

THE CRITERION

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Merciful love necessary for human society

John Paul II publishes new encyclical emphasizing mercy, 'not only justice'

VATICAN CITY—In an encyclical on the mercy of God, Pope John Paul II said society will become more human only if people introduce into their relationships "not merely justice, but also that 'merciful love' which constitutes the messianic message of the Gospel."

The pope warned against programs seeking social justice which are not shaped by love and mercy. Programs based only on the idea of justice "in practice suffer from distortions," he said in the encyclical "Dives in Misericordia" (Rich in Mercy) released Dec. 2.

Pope John Paul's second encyclical is a "very personal" document, originally produced by hand in the pope's native Polish, according to the head of Vatican Radio.

Jesuit Father Roberto Tucci, director of the radio station, presented the encyclical at a press conference in the Vatican.

He predicted that the new encyclical would receive praise from literary figures, "as one would expect from someone who proved his creative capabilities in the not-so-distant past in the areas of poetry and drama."

But, Father Tucci added, the pope's style "can be fully appreciated only by those who know his mother tongue well."

L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, published several pictures of the original handwritten document, showing various corrections made by the pope.

Father Tucci said that the second encyclical is "intimately linked" with Pope John Paul's first encyclical, "Redemptor Hominis" (Redeemer of Man), and could be considered a second section of the first encyclical.

"In the total vision of John Paul II man cannot be understood in his fullness and depth if not in Christ, or better if not in God as Jesus has revealed him."

The two sections, as represented by the encyclicals, "are the dignity of man and the mercy of God," Father Tucci added. "Man is seen in his human dignity, God is seen in his mercy, that is in that love which is more powerful than death, sin and every evil."

AT WASHINGTON, the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) hailed the encyclical as a "timely and even urgent" message to "a world torn by conflict and tension."

Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul and Minneapolis, said "lasting peace will come about only when the claims of justice are enriched with the imperatives of mercy flowing from love."

"Among the encyclical's many striking insights," Archbishop Roach said, "is its reminder that justice, as important and indeed essential as it is in human life and in the mission of the church, is not enough. In fact, without love it cannot survive. One who gives his neighbor only what he has a strict right to is not giving him love. God's relationship with us goes far beyond the demands of justice. It is his love that has put salvation within our reach. Just as God's love, expressed in mercy, in a sense goes far beyond the demands of justice, so we are called to go beyond strict justice in our personal and societal relationships and leaven them with deeds of loving mercy."

Archbishop Roach continued: "Some may find this message idealistic, even unrealistic. But, as the holy father observes, it lies at the heart of Christianity. At a time when conflict and tension threaten a renewed arms race with the potential of destroying humankind, when unborn lives are destroyed by the millions, when violence and oppression of many kinds hold sway all over the globe, who cares to say that the Christian alternative—the alternative of mercy and love—is unrealistic? History will judge this 'unrealistic' alternative to be the most realistic of all, precisely because it is the only one conducive to human happiness and, possibly, to human survival."

FORGIVENESS demonstrating mercy is necessary in human relationships, the pope said in the 83-page encyclical.



IN THIS ISSUE . . .

We have made some changes in this issue so we could offer you the complete text of Pope John Paul II's second encyclical "Dives in Misericordia." There is no Parish Profile in the Know Your Faith section, no regular editorials nor is there a "Generally Speaking" column this week.

The 18,000 word papal document begins on page 9.

A reader wonders why Catholics display the corpse of Jesus on crosses. Msgr. Bosler responds on page 18.

A biographical tribute to social activist Dorothy Day, who died Nov. 29, is on page 4.



THE CRITERION

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Synod was precedent setter, advisor says

by Peter Feuerherd

The long-term significance of the recent bishops' synod on the family in Rome was not the discussions of birth control, divorce, or even the status of family life in the 1980's. Instead, it is the precedent-setting process the meetings used which will have the greatest impact on the life of the church.

These are the conclusions of Dr. David Thomas of St. Paul's Parish, Tell City, an advisor to the American bishops at the synod. Dr. Thomas, an associate professor of theology at St. Meinrad Seminary, had no direct role in the synod itself but assisted the bishops in their interventions (speeches addressed to the synod).

Those "interventions" included the now-famous speech of Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco that asked the church to find better ways to pastorally implement the teachings of *Humanae Vitae*. But artificial contraception, contrary to media reports, was not the synod's central focus, according to Thomas.

The active participation of lay advisors like himself, the pastoral approach emphasized by the bishops, and the extraordinary amount of input from North America and Africa, Thomas saw as unusual.

"Everything said at the synod had a pastoral tone to it," asserted Thomas. The synod was not a law-making body, he emphasized, but it was a consultative group to advise the pope.

"EVERYTHING was discussed from a sensitive, caring attitude. No one was interested in forcing a doctrine down people's throats."

"For the first time in hundreds of years,

lay people were allowed a role in discussing church issues. That signaled a change that may turn out to be a major breakthrough," said the theology professor.

The African bishops brought forth the problems of implementing church teachings on marriage in cultures that have different customs and rituals than western societies. This "brought a new awareness of the international meaning of a church that affects people from different cultures. They played an important role in setting the tone."

And the American bishops exercised an influence in an international church council that they never have exerted before, according to Thomas. That influence was felt when Archbishop Quinn brought up the sensitive issue of birth control.

The purpose of Archbishop's Quinn's intervention was not to challenge *Humanae Vitae* but to suggest "that the issue be reopened and developed," said Dr. Thomas.

IN HIS VIEW, the Archbishop was concerned with the "bind" confronting many priests who have to articulate the church's teachings on contraception in complex pastoral situations.

"The major question remains that with our teaching on responsible parenthood there has to be more said," explained Thomas.

"By and large, the majority of bishops agreed with Archbishop Quinn," Thomas asserted. Yet the discussion on the issue took an interesting twist.

Bishops from Third World countries argued that contraception and control of family size is not a major concern in their countries. Instead, they chastized developed countries for aid programs that tie

abortion and contraception programs to assistance efforts.

Thomas said that "the third world bishops felt an unwarranted interference" from such aid. Those discussions "took away the urgency that bishops from the U.S., Canada and Britain had" about the issue.

The significance of the synod discussion on birth control is that the church will have to develop better ways to communicate its doctrines to Catholics, according to the St. Meinrad professor.

"We will now be spending a lot more time on dealing with issues of forming conscience. It's a kind of maturation process of treating adults like adults instead of children."

MEDIA REPORTS on the synod were superficial and distorted, said Thomas. Many reporters never realized that the synod was only an advisory body. Most were obsessed with the birth control issue, he observed.

"The emphasis was on the issue raised by Archbishop Quinn. They were asking the same questions at the last press conference that they asked at the first."

The press' searching for controversy was like "squeezing blood from a turnip—they kept working over the topic of contraception . . . There wasn't an awful lot of controversy—what there was, was very subtle."

Will there be any immediate impact on the church? Probably not, said the synod advisor, who cited the recommendations of the 1974 Synod on Evangelization as only now beginning to take shape in parishes.

"It takes awhile for these things to penetrate into church life."

Yet, the theologian says, the significance is there.

"This is the first international meeting of the church where the hierarchy of the United States took a leadership role . . . The long-term significance," Thomas concluded, "is that we not only have money to contribute to the church, we also have pastoral planning and ideas."

Advent penance services slated

Advent penance services in preparation for Christmas have been announced in several locations of the archdiocese.

In Indianapolis, services will begin at 7:30 p.m. in each of the following parishes:

Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Nativity; Thursday, Dec. 11, Our Lady of Lourdes; Tuesday, Dec. 16, Immaculate Heart, St. Pius X, and St. Lawrence; Wednesday, Dec. 17, at Christ the King, Holy Spirit, and St. Michael in Greenfield; Friday, Dec. 19, Little Flower; Sunday, Dec. 21,

at St. Andrew and St. Simon; and on Monday, Dec. 22, at St. Matthew and St. Philip Neri.

Outside of the Indianapolis area, penance services are announced for 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19, at St. Martin, in Yorkville; on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 2 p.m. at St. John, Osgood; at 4 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhouse; and at 7:30 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon. On Dec. 22 at 7:30 p.m. a penance service will be held at St. Maurice, Decatur County.

Parishioners of parishes involved are advised to go when and where convenient.

Scouting awards presented

Religious awards were presented to young people and adult leaders from the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Catholic Daughters of America, Junior Daughters of St. Peter Claver and Campfire Girls at a special liturgy celebrated by Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral on Nov. 23.

The St. George medal, for outstanding adult volunteer service, was given to Father Patrick Harpenau, pastor of St.

Mary's and St. Michael's parishes in Madison. The Bronze Pelican award, given to adults who have worked with Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts for a minimum of five years, went to Leroy J. Mast of St. Lawrence parish, Indianapolis; Chester Price, St. Simon's, Indianapolis; Rita Ann Kriech, St. Philip's, Indianapolis; Kathleen McCoy, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis; Jerry O'Neill and Frank Holzer of St. Michael, Greenfield; and Mrs. Carolyn Smith, St. Michael, Madison.

Awards for young people involved in religious service to the community included the Ad Altare Dei award, given to Robert Thomas Lowe, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis; Sean Michael Walsh, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis; Chris Hill, Jason Miles, Gary Stephan of St. Mary, Madison; John Dattilo, Michael Moore, Kevin Yancey of St. Patrick, Madison; Alan Charles Berry and Kyle Daugherty of Holy Spirit, Indianapolis.

Winners of the Pope Pius XII emblem included Michael Beason, Richard Gilyeat and Leo Rafail of St. Lawrence, Indianapolis.

Winners of the Marian award for girls included Theresa Hays of St. Agnes, Nashville; Katherine Elias, Clare Myers, Peggy Ruzicka, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis; Brenda Kramer, Kathleen Mennel, St. Mark, Indianapolis; Rose Ajami, Angela Clements, Mary Beth McCoy, Maureen Roney, Melissa Spellman, and Mimi Wilhelm of Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis.



