

THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

MOST REV. NICOLAS M. MONDEJAR, D.D.

On August 30, 1970 Msgr. Nicolas Mondejar was consecrated bishop by the Papal Nuncio Carmine Rocco at St. Elizabeth Cathedral in Jaro, and was appointed to be the auxiliary bishop to His Eminence Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Cebu, succeeding Bishop Manuel Salvador, now Bishop of Palo, Leyte.

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Emilio Mondejar, the Bishop was born in Cabatuan, Iloilo, on September 15, 1924 and raised in Marasin, Iloilo, where he made his grade and elementary school studies. Having finished his high school at the Seminario de San Vicente Ferrer in Jaro, he went to the U.S.T. Central Seminary where he obtained his Licentiates in Philosophy and Theology. In 1952 His Eminence Rufino J. Cardinal Santos in Manila ordained him to the priesthood.

RENEWAL OF PRIESTLY LIFE

A live-in seminar was held from September 6 to 9 in Tagaytay by the young priests of the Diocese of Imus, together with their bishop, Most Rev. Felix Perez.

Topics discussed were: a) on reviving the vicarial structures of the diocese by meeting regularly once a month; b) on physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of priestly formation: annual medical check-up, 15 days vacation and monthly socials with stress on sports. Also conferences, group discussions and monthly recollection, and a more personal involvement of priests in the liturgy — not merely functional. c) Relationships among the Clergy (between Bishop and his priests, and among the priests themselves) in dialogues, camaraderie, activating the role of the Board of Consultors and the Senate of Priests, introducing "due process", and exchanging Parishes for a few days by mutual arrangements among priests concerned. d) Relationship between priests and the laity, re-evaluating existing parish organizations, their relevance, training of lay-leaders, involving the diocese in Social Action, fostering a more practical and meaningful Tagalog Ritual and adult religious education.

BISHOPS ALONE SPEAK IN NAME OF THE CHURCH

Six bishops in the Dominican Republic have declared that neither priests nor laymen may issue statements in the name of the Church. "Only the bishops are authorized to issue official statements in the name of the Church," they said. "We, the successors of the Apostles, have been chosen by divine mandate to be responsible before God for the direction of our worldly communities."

The bishops said that they were making their declaration, to clear up "confusion" caused by a recent statement issued by a group of priests who attended a meeting to which the bishops were not invited. The statement was against the Dominican Republic for its violation of human rights. They advised priests and laymen to do what they can to alleviate poverty without "vain and dangerous attempts to change the structures of society."

PRIEST SENATES CONSULTATIVE ONLY

A proposal made by the Church in Ceylon for investing priests' senates in this country with policy making powers has been turned down.

In a communication to Cardinal Cooray, OMI, of Colombo, Archbishop Pignedoli, secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, said that the conferring of such powers on priest senates would seem to be contrary to the documents of the Second Vatican, which, he said, "attribute to the priests' senate a consultative function." This communication was sent in reply to a request from Cardinal Cooray for approval of the acts of Ceylon's second provincial council, which recommended decision-making powers for priests' senates.

Among other statutes on which the archbishop expressed reservations was a suggestion concerning "general absolution" on certain major feast days. The archbishop said that this matter at present is under study by the Doctrinal Congregation.

MODIFICATION OF CANONICAL RULES FOR RELIGIOUS

A decree of the Congregation for Religious has cancelled or altered several provisions of the Canon Law Code on the administration of convents and monasteries. The minimum age for superiors general is now 35 instead of 40. The required minimum age for novice masters and others of lesser authority is 30 instead of 35. Ten years of fully professed religious life are no longer required in those appointed to such posts. The obligation to have the past life of each novice checked by the bishop of every diocese where the novice ever lived has been dropped. Each order may decide how many days novices

must spend in meditation and spiritual retreat before first vows; the writing of wills is postponed from time of entering to the time of final vows — thereby eliminating a troublesome legal point — many novices are under 21 when they enter and are regarded as minors. Much greater freedom is given to religious superiors in erecting, changing and eliminating province boundaries and in opening and closing houses. In the past the Holy See had to be consulted before such decisions could be made. The same is held true for starting or closing a religious house. Religious superiors frequently found that consultation in Rome on such matters was time-consuming and apparently pointless.

Religious women are permitted to go out of their convents unaccompanied. This has long been standard practice in many places. The Congregation points, out, however, that superiors have an obligation to remain vigilant in order to "avoid incidents".

LOCAL MASSES AND PRAYERS

New directives have been issued to dioceses and religious communities on drafting special or local Masses and prayers. The participation of both the laity and clergy is strongly recommended.

Father Annibale Bugnini, secretary of the Congregation for Sacred Worship, says that the new instruction deals with the drafting of particular calendars, and of Breviary offices and the Propers of Masses for special saints' days or other occasions which are not common to the universal Church. The instruction calls for the establishment of diocesan, regional or national and religious commissions to study those special cases from the theological, historical and pastoral point of view. The clergy and laity should have some part in the drafting of these special commemorative Masses. In religious orders and communities, members of the community should be consulted. The local calendars and Mass Propers are to be completed by 1976, Father Bugnini said. The time allowed is more than sufficient; experience has shown in similar matters that "either it is done quickly or it is not done at all."

Among the provisions of the new instruction is one that permits the revival of Rogation and Ember Days to rest with national conferences of bishops. Ember Days are four groups of three days each in the Church year, set aside for fast and abstinence and originally connected with the seasons and crops. Rogation Days similarly were set aside for prayers and fasting in relation to the rural life. Father Bugnini points out that the link with the purely agricultural cycle has become "incomprehensible and anachronistic" for much of the world today. It will be the task of the bishops' conferences to try to give new vigor and meaning to these special observances, linking them with needs of the present day.