic schools in Mt. Province, and rector of St. Louis College — now a university in Baguio.

Born in Oostrozebeke, Belgium on Nov. 18, 1915, Msgr. Overbeke was ordained priest on Aug. 4, 1940. He finished philosophy and theology at the study house of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation in Scheut, and obtained his master of arts and education degree from the University of Santo Tomas.

ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC THEOLOGIAN CONFERENCE

'Surprising' Agreement on Difficult Points

Meetings between Anglican and Catholic theologians in southern England have produced "quite surprising" agreement on hitherto "insurmountable" doctrinal issues, according to Anglican Bishop George Reindorp of Guildford.

The discussions were held between an Anglican team from the two dioceses Guildford and Chichester, and a Catholic team from the diocese of Arundel and Brighton, which covers much the same area. The teams, six or seven on each side, have been meeting twice a year for a one-day conference for the past two years.

Bishop Reindorp in his diocesan newsletter for August said: "The following subjects have been discussed: the Bible as the basis for belief; what constitutes genuine tradition in the Church; the Eucharist in the light of tradition; the proposed Anglican-Methodist Ordinal; and the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice in Scripture and the early Church.

"The procedure has been for a Roman Catholic and an Anglican to read papers on the subject for the day with general discussion following. Owing to the fact that the membership has been relatively stable there has developed a genuine and easy frankness in exchange of views.

"The outcome has been a quite surprising agreement on doctrinal issues which in the past have been insurmountable barriers between the two Churches.

Even more remarkable has been the discovery that sometimes the differences that have appeared have cut across the Church divisions.

"This, of course, is only a local experience and too much importance must not be attached to it, but it may not be a totally insignificant straw in the wind if the wind is truly the wind of the Spirit."

The meetings have taken place at the Anglican Theological College at Chichester and at St. John's Catholic Seminary near Guildford. The theologians on the Catholic side include Benedictines as well as diocesan priests.

The teams have been appointed by the bishops of both sides.

THE POPE AGAIN STRESSES NEED FOR PRAYER

The Pope returned to the theme of the need of prayer in the modern world in a general audience at his summer residence on August 20.

Today, more than ever before, he said, man must sustain himself with personal prayer.

The Pope lamented the fact that many people do pray but find little joy in their efforts. He touched upon the distrust that many seem to have of the new liturgical forms, and said that with "just a little effort, they can draw great consolation from the new forms and rites and prayers."

The Pope lamented the fact that many people do pray but find little joy of prayer in favour of simply loving their neighbor and regard any prayer to God as being superfluous.

"We should not be among any of these groups," he said. "Let our prayer be the watchman of our lives. This continual feeling of God's presence can lead to the spiritual life of contemplation which is a beginning in us of the eternal happiness of heaven."

This was the third time in August that Pope Paul has used prayer as a theme for general audience talks.

Vatican Radio, in noting this return to the theme of prayer, conjectured that Pope Paul was displaying a little of his own personality without in any way referring to himself.

Having made the distinction between the spiritual life of a man who happens to be a pope and the natural faculties of the same man, Vatican Radio said: "We would dare to say that the particular sensitivity of Pope Paul towards this subject and the noble way in which he addresses himself to it does two things: it first gives away the fact that he is an intellectual, but much more importantly, that he is a man given to interior and profound meditation."

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(SGD.) FR. LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P.
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