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Archbishop O'Meara urges support for earthquake relief

A special collection for relief of survivors of the earthquake in Southern Italy has been set for next weekend, Dec. 13 and 14, in all parishes of the archdiocese.

Calling the need "immediate and desperate," Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara urged "the generosity of parishioners," and asked that all offerings be sent to the chancery. They will be used by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to provide shelter, medicine, food and clothing to victims of the Nov. 23 earthquake.

Archbishop O'Meara's action followed a request by Archbishop John R. Roach, president of the U.S. bishops' conferences, to have special collections in all 171 dioceses of the United States in early December. Archbishop Roach reported that CRS, overseas aid agency of U.S. Catholics, had already allocated \$50,000 to launch relief efforts, but he added that "more will be needed."

Archbishop Roach said "funds will be used by CRS both to provide immediate relief and to help thousands rebuild their lives."

He also said CRS representatives were "on the scene" within hours after the tragedy struck.

A WEEK AFTER the quake struck, the rescue headquarters in Naples, Italy, said 2,915 dead bodies had been recovered, another 1,547 people were missing and presumed dead, 7,069 people were injured, and about 250,000 were homeless. Pope John Paul II visited the devastated area Nov. 25 to comfort the injured and thank rescue workers.

"I was deeply moved, spiritually struck, by all that I was able to see with my own eyes," said Pope John Paul about his six-hour visit. Speaking to about 7,000 people at his general audience in Rome, the pope made a poignant, off-the-cuff appeal for



DEVASTATED VILLAGE—A lone survivor walks amid the rubble in a street of Balvano, Italy, after an earthquake destroyed the town and others in the region. Balvano was one of the towns visited by Pope John Paul. (NC photo)

world solidarity to aid the thousands affected by the quake.

"I was able to see not only the destroyed homes, but also the people, old and young, recovering in the hospitals," he said. "It was a partial vision, but significant."

Pope John Paul visited Naples, Potenza, Balvano and Avellino, stopping primarily at hospitals.

"I am not here out of curiosity, but I am here as your brother and pastor out of

human solidarity, compassion and love," the pope said in Balvano, where the collapse of a church during evening Mass caused about 60 deaths.

"**SOMEONE TOLD** me that these people can't pray any more," he added. "You pray with your suffering; you pray now more than at any other time because you bring to the Lord your sorrow."

Pope John Paul met people expressing bitterness at the events. In Balvano a

woman said the Parish of Santa Maria Assunta is "under accusation" because "they say that if there hadn't been that service in the church . . ."

The pope interrupted the woman, saying, "It's no one's fault. No, no, that doesn't have anything to do with it."

In Potenza, the pope sent local Vatican officials out of the recovery room of San Carlo Nuovo Hospital so he could speak privately with some of the victims.

Later in the hospital foyer he told local residents to "rebuild with humanity that which natural calamity has destroyed." He interrupted his impromptu speech at one point, telling the crowd, "Excuse me, I can't manage to speak because the emotion is stronger than words."

Because of time restrictions, the pope skipped a scheduled stop in Castelgrande, where 69-year-old Bishop Michele Federici of Veroli-Frosinone died under the debris of his family home.

CATHOLIC agencies and governments around the world provided tents, food, medicine and money to aid victims of the devastating earthquake. In Italy, the assistance efforts were led by Italian Caritas, which established centers throughout the country for the collection of needed supplies.

The Vatican's Society for the Propagation of the Faith contributed 50 million lire (about \$60,000) to the Caritas fund, and Catholic aid agencies in various countries sent initial contributions ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000.

In Geneva, Switzerland, the league representing the Red Cross in 126 countries sent 500,000 Swiss Francs (about \$300,000) from its emergency fund.

In a telegram to Italian President Alessandro Pertini, U.S. President Jimmy Carter said: "We share your deep sorrow. Our embassy in Rome is ready to help in any way possible."

Carter sent an initial contribution of \$1.6 million and gave the Italian government 1,000 tents from U.S. military installations in Europe. He also made available six military helicopters for use in the rescue work.

Church the target of terror in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador—A rightwing terrorist group claimed responsibility for the killing of six leaders of an anti-government front and the subsequent bombing of the Catholic cathedral where funeral services for the slain people were scheduled.

Three of the bodies were in the cathedral when a powerful bomb exploded near the main entrance the evening of Nov. 28, injuring many of the mourners.

A few days earlier, one of seven refugee camps sponsored by the Archdiocese of San Salvador was raided by 40 armed soldiers who destroyed the camp's clinic after beating six refugees and the man in charge of food supplies, according to church sources.

About 600 refugees—mostly women, children and elderly people—were at the camp at the time of the raid. This was the fourth time security forces had shot at archdiocesan refugee centers, church spokesmen said.

The same soldiers, supported by armored trucks, raided the studios of the Catholic radio station YSAX and the printing facilities of the archdiocesan weekly, *Orientacion*. One of the station's employees was "brutally beaten," church sources added.

THE CHAIN OF events leading directly to the slayings and the bombing began Nov. 27. Sources at Socorro Juridico, the archdiocesan legal aid office said that on that day, about 200 security agents surrounded the Jesuit-run high school, Externado San Jose, while 25 armed men in civilian clothes raided the school and took away 30 persons attending a meeting of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, which coordinates the activities of several anti-government political organizations.

On Nov. 28, residents of eastern San Salvador found the body of the front president Enrique Alvarez, among those who were abducted. They said he had been shot to death and his left arm cut off. Hours later, four more bodies were found.

Authorities of the Archdiocese of San Salvador said they "vigorously condemn this criminal and sacrilegious attack" and asked Christians abroad for a show of solidarity. Church officials said Nov. 29 that the ruling civilian-military junta shared responsibility for the deaths.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT is backing the Salvadoran government on grounds that it is the only way to fight terrorism from the left and from the right. It is giving economic and military aid, including training by U.S. officers of Salvadorans in counterinsurgency methods.

Thousands of families, mainly peasants, have been displaced from their homes and lands by the political strife of the last four years in this Central American nation of 6.1 million. Close to 8,000 persons have lost their lives so far this year.

Socorro Juridico keeps a record of violations of human rights. According to its October and November records, there were 180 instances of violence against the church, of which 153 were attributed to security forces.

Archbishop O'Meara's Schedule

Week of December 7

SUNDAY, December 7—Parish visitation, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Indianapolis; Masses at 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

MONDAY, December 8—Mass at 11:15 a.m. for the Marian College community at the college.

TUESDAY, December 9—Will celebrate the Mass marking the first anniversary of the death of Archbishop Sheen to be offered in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City.

THURSDAY, December 11—Parish visitation, St. Mary's Village Parish, St. Mary of the Woods.

A remembrance

by Thomas Ewald

Dorothy Day, a founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and an advocate of Christian pacifism, died Nov. 29 of congestive heart failure at Maryhouse, a Catholic settlement house on New York City's Lower East Side. She was 83 years old.

For more than half a century, Miss Day's name was linked with voluntary poverty, long bread lines, protest marches, hospitality houses, soup kitchens and the Catholic Worker Movement, which now has houses of hospitality in 29 U.S. cities and several communal farms in various parts of the country.

Miss Day, who seemed to have an endless amount of enthusiasm, energy and ideas, founded both the movement and a monthly tabloid newspaper called *The Catholic Worker* in 1933 with Peter Maurin, a wandering scholar and agitator of French peasant background.

Miss Day was born in Brooklyn on Nov. 8, 1897, the third of five children of John I. Day, a sports writer, and his wife Gloria.

The family lived in California and Chicago, where Miss Day was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church, before returning to New York.

Miss Day's childhood and adolescence were quiet and she spent much time reading a range of authors including Jack London, Upton Sinclair, St. Augustine and Prince Peter Kropotkin, the nonviolent Russian anarchist.

By the time she was 18, she had finished two years on a scholarship at the University of Illinois. There, she recalled in her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, "I felt my faith had nothing in common with that of Christians around me... so I hardened my heart." When a professor she admired suggested that religion was prop for the weak, she gave up religion.

Looking for a community which shared her concerns and values, she joined the Socialist Party.

When the family moved back to New York in 1916, Miss Day quit college and became a reporter and columnist with *The Call*, a Socialist daily. "I wanted to go on picket lines, to go to jail, to write, to influence others and so to make my mark on the world," she later recalled, adding, "How much ambition and how much self-seeking there was in all this!"

For a year, Miss Day worked for \$5 a week and wrote a column describing the squalor of slum living. She joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a free-wheeling labor movement. She worked briefly for the Anti-Conscription League

and then joined the staff of *The Masses*, a revolutionary magazine.

About this time she also met Mike Gold, a writer and later a leading Communist, who was her lover for several years.

When *The Masses* was suppressed for opposing World War I, Miss Day went with some suffragette friends to Washington to picket the White House. They were arrested and, refusing bail, spent 30 days in jail. That was the first of many jailings during a lifetime of protest.

Through Gold, Miss Day was introduced to the playwright Eugene O'Neill and a literary circle including Ben Hecht, Tamar Crane and Allen Tate, whose informal headquarters was a Greenwich Village saloon, the Hell Hole.

Involved in the 1920s in a common-law marriage to Forster Batterham, an atheist, she became pregnant and decided to have the child baptized a Catholic. The child, a daughter, Tamar Teresa, was born in 1927. The decision to have the child baptized led to Miss Day's decision to enter the Catholic Church and leave Batterham. "To become a Catholic," she later said, "meant for me to give up a mate with whom it was the simple question of whether I chose God or the man."

By that time, Miss Day, 30, had already published a play and a novel, and movie rights from the novel earned her \$5,000.

The fateful meeting between Miss Day and Maurin took place on Dec. 10, 1932. He knocked on the door of the vacant barber shop where she was living, entered and began talking for hours.

Maurin had an idea for what he called a "green revolution," which would unite scholars and workers in houses of hospitality for the needy, in farming communes and in round-table discussions.

By the time they met, the Depression had taken a grim hold on the country and one of every five Americans was out of work. Maurin emphasized people doing things for themselves rather than having government programs care for their needs.

