

HOMILETICS

• **Fernando Yusingco, C.S.S.R.**

5th Sunday after Easter (May 3)

EGOISM

Someone wrote these lines, "When the only really important thing in the world is ME — the world is too small to live in." It sounds so self-evident a truth; so simple. We may miss just why it is so true. Really, when our whole striving, acting, doing, wishing are within ourselves, we get locked up within our own world. And that world is a small world because it is only one person's world — ME. It is living in isolation though physically we meet and talk with people. Yet those people count for nothing because they are not really important. They are things for us. I am important — nobody else.

In isolation we are the only ones important. Until we discover that other people's misery, other people's pain, other people's happiness, other people's joys mean something to us, then we stay our own prisoners in the prison of our selfishness. When we say, "Who cares? So what? I don't see why? I don't have time. He does not fit with us. She dresses funny. They talk queer. They are lazy. They are pathetic." We build walls of isolation. And these walls of self-isolation manifest themselves in actually physical walls that we see everywhere. Selfishness is the creator of isolation. Love, the kind of love that is centered on others, is the creator of smiles and tears, anger and frustration, of pain and joy. Love creates real living.

That is why a wife is not a wife who says, "How much can I neglect my husband before he gets angry." No wife who really loves takes that

attitude. Of course, no wife really and consciously says that to herself. But she could just love to keep playing mahjong till she becomes a can opener instead of a cook, or until the maid does all the functions of a housewife except that of sex.

That is why a landowner is not a Christian, or a businessman for that matter, who says, "How far can I save on my workers' salaries, or how much can I gain on my tenants' share before they cry out loud." Of course, again, no landowner or businessman says that outright even to himself. He does throw in an occasional morsel at Christmas time or on his birthday to keep his tenants or workers contented. It is like giving a rubber nipple to a crying baby. The poor baby sucks in nothing really but air.

We are very sure you agree with the first example or statement, "A wife is no wife who says, 'How much can I neglect my husband before he gets angry.'" But we do unreservedly agree with the second statement, "a landowner or a business man is not a Christian who says, 'How far can I save on my workers' salaries or how much can I gain on my tenants' share before they cry out.'" Well! Let us be honest with ourselves at least. How many businessmen now pay a just wage to their workers, fulfill the law? Do not say you cannot afford it. If you cannot afford it. If you cannot afford, why — is it due to lack of management skill? Or would it mean less profit for yourself. How many here do fulfill the law on tenancy — give a just share to tenants — 70-30 in favor of tenants with expenses shared. Is there anyone here who has agreed to the leasehold system — the rental system?

Really, let us be honest for a change. Why do we agree with the first statement — "A wife is no wife who says how much can I neglect my husband before he gets angry." But why do we not unreservedly agree with the second — "No landowner or businessman is a Christian who says, 'How far can I save on my workers' salaries or how much can I gain on my tenants, share before they cry out.'" Perhaps it is because "the only really important thing in the world is ME." So, everything that I can get for myself is alright.

Now just compare that "Me Only" attitude with Christ's words I have just read in this Sunday's gospel, listen — "This is my Commandment: