

## *Iloilo Mason Protest*

Bro. Alfredo Samson of Iloilo City takes exception to the tenor of a radio speech of the parish priest of La Paz, Iloilo, on June 4 wherein the good Father branded all non-Catholics as heretics, unfit to be sponsors of children at baptism because "they cannot teach the child anything useful in life". We do not have the priestly speech in full but it is apparent from portions quoted by Bro. Samson that the cleric has taken up what we thought was already a discarded line of his church.

"Is this the way you size up your countrymen at this time and age?" asked Bro. Samson in a personal letter of protest to the priest for the unkind generalization. "What if some people do not embrace Catholicism, became Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists, or join the fraternal organization of Freemasons? . . . Perhaps these people are better than you think because they are taught to be tolerant, morally upright, to love God and be ready to help any one in distress", Bro. Samson added. Appealing to the clergyman to preach rather "the real Christian truth as taught and preached by Jesus Christ", Bro. Samson stressed the need for a "spiritual revival to strengthen our moral character". Certainly in these days of lowered ethical standards, this is more needed by the people than offensive diatribes against non-Catholics.

We are with Bro. Samson in his vigorous objection to the prelate's revival of the practice of villifying "non-conformists" and "dissenters", especially Masons who are as earnest as any good Catholic in their endeavor to serve their fellowmen and God.

One of the virtues Masons cultivate is Tolerance because it is essential to peace and unity. With it, we shall be able to close ranks and solve together individual as well as national problems. This is not possible when uncharitable and uncalled for statements are hurled by churchmen against non-Catholics whenever the mood comes to them, inviting retaliation and widening cleavages.

In passing, it is noteworthy that such attacks never come from the laity. This is indicative that our Catholic laymen need no lesson in Tolerance. Should a priest be less decorous?

Undoubtedly the good priest wants to win non-Catholics to his fold. Need he be reminded of the elementary fact that offense does not attract nor abuse produce conversions?

American Catholicism seems to be of different brand from what we have here. If memory serves us right, a priest in America was recently censured severely by his superior for preaching that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation. The Iloilo divine apparently has not kept up with the times. He is vetoing Pope John XXIII's friendly approach to all Christian churches to effect a re-union. Late last year at the meeting of World Council of Churches at Delhi, the most distinguished Protestant Anglican and Orthodox church leaders were joined by official Roman Catholic observers. Let us hope that "Churchianity" which has displaced Christianity for centuries is poised for an exit despite obstructions by bigoted Rip Van Winkles in the sacerdotal ranks.