They began publishing *The Catholic Worker*, which sells today, as it did in 1933, for a penny a copy and now has a monthly circulation of about 70,000. The purpose of the new paper was to "popularize and make known the encyclicals of the popes in regard to social justice." The paper also addressed such questions as poverty, labor relations, racism and war.

The response of the *Catholic Worker* staff to the unemployed who began seeking their help was their first "house of hospitality," St. Joseph's House, on New York's Lower East Side. Maurin told Miss Day: "We need houses of hospitality to give the rich an opportunity to serve the poor."

Miss Day later told those who came to see her that, while she gladly lived among the poor and ate off the soup line, that lifestyle was anything but a picnic. She once said: "I'm in favor

of becoming a vegetarian, but only if the vegetables are cooked right."

By 1937, there were 40 hospitality houses helping the poor in cities around the country.

With the coming of World War II and the draft, the number of houses of hospitality declined. After the war, in the period of so-called "full employment," many men released from military service found jobs and others went to college on the GI Bill. In addition, social legislation, such as unemployment insurance, aid for dependent children and Social Security, had come into effect.

"Many felt that these would ameliorate on a mass scale the same ills and abuses which houses of hospitality had been set up to relieve in their way," Miss Day wrote. "Nevertheless, the latter have remained unique in their spirit of mutual aid and community."

"As we face a new threat of unemployment under the shadow of automation, as we face daily threats of world destruction, such centers of mutual help in a spirit of brotherhood—under whatever name, or in whatever guise—were never more desperately needed than they are right now."

In the 1950s, members of the Catholic Worker Movement refused to vote, pay federal taxes, accept tax-exempt status or participate in air-raid drills.

Expressing her bewilderment with religion, Miss Day said: "What confusion we have gotten into when Christian prelates sprinkle holy water on scrap metal, to be used for obliteration bombing, and name bombers for the Holy Innocents, for Our Lady of Mercy; who bless a man about to press a button which releases death on 50,000 human beings, including little babies, the sick, the aged, the innocent as well as the guilty."

In the 1960s, members of the Catholic Worker Movement journeyed South as civil rights workers and joined Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan and his brother Philip and others in non-violent opposition to the Vietnam War.

Miss Day's last stay in jail was in 1973 after a demonstration in Fresno, Calif., on behalf of farm workers led by Cesar Chavez. The Fresno jail, she said, was "a paradise compared to others" in which she had been over the years.

In 1972, the University of Notre Dame awarded her its highest honor, the Latetare Medal, for "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable virtually all of her life."

Her pace slowed after a minor heart attack in September 1975 but she still rose at 6 a.m. each day to pray and read the Bible for two hours before beginning work.

Miss Day is survived by her daughter, nine grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and a brother.

A private funeral Mass was held Dec. 2 in the Church of the Nativity in New York City.

Washington Newsletter

by Jim Lackey

WASHINGTON—With all eyes focused on the elections in early November, one story which failed to get much attention was publication of new federal guidelines describing what steps employers must take to accommodate the religious practices of their employees.

The guidelines, issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and based on federal anti-discrimination laws, marked the latest stage in a lengthy debate over whose rights should prevail: the worker's right to practice his religion freely or the employer's right not to burden his business efforts in accommodating the religious needs of current or potential employees.

The guidelines for the most part are aimed at problems which arise when the need for weekend work clashes with some workers' desire to abstain from work on the Sabbath. But the guidelines also apply to dress or grooming habits required by religious practices and to religious practices which do not permit payment of dues to labor organizations.

Catholic teaching holds that Catholics are not to work on Sundays and holy days of obligation unless there are mitigating circumstances. The issue, though, has not made headlines in the Catholic commun-

ity, but has been raised by smaller denominations which strictly observe rules forbidding work on the Sabbath.

PROBABLY THE most well-known religious accommodation case in recent years was decided in 1977 when the Supreme Court ruled in *Trans World Airlines vs. Hardison* that TWA had made reasonable efforts to accommodate the religious practices of employee Larry G. Hardison and did not violate Hardison's civil rights. Hardison, who joined the Worldwide Church of God during his employment with TWA, was dismissed from the airline's maintenance and overhaul base in Kansas City when he refused to report for work on Saturdays, his Sabbath.

While the court sided with TWA rather than with Hardison and his religious practices, the ruling set no broad guidelines and was based primarily on the facts in the particular case.

But as the EEOC points out, the decision created confusion, leaving employers, employees and labor organizations uncertain about the extent to which federal law forbidding discrimination based on religion requires religious accommodation in the workplace. After national hearings in 1978, the commission decided it was time to issue new guidelines.

According to the EEOC, "failure to reasonably accommodate the religious practices of an employee or prospective employee is an unlawful employment practice... unless (employers) can

demonstrate that accommodation would result in undue hardship."

From that general principle, the guidelines branch into several sections, including attempts at defining "undue hardship" and illegal "selection practices" in which employers would decline to hire someone solely on the basis that a religious accommodation for the potential employee would be necessary.

TO CLAIM AN undue hardship, according to the guidelines, the employer must show an "identifiable cost" in relation to the size of the business. While regular payment of "premium wages" would constitute undue hardship, the commission says, occasional or infrequent payment of such wages—such as periodic overtime pay for a worker filling in for an absent employee—would not constitute such hardship.

The guidelines note that an employer, in considering the case of an employee who has asked for a religious accommodation, cannot assume that an undue hardship might result because many other employees might seek the same accommodation.

As for selection practices, the guidelines note that employers have an obligation to allow potential employees to participate in tests and other selection procedures at times which would not conflict with their religious practices.

And the guidelines prohibit employers in most cases from asking applicants about their availability for work since such inquiries usually have an "exclusion-

ary effect" on employees who need a religious accommodation.

They also state that a belief is religious not because a religious group professes that belief, but because the individual sincerely holds the belief with the strength of traditional religious views.

Overall, the guidelines are likely to please religious groups more than the business community. The EEOC said that when the guidelines were first proposed in 1979, most of the positive comments came from religious groups which observe a Saturday Sabbath while most of the criticism came from employers.



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Advent: Third Sunday, Dec. 14

Could St. Matthew have used a better editor?



**But a shoot
shall sprout
from the stump
of Jesse,
and from
his roots a
bud shall
blossom.**

Isaiah 11:1

by David Gibson

"Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah..."

That's how the Gospel of Matthew begins: with a 350 word "genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." It is quite a beginning, not the sort of thing you find today on the first page of a best seller; not the sort of thing you hear on TV.

"Obed was the father of Jesse; and Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon." And so it goes until the writer reaches the point where he proclaims: "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ."

By this time, 42 names divided neatly into three groups of 14 names each have been listed.

The other three Gospels begin quite differently. Mark has a fine introduction: "This is the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God," he explains. There! You know exactly what

he is going to tell about in the rest of the book. What's more, he follows immediately with a colorful, attention-getting account of St. John the Baptist, who lived on locusts and wild honey and wore a camel-skin garment.

THE GOSPEL of Luke begins with the familiar, moving story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, a couple blessed with their first child—John the Baptist—in their advanced years. The Angel Gabriel visited Zechariah to tell of the coming birth and the man was greatly frightened. An unforgettable story!

John's Gospel has a compelling introduction. "In the beginning was the Word," he writes; "the Word was with God and the Word was God... Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him." Obviously, someone of great importance is under discussion.

But Matthew's genealogy?

Today, in a writing class, we'd be told to put the important material at the beginning of a story—to get quickly to the point and to work hard at capturing the reader's attention. Can we assume that what the Gospel of Matthew needed was a good editor to rearrange the material and make it more interesting? Or perhaps the writer should have attended a writing class?

LONG BEFORE the time of Jesus, Isaiah spoke of one who would spring from the line of Jesse. In the Old Testament book of Isaiah we learn that the spirit of God would be with the one to come. In that time, the wolf would lie down with the lamb. "The root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations," Isaiah said.

Now the son of Jesse was David, the beloved king. And David's family tree led—after the listing of 26 more generations in Matthew—to Jesus.

Probably most early Christians and most Jews at the time of Jesus knew the story of Jesse and the line of David. They awaited the wonderful times associated with the one to come.

Telling of David's lineage with Matthew's detail might not be the sort of thing the early Christians did regularly. But when Matthew did it, they understood why.

Telling the stories of one's ancestors is the sort of storytelling done in families where people share a common desire to understand their own history and the reasons why their family is the sort of a family it is.

The family tree for the ancient Christian family found in the Gospel of Matthew recalls the history of the people—saying more than may meet the eye about what kind of a family the people were meant to be: the family of the Messiah.

Correction

Last week's feature story on Franciscan Sister Francesca Thompson mistakenly stated that St. Mary's Academy was the only private high school in Indianapolis that accepted blacks in the 1940's. That was not the case—there were other Catholic high schools in the city that admitted blacks at the time. We regret the error.

Advent is a good time for storytelling

1. The Gospel of Matthew's family tree for the early Christian family may provide a lead for modern Christian families during the season of Advent.

Is it possible to look back in one's own family tree for stories that help illustrate how the family developed some of its own Christmas customs, what the children's grandparents did in the time before Christmas, what Aunt Hilda believed was the best sort of gift to give, what the hopes of one's great grandparents were in this country, how a family member served the poor and took care of the sick?

2. Advent is a good time for storytelling or for families to read aloud together. And, it may be just about the best time of the year for families and friends to reflect together on their values and faith.

Despite the fact that the pre-Christmas season often seems like the most secular and commercial time of the year, it is also the time just before what most Christians now seem to regard as the main religious day of the year.

Advent offers a special opportunity for family members and friends to communicate about the meaning of the life of Jesus and why he came into the world. Unfortunately, it is often a lost opportunity.

THE TROUBLE is, people are busy preparing for Christmas day, and do not feel they have time to get together as a family or with neighbors for quiet, reflective times during Advent. What's to be done in a season that so easily takes its toll?

It may be easier than people think to arrange time for a special family night once each week during Advent or for a special time late Sunday afternoon when families and friends think together about the meaning of this entire season.

