

EDITORIAL

THE VISION OF A NEW SOCIETY

In official teachings and out of the wisdom of experience, the Church views the grave issues of *hatred and violence, loss of discipline and disregard for duly constituted authorities, injustices and godless ideologies* as diametrically opposed to the ways of Christ which are love, religion and justice.

Therefore, to bring about sincere renewal and reform, moral leaders have pointed out the pressing need for *a total conversion of heart* and a radical change of attitudes and ways, which expectedly will entail *sacrifices and privations*. As the saying goes: "a gem cannot be polished without friction nor a man be renewed without trials".

In this light and on the temporal plane, the establishment of a New Society in our beloved country, as envisioned by the imposition of Martial Law, should be hailed and welcomed by every peace-loving citizen. The Sermon on the Mount, the New Commandment of Love and the condemnation of hypocrisy and deceit are all conducive to the formation of the biblical New Man in a renovated society. We are fully in accord, in this spirit and purpose, with His Excellency, President FERDINAND E. MARCOS, in his concern for the preservation of our Republic, for the restoration of peace and order and for the moral renewal and complete development of our people, and we assure him of our humble prayers and cooperation to achieve this noble end.

There is need for *individual as well as national "self-examination"*, as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the

Philippines said in its official statement shortly after the declaration of martial law. We have to go back to the question of how far each one of us has contributed to the social ills that beset our country so that we may, singly and collectively, do our part in building that New Society of *social justice, peace and love*. It is in the acknowledgment of our own failures and shortcomings that the way is paved for humble repentance and lasting reforms.

In this kind of process of rebirth and cleansing for national survival against materialism and godlessness, His Holiness POPE PAUL VI has repeatedly stated that today the Church needs to re-ignite her faith and strengthen the salvific union of her members with Christ. Christian faith, however, bears its full fruit in Christian life because "faith without works is dead".

"*Your faith*", the Holy Father said during his historic visit in Manila, "*must find expression in your life*". As Christians, "you must be the best citizens, the most honest ones and the most concerned for the common good", always bearing in mind, "that the New Command of Love is the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world's transformation".

Indeed, the present state of affairs leading to the vision of a New Society should bring us relentlessly to the all-important question of the very meaning of Christianity that we profess and of the mode of existence in our Christian and democratic society. The challenge lies ever present before us; a New Society is in the making to the extent that we bear witness to our faith as God-fearing and law-abiding citizens, for the happiness and prosperity of our own people.

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Archbishop of Manila

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