

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREACHERS WHO PREACH TO PRIESTS

In the December 1971 issue of *"The Priest"*, the Rev. R. H. Lesser, himself a diocesan priest, has an article entitled *"Preachers Who Preach to Priests"*. He has some suggestions which should be brought to the attention of all priests, namely:

1. Ideally, retreats should be preached by those who are closest to the retreatants, who know them best, their problems, their difficulties, their capabilities. In other words, the ideal person to preach to diocesan priests is a diocesan priest. . . . So my first plea is to inspire and encourage diocesan priests to preach retreats to their fellow-priests and then to advise and inspire Bishops to give them the opportunity to do so.

2. There is no doubt that much of modern theology is in a ferment, which means it is in a mess. My plea is that if you are not absolutely sure of yourself, please do not spread your confusion to others.

3. Do not be negative. Do not attack what you cannot replace. Do not destroy anything which still has or can have value, even though it may need a certain amount of adaptation, *aggiornamento*, and perhaps purification.

4. Devotion to Our Lady has often been condemned as emotional. Now while it is true that exaggerations should be promptly, though carefully and tactfully corrected, I think that many people, not excluding priests, need an emotional devotion. They have emotions and they have a right and a need to use their emotions in worship. The devotion to Our Lady, based as it is on a solid theological foundation, is a useful and necessary outlet for such emotions. (*Lumen Gentium*, 61) Surely, then, it is wrong to denigrate such a devotion, either by neglect or, still worse, by snide remarks and cynical allusions.

5. Do not be afraid to tell us about prayer. Surely, prayer is the key to life as a Christian. Is not the pendulum swinging too far, from concentration on the internal spirit-

ual life and neglect of others to concentration on others at the cost of spiritual life? In spiritual dimensions, the vertical is not and cannot be opposed to the horizontal; the horizontal can and, as we know, often does, exclude the vertical, and with tragic results.

6. Encourage us to go beyond mere meditation. Teach us something about "prayer of simplicity", "prayer of quiet". We need contemplation as much as anybody. The tragedy is that most diocesan priests have an inferiority complex about this, as about so many other things; they feel it is way above and beyond them. It is up to you, retreat preachers, and I beg you to show us that it is not.

7. May I refer to one particular form of prayer which has been and is being increasingly neglected — the Rosary. The rosary has always been the poor man's prayer and even the poor priest's prayer. Its attackers would call it a meaningless repetition, and they would replace it with the "Jesus prayer," which could also easily become a meaningless repetition. But I wonder how many of those who have discarded the rosary, have taken anything else?

8. Diocesan priests do tend to get narrow and parochial-minded, especially if isolated in a lonely parish. So it would be good to emphasize the community aspect of the Church, specially through the wonderfully rich doctrine of the Mystical Body.

9. In your talk on charity — and every retreat must include one — emphasize the necessity of loving and serving all God's creatures, even and especially the poor, the neglected and our enemies. You'd be surprised how few priests pray for the persecutors of the Church, not just that they stop persecuting, but for their spiritual, mental and physical well-being.

10. One other very important topic which tends to be negatively treated by preachers is that concerned with preaching of the Gospel by word as well as by deed. We are told, though on what authority we do not know, that this is not the time for direct preaching; that now we should bear silent witness and do social work. Some even want a moratorium on conversions. It should hardly be necessary to remind you, Fathers, that the solid theological reasons for preaching remain as valid as ever. Of course, to preach the Gospel does not exclude, it necessarily includes, charitable and development work. But

let not the latter exclude the former. So please try to make us more enthusiastic about preaching the Word.

11. Without giving us a liturgical discourse, can you not make us love Mass? This is important for us and our people. By the same token you will help us immensely in our prayer life if you ease us into the new breviary.

12. This brings us to the Bible. The priest is, par excellence, the interpreter of the Word of God. To do this he must know the Bible fairly well, he must love it, he must want to serve it and the people through it. To do this he must, first of all, read the Bible. Do remind us of our obligation in this connection.

13. The conference, of which I feel that one day should be enough, would be germinal rather than explicit, rational rather than emotional, sowing seeds and inculcating habits rather than stirring feelings, offering strands of thought that can be left to the maturity of the listeners to develop. All this, of course, would not exclude its being interesting and even humorous and witty.

While many of our brother priests in the Philippines read the Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas, few of them may be receiving the American magazine "The Priest". Through these pages, therefore, we pass the ideas to them for their own evaluation and application in their retreats.

ROTARIANS' FOUR-WAY TEST

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ said: "*So always treat others as you would like them to treat you.*" (Matthew 7:12) This is the Golden Rule which should govern man's relationship with other men. This is one of the practical ways of applying the Law of Charity.

The Rotary Club has a beautiful way of teaching and reminding its members of the Law of Charity and the Golden Rule. It is the Four-Way Test. One can see big RC bill boards with this Test along highways so that it can be known and used not only by Rotarians but also by all passers by. Here is the text:

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOOD WILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Due to the rules of the RC, not all can be members of the Club. Only one from each profession can join a club. And it will be the task of that representative of the profession to propagate the ideals of the RC to his co-professionals. In other words, the ideals of the RC are for all actually.

We priests are urged to use a language understandable to the people. Perhaps the people will understand us better if we use the Four-Way Test to explain God's Law of Charity and the Golden Rule. And by so doing, perhaps we, the priests, will also understand the Golden Rule better.

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Let us pray for our Bishops on the occasion of their ordination anniversaries.

Most Rev. Rafael Lim, D.D.
March 17, 1971

Most Rev. Jaime L. Sin, D.D.
March 18, 1967

Most Rev. Bienvenido Tudtud, D.D.
March 21, 1968

Most Rev. Manuel Mascarinas, D.D.
March 25, 1938

Most Rev. Victorino Ligot, D.D.
March 27, 1969