Try reading aloud, then discussing, a story that all age groups will enjoy. Check out a book of seasonal stories from the library. Some Christmas books contain stories appropriate for Advent as well. A

suggestion: *The Tasha Tudor Christmas Book: Take Joy*. (Edited by Tasha Tudor, Collins Publishers)

A book that contains materials for family prayer during Advent is, "*A Book of Family Prayer*," by Gabe Huck (Seabury Press).

Again, plan to sit down together to think about what will make this a special Christmas, why Jesus came among people as a man, what kind of gift is most valuable, or how family members can make a gift by making more time for each other.

Have a family member prepare a story

to tell—a Scripture story, a family story, a memory.

OR HAVE YOUR family begin its own family tree, recalling the reasons why the Gospel of Matthew begins with a family tree for the whole Christian family.

These kinds of ideas don't have to be carried out in a terribly formal way. Perhaps a family can plan to spend time together right after a pre-Christmas baking spree or even around dinnertime.

It takes time to make Advent count. But making Advent count makes Christmas different. It makes Christmas better.

'Tis the season to be charitable; but know who you're giving to!

Christmas is the season of giving—to loved ones, friends and neighbors—and, for millions of Americans, to many of the religious charities who appeal for financial help on behalf of the poor and needy.

It's not surprising then, when the mails bring many such appeals into our home, that people who want to give can become confused or uncertain about responding to such appeals.

The National Catholic Development Conference (NCDC), an association of religious fund-raising institutions and organizations, offers this advice on how to be a better-informed giver:

► Read the appeal letter carefully. In addition to containing the full name and address of the organization requesting aid, it should be in good taste and present that organization's needs factually, describing fully for what purpose or programs the charitable contribution will be used.

► Premiums or gifts, such as cards, medals or similar tokens received with the appeal, do not obligate you, and if you decide not to give, you don't have to return the gift.

► If you have any questions at all about

the organization—or, if you want your gift applied to a specific program—don't hesitate to write directly to the charity before you make your gift. Don't give until you are satisfied with the answers.

► If the charity's finances are a special concern for you, remember that Catholic organizations have a clear, moral obligation to be fully accountable to you, the donor. Under religious fund raising guidelines issued by the U.S. Catholic bishops, the charity will provide you, on request, with a statement of financial accountability.

► If you give, expect a prompt thank-you or acknowledgement.

► If you don't want to receive any more appeals from a particular charity, write to that charity and ask that your name be taken off its mailing list.

NCDC, which is committed to encouraging public confidence in the integrity of religious fund raising will send you a free copy of its informative brochure, "Giving Is an Act of Faith: What Every Donor to Religious Charities Should Know about Giving." Write to NCDC at 119 North Park Ave., Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11570

To the Editor . . .

Fr. Courtney's letter missed the point

Father Courtney's letter (Nov. 21, *Criterion*) totally misses the point in the refusal of some pastors to permit the distribution on church property of flyers endorsing particular candidates. I find it fascinating that he singled out two pastors who had been involved in fighting racial discrimination at the Riviera Club, especially in view of the fact that a number of other pastors also refused permission to distribute the flyers.

I did refuse permission to distribute the flyers for very legitimate reasons. I am strongly opposed to abortion. I am concerned with the right to life and the dignity and quality of human life from conception to death. The reason for refusing permission was precisely because the flyers endorsed particular candidates. The administrative board of the United States Catholic Conference (our bishops) in "Political Responsibility: Choices for the 1980's" said: "We specifically do not seek the formation of a religious voting block; nor do we wish to instruct persons

on how they should vote by endorsing candidates . . . We hope that voters will examine the positions of candidates on the full range of issues as well as the person's integrity, philosophy and performance."

Father Courtney's statement about the right to swim boggles my mind, as I could care less about the right to swim (I don't even swim!). The issue in the dispute was exclusion of people solely on the basis of race, namely racism, a serious moral issue and a right-to-life issue. Such statements attacking the credibility of those fighting for racial justice allow an "out" for people with racist attitudes. That saddens me. But I accept and expect such challenges as the price for speaking out on justice issues. As my daddy used to say: "If you can't take the heat, stay out of the kitchen." I thank many of my brother priests who have expressed support in our efforts for racial justice.

Fr. Martin A. Peter
Pastor, St. Thomas Aquinas
Indianapolis

Inaccurate, cynical, unprofessional

Father Courtney's letter (Nov. 21) is, in my opinion, inaccurate, cynical, theological questionable and unprofessional.

Inaccurate: The people calling to distribute Right to Life voting recommendations outside our church were not "rebuffed in no uncertain terms." They were politely denied permission in agreement with U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops which strongly discouraged one-issue voting and candidate endorsements.

Cynical: Doing the slow, hard and often frustrating work of love in ministry easily leads to cynicism which does not build up the Body of Christ but destroys it.

A case of poor logic from a scholar

An open letter to Father Paul Courtney:

We have never met, but you have been consistently described as erudite, witty, and scholarly. As a result, your recent letter to the editor came as a surprise . . . or, to borrow a phrase, "it boggles the mind." A differing perspective was expected; poor logic from a classical scholar wasn't expected.

The message in your letter appears to rest on a major premise which doesn't hold water. If my days in logic class hold me in good stead, then an unprovable major premise is the classic mortal sin of logicians. In the light of recent statements of your own Archbishop about the dangers of single issue voting, then it appears to me that you cannot state . . . as you attempted to do, "All those who rebuff the distribution of flyers with Right to Life voting recommendations think the right to life isn't important."

Then it seems you have compounded the problem by an appeal *ad hominem*, which questions the motives of two northside pastors. Really, Father! Maybe your image has been besmeared.

Michael J. Kenney

Indianapolis

Right-to-lifer questions context

As someone in Right to Life, your own parish's pro-life group, and a member of one of the northside parishes Father Paul Courtney referred to, I question the context of his letter.

When a pastor is involved in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood association, the Bread for the World hunger walk, campus ministry at Butler University, serves as president of the Marion County Mental Health Association, and—yes—even the Riviera Club issue, I don't think this qualifies as "selective moral outrage" or "today's liberalism."

I wonder if perhaps the wrong question has been raised and if the real issue

shouldn't be the one-issue voting practice Archbishop O'Meara prior to election time warned against the one-issue voting concept. It appears as though the real point has been missed altogether.

Gloria Connors

Indianapolis

'Appalled' by letter

I was appalled to read Father Courtney's letter in last week's *Criterion*, which gave a totally erroneous and unfair view of the priests who have been so courageously leading the struggle against racism in our community. It is quite clear that his unseemly sarcasm was aimed at the priests at St. Thomas Aquinas, and also apparent he made no effort to discover the facts before taking pen in hand.

Last spring, Father Peter expressed his strong opposition to abortion and support of the St. Thomas Right to Life group. At the same time, he voiced concern about "single issue voting."

Single issue politics is a form of political blackmail that, to my mind, encourages cynicism and corruption among politicians. It teaches politicians not to critically examine issues and formulate solutions based on morality, but rather to count votes and yield to pressure groups without regard for what is best for our country. Right to Life, and every other group that espouses single issue politics, claims their cause is an exception, that for them the end does justify the means. It is this way of thinking that Father Peter and Father Raimondi have rejected in favor of a more difficult, and apparently more easily misunderstood, position.

Sharon A. Mason

Indianapolis

Sccecina High School



OPEN HOUSE

Sunday,
December 7
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Tours — Reception

Band Program
1:15 & 2:30 p.m.

Principal & Staff
Presentations
1:45 & 3:00 p.m.

Indianapolis

Fr. Cosmas L. Raimondi
Associate Pastor
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish

KNOW YOUR FAITH



DIVERSITY—Numerous nationalities, differences in age and financial status, educational background, singles, marrieds and divorced all add up to a great deal of diversity in parishes.

With such a mixture, it is not just amazing that parishes are able to achieve a degree of unity but that they can achieve so much unity. (NC photo)

What do the Gospels say on families?

by Don Kurre

Why is it that you very rarely see the gospels used in discussions about family life? Could it be that the gospels do not speak positively about family? Following a discussion I had with a friend the other day, I decided to look into this question.

In sharing the story of Jesus, the gospel writers do not speak directly about family. The references to family life found in the gospels focus on the relationships between family members. Family relationships are used in two basic ways.



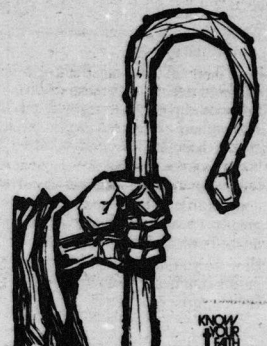
First, family relationships are used to illustrate the way in which God the Father relates to us. To show how the Father responds to our prayers, Luke shares with us an interchange between Jesus and his disciples. In the dialogue Jesus asks, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish will instead of a fish give him a serpent; how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Lk 11:11-13)

The story of the prodigal son is another prime example of this use of family relationships.

Because the evangelists use the relationships between family members to show the loving nature of the relationship between God and His children, we might assume that family is highly revered in the gospels, but this does not seem to be the case.

Secondly, family relationships are examined as part of the gospel's explanation of discipleship.

LUKE QUOTES Jesus in his gospel (See THE GOSPELS on page 17)



The challenge of parish diversity and unity

by Fr. Philip J. Murnion

The people of a parish are not all alike.

That's a safe enough statement—not likely to generate much debate. The fact is, during the past two decades, Catholics have grown increasingly aware of the differences among themselves.

Ask any pastor about this. You will find he is accustomed to hearing from the many Catholics who think the church has not yet changed enough. He also hears from the many who think it has changed too much.

People do not agree across the board about the way the church should live its life in this world.

The best structure and leadership for the church, the spirit in which to celebrate the Mass and the answers to moral questions—these are but a few areas where the people of a parish have often found themselves in disagreement.

Of course, people differ in other important ways. Groups within a parish often differ in ethnic background, in the amount of formal education they have pursued, in age, in economic means and in other ways too.

The amazing thing about parishes is not that many differences within them. It is that they actually achieve so much unity!

A lot of people feel that the differences among Catholics are part of their richness. But differences also contribute to the tensions in parish life. One group easily con-

cludes that another group—"they," whoever "they" may be—is being favored in the parish's preaching or music, in educational programs and other activities.

How can we account for both diversity and unity in parishes?

THIS IS A challenge. Basic to meeting it is an attitude of respect for the "others" and a desire for unity—a desire based on the conviction that we really are all one in the Lord. That sort of attitude is essential.

But what comes first, the attitudes or the behavior that will foster unity? Many people today feel that the way to foster new attitudes is by first encouraging some new behavior.

The activities most likely to foster unity are, of course, those that underscore things people have in common. People share the Mass or they share opportunities to perform service for one another. In situations where economic or even ethnic differences are profound, people can share the experience of tackling together some problem that touches all.

Ten years ago, three parishes helped form a community organization in a changing part of Cleveland. The organization's goal: maintaining a racially integrated neighborhood and promoting the quality of life in the neighborhood. Middle class and poor, blacks and whites, were equally committed to this goal.

In another parish where there were many differences among the people, the three activities that were especially effective in bringing people together were: the annual Good Friday procession in the streets, the annual picnic and the organization called FISH.

FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic

Help) is a volunteer organization found in many communities. It serves people who request help—whether the help takes the form of food supplies, looking after children, assisting an elderly person or meeting some other immediate need. In FISH, individuals agree to be "on duty" briefly each month.

Involvement in FISH does not call for a lot of preparation on the part of the volunteers. The needs served by FISH are clear, the demands are limited and yet each person involved feels the support of all the others. It is the kind of service that offers people the opportunity to experience the unity they already share.

IF PEOPLE in a parish differ in the kind of Mass celebration they prefer, the problem can often be solved by providing options: the folk Mass and the organ Mass, a Mass with singing and one without.

—When people discover that their tastes and concerns are respected by others in their parish, the likelihood increases that these people will respond in kind.

—When people find an opportunity to rise above differences by engaging together in activities they are equally concerned about, the likelihood increases that they will allow for diversity, and, at the same time, experience some unity in their parish.

It often happens that one group in a parish regards another group as "they." Whenever this happens, parishes and their people need to start thinking—to discover some creative ways of coming to regard everyone as "we," part of a unified parish.

THE WORD THIS WEEKEND

by Paul Karnowski

DECEMBER 7, 1980
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-9
Matthew 3:1-12

I think it has happened to all of us at least once. You tell an acquaintance at work something about yourself; half in jest, you mention that you're thinking about another job. By the end of the day, it is rumored that you will soon be fired! Who knows how a flippant remark in the morning could take so many twists and turns in the course of the day and end up so contrary to the spirit of the original comment.

Today's readings talk about two contrary human experiences that often get turned around. In the second reading, St. Paul talks about how we should be tolerant of one another. In the early church there was a big conflict between Christians who came out of the Jewish tradition and those who did not. It was finally concluded that Jesus' message of salvation was for all men. Jew and Gentile would just have to learn to tolerate each other.

Isaiah talks about tolerance in the first reading, if in a more poetic fashion. He speaks of how the wolf lives with the lamb... calf and lion cub feed together. Jew or Gentile, lamb or lion, Hoosier or Boilermaker, we are called to live together.

At first glance, today's gospel doesn't seem to fit in with these first two readings. John the Baptist lambasts the Pharisees, calling them "a brood of vipers!" He compares them to trees that don't produce fruit, and insinuates that they should be burned like the useless rubbish they are! Such strong words are hardly in keeping with the spirit of tolerance. Or maybe they are.

The important thing to remember is: There's a time and a place for everything. And yet, just as people might turn our words around, so we find ourselves being critical when a little tolerance would do; worse, when confronted with a situation that insults our spiritual sense of human dignity, we recoil in fear from the possible conflict and call it "tolerance."

Just think of all the petty arguments that a little tolerance would prevent; and think of the good that might result from a few gutsy Christian challenges.

As Christians we're called to be both lion and lamb. Let's not roar when a simple bleat would do; or don a sheepskin when the wolf approaches!

DECEMBER 8, 1980

FEAST OF THE

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Genesis 3:9-15, 20 Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

A couple of months ago as I read the morning paper, I stumbled across a syndicated feature written by Gail Sheehy. The serialized story was an examination of the Bendix affair; the saga of William Agee and Mary Cunningham. He is the chairman of the powerful Bendix Corporation; she was his ambitious assistant and protégé.

As the story unfolded, I was startled to find Ms. Cunningham saying, "I want to go out... into the murkiest part of human nature and force myself to deal with it." Sheehy described the young Ms. Cunningham's aspirations: "She would work her secret priestly mission in what she perceived to be the most decadent corridor of the culture—corporate American." It sounded as if she was on a mission from God.

Today we celebrate a feast of another Mary, a woman we know had a call from God. Her special mission, as recounted by Luke in today's gospel, was to bring the Son of God into the world. More specifically, we celebrate our belief that Mary, from the moment of her conception was preserved from any taint of sin or evil. Exactly how this can be, we're not sure.

But if we are to understand it at all, it must be seen in the context of the Resurrection. It is our belief that on Easter, goodness triumphed over evil and sin; we await the fulfillment of that victory. Because of Mary's special role in God's plan of salvation, she participated more fully in that victory than we do now.

In the meantime, there is no denying the existence of evil, or the fact of our weakness. But our faith in the Resurrection, our belief that goodness does indeed reign victorious, gives us reason to hope; it compels us to "go out into... the murkiest part of human nature" and not only deal with it, but strive to overcome it.

Along with Mary, the mother of God, we are called to bring the Son of God into the world; and along with Mary Cunningham, we all have a "priestly mission," whether it be worked out in our hearts or in the "decadent corridors of our culture."



NOT EASY—It is no easy thing to help sustain persons in a life of prayer, service and openness to the power of God's word to change and direct lives. Small groups like basic Christian

Communities and need one another

Discussion Points and Questions

1. In what ways does Father Philip Murnion feel that people in parishes differ?
2. What kinds of behavior does Father Murnion think will lead to unity in parishes?
3. Why does Father Murnion say that people often refer to others as "they"? What does he mean by this?
4. What activities in your parish help to unify the parish?
5. How does St. Paul tell the Corinthians to deal with the scandalous behavior of the man living with his stepmother? What is Paul's unspoken hope for this man, according to Father Castelot?
6. Have you ever seen action in a local community that contributed greatly to restoring unity among divided people? What happened?
7. How do you understand the evangelists' comments about family life? Do you agree with them?

The Story Hour

Paul, Barnabas make so

by Janaan Manternach

Paul and Barnabas are walking along the highway to Iconium. Iconium is a town in Lycaonia. In our time it is called Konya and is in the country of Turkey.

Along the way the two missionaries talk about what has happened in the cities they have visited the last few months. In each place some people accepted them and their good news about Jesus. Others became angry with them.

They wonder what will happen in Iconium.

Once inside the city, they search out the Jewish community. They do this whenever they visit a new city. On the Sabbath they go to the synagogue. The synagogue leaders in Iconium have heard many stories about Paul and Barnabas. They want to hear them so they invite the two to speak to the congregation.

"Jesus is our Lord and Savior," Paul tells his listeners. "Our Jewish Scriptures point to him as the one our people have waited for so long. God wants us all to

accept Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord."

Many are moved by Paul's words. They come to believe in Jesus Christ. Some new believers are Jews. Some are Gentile who came to the synagogue to hear Paul and Barnabas. Those who accept Jesus Christ form small communities. They meet together in private homes.

Some Jews who are not convinced by Paul's words are angry. They see Paul and Barnabas as a threat to their Jewish faith. This group turns many gentile against the new Christian communities.

Paul and Barnabas continue to speak out fearlessly in Iconium. They know that there are plots against them. But they trust that the Lord is with them. They rely completely on him.

The longer they stay in Iconium, the greater the opposition to them becomes. At the same time God gives them more and more power. Their Christian communities more and more evidence that he is with them. The Lord con-

'Dives in Misericordia'

Pope describes God as 'Rich in Mercy'

VATICAN CITY—Following is a Vatican translation of the encyclical of Pope John Paul II, "Dives in Misericordia" (Rich in Mercy), issued Dec. 2, 1980.

I. He Who Sees Me Sees the Father (cf. Jn. 14, 9)

1. The Revelation of Mercy

It is "God, who is rich in mercy" whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father: it is his very Son who, in himself, has manifested him and made him known to us.² Memorable in this regard is the moment when Philip, one of the 12 Apostles, turned to Christ and said: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied"; and Jesus replied: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me . . . ? He who has seen me has seen the Father."³ These words were spoken during the farewell discourse at the end of the paschal supper, which was followed by the events of those holy days during which confirmation was to be given once and for all of the fact that "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ."⁴

Following the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and paying close attention to the special needs of our times, I devoted the encyclical "Redemptor Hominis" to the truth about man, a truth that is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ. A no less important need in these critical and difficult times impels me to draw attention once again in Christ to the countenance of the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort."⁵ We read in the constitution "Gaudium et Spes": "Christ the new Adam . . . fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his lofty calling," and does it "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love."⁶ The words I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference—not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way—to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love.

For this reason it is now fitting to reflect on this mystery. It is called for by the varied experiences of the church and of contemporary man. It is also demanded by the pleas of many human hearts, their sufferings and hopes, their anxieties and expectations. While it is true that every individual human being is, as I said in my encyclical "Redemptor Hominis," the way for the church, at the same time the Gospel and the whole of tradition constantly show us that we must travel this way with every individual just as Christ traced it out by revealing in himself the Father and his love.⁷ In Jesus Christ, every path to man, as it has been assigned once and for all to the church in the changing context of the times, is simultaneously an approach to the Father and his love. The Second Vatican Council has confirmed this truth for our time.

The more the church's mission is centered upon man—the more it is, so to speak, anthropocentric—the more it must be confirmed and actualized theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father. While the various currents of human thought both in the past and at the present have tended and still tend to separate theocentrism and anthropocentrism, and even to set them in opposition to each other, the church, following Christ, seeks to link them up in human history in a deep and organic way. And this is also one of the basic principles, perhaps the most important one, of the teaching of the last council. Since, therefore, in the present phase of the church's history we put before ourselves as our primary task the implementation of the doctrine of the great council, we must act upon this principle with faith, with an open mind and with all our heart. In the encyclical already referred to I have tried to show that the deepening and the many-faceted enrichment of the church's consciousness resulting from the council must open our minds and our hearts more widely to Christ. Today I wish to say that openness to Christ, who as the redeemer of the world fully "reveals man to himself," can only be achieved through an ever more mature reference to the Father and his love.

2. The Incarnation of Mercy

Although God "dwells in unapproachable light,"⁸ he speaks to man by means of the whole of the universe: "ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made."⁹ This indirect and imperfect knowledge, achieved by the intellect seeking God by means of creatures through the visible world, falls short of a "vision of the Father." "No one has ever seen God," writes St. John in order to stress



the truth that "the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known."¹⁰ This "making known" reveals God in the most profound mystery of his being, one and three, surrounded by "unapproachable light."¹¹ Nevertheless, through this "making known" by Christ we know God above all in his relationship of love for man: in his "philanthropy."¹² It is precisely here that "his invisible nature" becomes in a special way "visible," incomparably more visible than through all the other "things that have been made": it becomes visible in Christ and through Christ, through his actions and his words, and finally through his death on the cross and his resurrection.

In this way, in Christ and through Christ, God also becomes especially visible in his mercy; that is to say, there is emphasized that attribute of the divinity which the Old Testament, using various concepts and terms, already defined as "mercy." Christ confers on the whole of the Old Testament tradition about God's mercy a definitive meaning. Not only does he speak of it and explain it by the use of comparisons and parables, but above all he himself makes it incarnate and personifies it. He himself, in a certain sense, is mercy. To the person who sees it in him—and finds it in him—God becomes "visible" in a particular way as the Father "who is rich in mercy."¹³

The present-day mentality, more perhaps than that of people in the past, seems opposed to a God of mercy, and in fact tends to exclude from life and to remove from the human heart the very idea of mercy. The word and the concept of "mercy" seem to cause uneasiness in man, who, thanks to the enormous development of science and technology, never before known in history, has become the master of the earth and has subdued and dominated it.¹⁴ This dominion over the earth, sometimes understood in a one-sided and superficial way, seems to leave no room for mercy. However, in this regard we can profitably refer to the picture of "man's situation in the world today" as described at the beginning of the constitution "Gaudium et Spes." Here we read the following sentences: "In the light of the foregoing factors there appears the dichotomy of a world that is at once powerful and weak, capable of doing what is noble and what is base, disposed to freedom and slavery, progress and decline, brotherhood and hatred. Man is growing conscious that the forces he has unleashed are in his own hands and that it is up to him to control them or be enslaved by them."¹⁵

The situation of the world today not only displays transformations that give grounds for hope in a better future for man on earth, but also reveals a multitude of threats, far surpassing those known up till now. Without ceasing to point out these threats on various occasions (as in addresses to the U.N., to UNESCO, to FAO and elsewhere), the church must at the same time examine them in the light of the truth received from God.

The truth, revealed in Christ, about God the "Father of

mercies,"¹⁶ enables us to "see" him as particularly close to man, especially when man is suffering, when he is under threat at the very heart of his existence and dignity. And this is why, in the situation of the church and the world today, many individuals and groups guided by a lively sense of faith are turning. I would say almost spontaneously, to the mercy of God. They are certainly being moved to do this by Christ himself, who through his Spirit works within human hearts. For the mystery of God the "Father of mercies" revealed by Christ becomes, in the context of today's threats to man, as it were, a unique appeal addressed to the church.

In the present encyclical I wish to accept this appeal; I wish to draw from the eternal and at the same time—for its simplicity and depth—incomparable language of revelation and faith in order, through this same language, to express once more before God and before humanity the major anxieties of our time.

In fact, revelation and faith teach us not only to meditate in the abstract upon the mystery of God as "Father of mercies," but also to have recourse to that mercy in the name of Christ and in union with him. Did not Christ say that our Father, who "sees in secret,"¹⁷ is always waiting for us to have recourse to him in every need and always waiting for us to study his mystery: the mystery of the Father and his love?¹⁸

I therefore wish these considerations to bring this mystery closer to everyone. At the same time I wish them to be a heartfelt appeal by the church to mercy, which humanity and the modern world need so much. And they need mercy even though they often do not realize it.

II. The Messianic Message

3. When Christ Began to Do and to Teach.

Before his own townspeople in Nazareth Christ refers to the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."¹⁹ These phrases, according to Luke, are his first messianic declaration. They are followed by the actions and words known through the Gospel. By these actions and words Christ makes the Father present among men. It is very significant that the people in question are especially the poor, those without means of subsistence, those deprived of their freedom, the blind who cannot see the beauty of creation, those living with broken hearts or suffering from social injustice and, finally, sinners. It is especially for these last that the Messiah becomes a particularly clear sign of God who is love, a sign of the Father. In this visible sign the people of our own time, just like the people then, can see the Father.

It is significant that, when the messengers sent by John the Baptist came to Jesus to ask him: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"²⁰ he answered by referring to the same testimony with which he had begun his teaching at Nazareth: "Go and tell John what it is that you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." He then ended with the words: "And blessed is he who takes no offense at me!"²¹

Especially through his lifestyle and through his actions, Jesus revealed that love is present in the world in which we live—an effective love, a love that addresses itself to man and embraces everything that makes up his humanity. This love makes itself particularly noticed in contact with suffering, injustice and poverty—in contact with the whole historical "human condition," which in various ways manifests man's limitation and frailty, both physical and moral. It is precisely the mode and sphere in which love manifests itself that in biblical language is called "mercy".

Christ, then, reveals God who is Father, who is "love," as St. John will express it in his first letter.²² Christ reveals God as "rich in mercy," as we read in St. Paul.²³ This truth is not just the subject of a teaching; it is a reality made present to us by Christ. Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ's own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of his mission as the Messiah; this is confirmed by the words that he uttered first in the synagogue at Nazareth and later in the presence of his disciples and of John the Baptist's messengers.

On the basis of this way of manifesting the presence of God who is Father, love and mercy, Jesus makes mercy one of the principal themes of his preaching. As is his custom, he first teaches "in parables," since these express better the very essence of things. It is sufficient to recall the parable of the Prodigal Son²⁴ or the parable of the Good Samaritan,²⁵ but also by ~~colloquial~~ the parable of the merciless servant.²⁶ There are many passages in the teaching of Christ that manifest love-mercy under some ever fresh aspect. We need only consider the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep²⁷ or the woman who sweeps the house in search of the lost coin.²⁸ The Gospel writer who particularly treats of these themes in Christ's teaching is Luke, whose Gospel has earned the title of "the Gospel of mercy."

When one speaks of preaching, one encounters a problem of major importance with reference to the meaning of terms and the content of concepts, especially the content of the concept of

"mercy" (in relationship to the concept of "love"). A grasp of the content of these concepts is the key to understanding the very reality of mercy. And this is what is most important for us. However, before devoting a further part of our considerations to this subject, that is to say, to establishing the meaning of the vocabulary and the content proper to the concept of "mercy," we must note that Christ, in revealing the love-mercy of God, at the same time demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy. This requirement forms part of the very essence of the messianic message, and constitutes the heart of the Gospel ethos. The teacher expressed this both through the medium of the commandment which he describes as "the greatest"²⁹ and also in the form of a blessing, when in the Sermon on the Mount he proclaims: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."³⁰

In this way, the messianic message about mercy preserves a particular divine-human dimension. Christ—the very fulfillment of the messianic prophecy—by becoming the incarnation of the love that is manifested with particular force with regard to the suffering, the unfortunate and sinners, makes present and thus more fully reveals the Father, who is God "rich in mercy." At the same time, by becoming for people a model of merciful love for others, Christ proclaims by his actions even more than by his words that call to mercy which is one of the essential elements of the Gospel ethos. In this instance it is not just a case of fulfilling a commandment or an obligation of an ethical nature; it is also a case of satisfying a condition of major importance for God to reveal himself in his mercy to man: "The merciful . . . shall obtain mercy."

III. The Old Testament

4. The Concept of "Mercy" in the Old Testament

The concept of "mercy" in the Old Testament has a long and rich history. We have to refer back to it in order that the mercy revealed by Christ may shine forth more clearly. By revealing that mercy both through his actions and through his teaching, Christ addressed himself to people who not only knew the concept of mercy, but who also, as the people of God of the Old Covenant, had drawn from their age-long history a special experience of the mercy of God. This experience was social and communal as well as individual and interior.

Israel was, in fact, the people of the covenant with God, a covenant that it broke many times. Whenever it became aware of its infidelity—and in the history of Israel there was no lack of prophets and others who awakened this awareness—it appealed to mercy. In this regard, the books of the Old Testament give us very many examples. Among the events and texts of greater importance one may recall the beginning of the history of the Judges,³¹ the prayer of Solomon at the inauguration of the Temple,³² part of the prophetic word of Micah,³³ the consoling assurances given by Isaiah,³⁴ the cry of the Jews in exile³⁵ and the renewal of the covenant after the return from exile.³⁶

It is significant that in their preaching the prophets link mercy, which they often refer to because of the people's sins, with the incisive image of love on God's part. The Lord loves Israel with the love of a special choosing, much like the love of a spouse,³⁷ and for this reason he pardons its sins and even its infidelities and betrayals. When he finds repentance and true conversion, he brings his people back to grace.³⁸ In the preaching of the prophets mercy signifies a special power of love, which prevails over the sin and infidelity of the chosen people.

In this broad "social" context, mercy appears as a correlative to the interior experience of individuals languishing in a state of guilt or enduring every kind of suffering and misfortune. Both physical evil and moral evil, namely sin, cause the sons and daughters of Israel to turn to the Lord and beseech his mercy. In this way David turns to him, conscious of the seriousness of his guilt.³⁹ Job too, after his rebellion, turns to him in his tremendous misfortune.⁴⁰ So also does Esther, knowing the mortal threat to her own people.⁴¹ And we find still other examples in the books of the Old Testament.⁴²

At the root of this many-sided conviction, which is both communal and personal, and which is demonstrated by the whole of the Old Testament down the centuries, is the basic experience of the chosen people at the Exodus: the Lord saw the affliction of his people reduced to slavery, heard their cry, knew their sufferings and decided to deliver them.⁴³ In this act of salvation by the Lord, the prophet perceived his love and compassion.⁴⁴ This is precisely the grounds upon which the people and each of its members based their certainty of the mercy of God, which can be invoked whenever tragedy strikes.

Added to this is the fact that sin too constitutes man's misery. The people of the Old Covenant experienced this misery from the time of the Exodus, when they set up the golden calf. The Lord himself triumphed over this act of breaking the covenant when he solemnly declared to Moses that he was a "God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."⁴⁵ It is in this central revelation that the chosen people, and each of its members, will find, every time that they have sinned, the strength and the motive for turning to the Lord to remind him of what he had exactly revealed about himself⁴⁶ and to beseech his forgiveness.

Thus, in deeds and in words, the Lord revealed his mercy from the very beginnings of the people which he chose for himself; and, in the course of its history, this people continually entrusted itself, both when stricken with misfortune and when it became aware of its sin, to the God of mercies. All the subtleties of love become manifest in the Lord's mercy toward those who are his own: he is their Father,⁴⁷ for Israel is his first-born son.⁴⁸ The Lord is also the bridegroom of her whose new name the prophet proclaims: Ruhamah, "Beloved" or "she has obtained pity."⁴⁹

Even when the Lord is exasperated by the infidelity of his people and thinks of finishing with it, it is still his tenderness and generous love for those who are his own which overcomes his anger.⁵⁰ Thus it is easy to understand why the psalmists, when they desire to sing the highest praises of the Lord, break forth into hymns to the God of love, tenderness, mercy and fidelity.⁵¹

From all this it follows that mercy does not pertain only to the notion of God, but it is something that characterizes the life of the whole people of Israel and each of its sons and daughters: mercy is the content of intimacy with their Lord, the content of their dialogue with him. Under precisely this aspect mercy is presented in the individual books of the Old Testament with a great richness of expression. It may be difficult to find in these books a purely theoretical answer to the question of what mercy is in itself. Nevertheless, the terminology that is used in itself able to tell us much about this subject.⁵²

The Old Testament proclaims the mercy of the Lord by the use of many terms with related meanings; they are differentiated by their particular content, but it could be said that they all converge from different directions on one single fundamental content, to express its surpassing richness and at the same time to bring it close to man under different aspects. The Old Testament encourages people suffering from misfortune, especially those weighed down by sin—as also the whole of Israel, which had entered into the covenant with God—to appeal for mercy, and enables them to count upon it: it reminds them of his mercy in times of failure and loss of trust. Subsequently, the Old Testament gives thanks and glory for mercy every time that mercy is made manifest in the life of the people or in the lives of individuals.

In this way, mercy is in a certain sense contrasted with God's justice, and in many cases is shown to be not only more powerful than that justice but also more profound. Even the Old Testament teaches that, although justice is an authentic virtue in man, and in God signifies transcendent perfection, nevertheless love is "greater" than justice: greater in the sense that it is primary and fundamental. Love, so to speak, conditions justice and, in the final analysis, justice serves love. The primacy and superiority of love vis-a-vis justice—is this a mark of the whole of revelation—are revealed precisely through mercy. This seemed so obvious to the psalmists and prophets that the very term justice ended up by meaning the salvation accomplished by the Lord and his mercy.⁵³ Mercy differs from justice, but is not in opposition to it, if we admit in the history of man—as the Old Testament precisely does—the presence of God, who already as Creator has linked himself to his creature with a particular love. Love, by its very nature, excludes hatred and ill-will toward the one to whom he once gave the gift of himself: Nihil odisti eorum quae fecisti, "you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence."⁵⁴ These words indicate the profound basis of the relationship between justice and mercy in God, in his relations with man and the world. They tell us that we must seek the life-giving roots and intimate reasons for this relationship by going back to "the beginning" in the very mystery of creation. They foreshadow in the context of the Old Covenant the full revelation of God, who is "love."⁵⁵

Connected with the mystery of creation is the mystery of the election, which in a special way shaped the history of the people whose spiritual father is Abraham by virtue of his faith. Nevertheless, through this people which journeys forward through the history both of the Old Covenant and of the New, that mystery of election refers to every man and woman, to the whole great human family. "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."⁵⁶ "For the mountains may depart . . . my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed."⁵⁷ This truth, once proclaimed to Israel, involves a perspective of the whole history of man, a perspective both temporal and eschatological.⁵⁸ Christ reveals the Father within the framework of the same perspective and on ground already prepared, as many pages of the Old Testament writings demonstrate. At the end of this revelation, on the night before he dies, he says to the Apostle Philip these memorable words: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me . . . ? He who has seen me has seen the Father."⁵⁹

IV. The Parable of the Prodigal Son

5. An Analogy

At the very beginning of the New Testament, two voices resound in St. Luke's Gospel in unique harmony concerning the mercy of God, a harmony which forcefully echoes the whole Old Testament tradition. They express the semantic elements linked

to the differentiated terminology of the ancient books. Mary, entering the house of Zechariah, magnifies the Lord with all her soul for "his mercy," which "from generation to generation" is bestowed on those who fear him. A little later, as she recalls the election of Israel, she proclaims the mercy which he who has chosen her holds "in remembrance" from all time.⁶⁰ Afterward, in the same house, when John the Baptist is born, his father Zechariah blesses the God of Israel and glorifies him for performing the mercy promised to our fathers and for remembering his holy covenant.⁶¹

In the teaching of Christ himself this image inherited from the Old Testament becomes at the same time simpler and more profound. This is perhaps most evident in the parable of the Prodigal Son.⁶² Although the word "mercy" does not appear, it nevertheless expresses the essence of the divine mercy in a particularly clear way. This is due not so much to the terminology, as in the Old Testament books, as to the analogy that enables us to understand more fully the very mystery of mercy as a profound drama played out between the father's love and the prodigality and sin of the son.

That son, who receives from the father the portion of the inheritance that is due to him and leaves home to squander it in a far country "in loose living," in a certain sense is the man of every period, beginning with the one who was the first to lose the inheritance of grace and original justice. The analogy at this point is very wide-ranging. The parable indirectly touches upon every breach of the covenant of love, every loss of grace, every sin. In this analogy there is less emphasis than in the prophetic tradition on the unfaithfulness of the whole people of Israel, although the analogy of the Prodigal Son may extend to this also. "When he had spent everything," the son "began to be in need," especially as "a great famine arose in that country" to which he had gone after leaving his father's house. And in this situation "he would gladly have fed on" anything, even "the pods that the swine ate," the swine that he herded for "one of the citizens of that country." But even this was refused him.

The analogy turns clearly toward man's interior. The inheritance that the son had received from "his father was a quantity of material goods, but more important than these goods was his dignity as a son in his father's house. The situation in which he found himself when he lost the material goods should have made him aware of the loss of that dignity. He had not thought about it previously, when he had asked his father to give him the part of the inheritance that was due to him in order to go away. He seems not to be conscious of it even now, when he says to himself: "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger." He measures himself by the standard of the goods that he has lost, that he no longer "possesses," while the hired servants in "his father's house" "possess" them. These words express above all his attitude to material goods; nevertheless, under their surface is concealed the tragedy of lost dignity, the awareness of squandered sonship.

It is at this point that he makes the decision: "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"⁶³ These are words that reveal more deeply the essential problem. Through the complex material situation in which the Prodigal Son found himself because of his folly, because of sin, the sense of lost dignity had matured. When he decides to return to his father's house, to ask his father to be received—no longer by virtue of his right as a son, but as an employee—at first sight he seems to be acting by reason of the hunger and poverty that he had fallen into; this motive, however, is permeated by an awareness of a deeper loss: to be a hired servant in his own father's house is certainly a great humiliation and source of shame. Nevertheless, the Prodigal Son is ready to undergo that humiliation and source of shame. He realizes that he no longer has any right except to be an employee in his father's house.

His decision is taken in full consciousness of what he has deserved and of what he can still have a right to in accordance with the norms of justice. Precisely this reasoning demonstrates that, at the center of the Prodigal Son's consciousness, the sense of lost dignity is emerging, the sense of that dignity that springs from the relationship of the son with the father. And it is with this decision that he sets out.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the term "justice" is not used even once; just as in the original text the term "mercy" is not used either. Nevertheless, the relationship between justice and love, that is manifested as mercy, is inscribed with great exactness in the content of the Gospel parable. It becomes more evident that love is transformed into mercy when it is necessary to go beyond the precise norm of justice—precise and often too narrow. The Prodigal Son, having wasted the property he received from his father, deserves—after his return—to earn his living by working in his father's house as a hired servant and possibly, little by little, to build up a certain provision of material goods, though perhaps never as much as the amount he had squandered. This would be demanded by the order of justice, especially as the son had not only squandered the part of the inheritance belonging to him but had also hurt and offended his father by his whole conduct. Since this conduct had in his own eyes deprived him of his dignity as a son, it could not be a matter of indifference to his father. It was bound to make him suffer. It was also bound to implicate him in some way. And yet, after all, it was his own son who was involved, and such a relationship

could never be altered or destroyed by any sort of behavior. The Prodigal Son is aware of this and it is precisely this awareness that shows him clearly the dignity which he has lost and which makes him honestly evaluate the position that he could still expect in his father's house.

6. Particular Concentration on Human Dignity

This exact picture of the Prodigal Son's state of mind enables us to understand exactly what the mercy of God consists in. There is no doubt that in this simple but penetrating analogy the figure of the father reveals to us God as Father. The conduct of the father in the parable and his whole behavior, which manifests his internal attitude, enables us to rediscover the individual threads of the Old Testament vision of mercy in a synthesis which is totally new, full of simplicity and depth. The father of the Prodigal Son is faithful to his fatherhood, faithful to the love that he had always lavished on his son. This fidelity is expressed in the parable not only by his immediate readiness to welcome him home when he returns after having squandered his inheritance; it is expressed even more fully by that joy, that merry-making for the squanderer after his return, merry-making which is so generous that it provokes the opposition and hatred of the elder brother, who had never gone far away from his father and had never abandoned the home.

The father's fidelity to himself—a trait already known by the Old Testament term "hesed"—is at the same time expressed in a manner particularly charged with affection. We read, in fact, that when the father saw the Prodigal Son returning home "he had compassion, ran to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him."⁶⁴ He certainly does this under the influence of a deep affection, and it also explains his generosity toward his son, that generosity which so angers the elder son. Nevertheless, the causes of this emotion are to be sought at a deeper level. Notice, the father is aware that a fundamental good has been saved: the good of his son's humanity. Although the son has squandered the inheritance, nevertheless his humanity is saved. Indeed, it has been, in a way, found again. The father's words to the elder son reveal this: "It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found."⁶⁵ In the same chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel, we read the parable of the sheep that was found⁶⁶ and then the parable of the coin that was found.⁶⁷ Each time there is an emphasis on the same joy that is present in the case of the Prodigal Son. The father's fidelity to himself is totally concentrated upon the humanity of the lost son, upon his dignity. This explains above all his joyous emotion at the moment of the son's return home.

Going on, one can therefore say that the love for the son, the love that springs from the very essence of fatherhood, in a way obliges the father to be concerned about his son's dignity. This concern is the measure of his love, the love of which St. Paul was to write: "Love is patient and kind . . . love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful . . . but rejoices in the right . . . hopes all things, endures all things" and "love never ends."⁶⁸ Mercy—as Christ has presented it in the parable of the Prodigal Son—has the interior form of the love that in the New Testament is called "agape." This love is able to reach down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin. When this happens, the person who is the object of mercy does not feel humiliated, but rather found again and "restored to value." The father first and foremost expresses to him his joy that he has been "found again" and that he has "returned to life." This joy indicates a good that has remained intact: even if he is a prodigal, a son does not cease to be truly his father's son; it also indicates a good that has been found again, which in the case of the Prodigal Son was his return to the truth about himself.

What took place in the relationship between the father and the son in Christ's parable is not to be evaluated "from the outside." Our prejudices about mercy are mostly the result of appraising them only from the outside. At times it happens that by following this method of evaluation we see in mercy above all a relationship of inequality between the one offering it and the one receiving it. And, in consequence, we are quick to deduce that mercy belittles the receiver, that it offends the dignity of man. The parable of the Prodigal Son shows that the reality is different: the relationship of mercy is based on the common experience of that good which is man, on the common experience of the dignity that is proper to him. This common experience makes the Prodigal Son begin to see himself and his actions in their full truth (this vision in truth is a genuine form of humility); on the other hand, for this very reason he becomes a particular good for his father: the father sees so clearly the good which has been achieved thanks to a mysterious radiation of truth and love, that he seems to forget all the evil which the son had committed.

The parable of the Prodigal Son expresses in a simple but profound way the reality of conversion. Conversion is the most concrete expression of the working of love and of the presence of mercy in the human world. The true and proper meaning of mercy does not consist only in looking, however penetratingly and compassionately, at moral, physical or material evil: mercy is manifested in its true and proper aspect when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man. Understood in this way, mercy constitutes the fundamental content of the messianic message of

Christ and the constitutive power of his mission. His disciples and followers understood and practiced mercy in the same way. Mercy never ceased to reveal itself, in their hearts and in their actions, as an especially creative proof of the love which does not allow itself to be "conquered by evil," but overcomes "evil with good."⁶⁹ The genuine face of mercy has to be ever revealed anew. In spite of many prejudices, mercy seems particularly necessary for our times.

V. The Paschal Mystery

7. Mercy Revealed in the Cross and Resurrection

The messianic message of Christ and his activity among people ends with the cross and resurrection. We have to penetrate deeply into this final event—which especially in the language of the council is defined as the "mysterium paschale"—if we wish to express in depth the truth about mercy, as it has been revealed in depth in the history of our salvation. At this point of our considerations, we shall have to draw closer still to the content of the encyclical "Redemptor Hominis." If, in fact, the reality of the redemption, in its human dimension, reveals the unheard-of greatness of man, "qui talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem,"⁷⁰ at the same time the divine dimension of the redemption enables us, I would say, in the most empirical and "historical" way, to uncover the depth of that love which does not recoil before the extraordinary sacrifice of the son, in order to satisfy the fidelity of the Creator and Father toward human beings, created in his image and chosen from "the beginning," in this Son, for grace and glory.

The events of Good Friday and, even before that, the prayer in Gethsemane, introduce a fundamental change into the whole course of the revelation of love and mercy in the messianic mission of Christ. The one who "went about doing good and healing"⁷¹ and "curing every sickness and disease"⁷² now himself seems to merit the greatest mercy and to appeal for mercy, when he is arrested, abused, condemned, scourged, crowned with thorns, when he is nailed to the cross and dies amidst agonizing torments.⁷³ It is then that he particularly deserves mercy from the people to whom he has done good, and he does not receive it. Even those who are closest to him cannot protect him and snatch him from the hands of his oppressors. At this final stage of his messianic activity the words which the prophets, especially Isaiah, uttered concerning the Servant of

Yahweh are fulfilled in Christ: "Through his stripes we are healed."⁷⁴

Christ, as the man who suffers really and in a terrible way in the Garden of Olives and on Calvary, addresses himself to the Father—that Father whose love he has preached to people, to whose mercy he has borne witness through all of his activity. But he is not spared—not even he—the terrible suffering of death on the cross: "For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin,"⁷⁵ St. Paul will write, summing up in a few words the whole depth of the cross and at the same time the divine dimension of the reality of the redemption. Indeed this redemption is the ultimate and definitive revelation of the holiness of God, who is the absolute fullness of perfection: fullness of justice and of love, since justice is based on love, flows from it and tends toward it. In the passion and death of Christ—in the fact that the Father did not spare his own Son, but "for our sake made him sin"⁷⁶—absolute justice is expressed, for Christ undergoes the passion and cross because of the sins of humanity. This constitutes even a "superabundance" of justice, for the sins of man are "compensated for" by the sacrifice of the man-God. Nevertheless, this justice, which is properly justice "to God's measure," springs completely from love: from the love of the Father and of the Son, and completely bears fruit in love. Precisely for this reason the divine justice revealed in the cross of Christ is "to God's measure," because it springs from love and is accomplished in love, producing fruits of salvation. The divine dimension of redemption is put into effect not only by bringing justice to bear upon sin, but also by restoring to love that creative power in man thanks to which he once more has access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God. In this way, redemption involves the revelation of mercy in its fullness.

The paschal mystery is the culmination of this revealing and effecting of mercy, which is able to justify man, to restore justice in the sense of that salvific order which God willed from the beginning in man and, through man, in the world. The suffering Christ speaks in a special way to man, and not only to the believer. The non-believer also will be able to discover in him the eloquence of solidarity with the human lot, as also the harmonious fullness of a disinterested dedication to the cause of man, to truth and to love. And yet the divine dimension of the paschal mystery goes still deeper. The cross on Calvary, the cross upon which Christ conducts his final dialogue with the Father, emerges from the very heart of the love that man, created in the image and likeness of God, has been given as a gift, according to God's eternal plan. God, as Christ has revealed him, does not merely remain closely linked with the world as the creator and the ultimate source of existence. He is also Father:

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he is linked to man, whom he called to existence in the visible world, by a bond still more intimate than that of creation. It is love which not only creates the good but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For he who loves desires to give himself.

The cross of Christ on Calvary stands beside the path of that "admirabile commercium" of that wonderful self-communication of God to man which also includes the call to man to share in the divine life by giving himself, and with himself the whole visible world, to God, and like an adopted son to become a sharer in the truth and love which is in God and proceeds from God. It is precisely beside the path of man's eternal election to the dignity of being an adopted child of God that there stands in history the cross of Christ, the only begotten Son, who, as "light from light, true God from true God,"⁷⁷ came to give the final witness to the wonderful covenant of God with humanity, of God with man—every human being. This covenant, as old as man—it goes back to the very mystery of creation—and afterward many times renewed with one single chosen people, is equally the new and definitive covenant, which was established there on Calvary, and is not limited to a single people, to Israel, but is open to each and every individual.

What else, then, does the cross of Christ say to us, the cross that in a sense is the final word of his messianic message and mission? And yet this is not yet the word of the God of the covenant: that will be pronounced at the dawn when first the women and then the apostles come to the tomb of the crucified Christ, see the tomb empty and for the first time hear the message: "He is risen." They will repeat this message to the others and will be witnesses to the risen Christ. Yet, even in this glorification of the Son of God, the cross remains, that cross which—through all the messianic testimony of the man, the Son, who suffered death upon it—speaks and never ceases to speak of God the Father, who is absolutely faithful to his eternal love for man, since he "so loved the world"—therefore man in the world—that "he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."⁷⁸ Believing in the crucified Son means "seeing the Father,"⁷⁹ means believing that love is present in the world and that this love is more powerful than any kind of evil in which individuals, humanity or the world are involved. Believing in this love means believing in mercy. For mercy is an indispensable dimension of love; it is as it were love's second name and, at the same time, the specific manner in which love is revealed and effected vis-à-vis the reality of the evil that is in the world, affecting and besieging man, insinuating itself even into his heart and capable of causing him to "perish in Gehenna."⁸⁰

8. Love More Powerful Than Death, More Powerful Than Sin

The cross of Christ on Calvary is also a witness to the strength of evil against the very Son of God, against the one who, alone among all the sons of men, was by his nature absolutely innocent and free from sin, and whose coming into the world was untainted by the disobedience of Adam and the inheritance of original sin. And here, precisely in him, in Christ, justice is done to sin at the price of his sacrifice, of his obedience "even to death."⁸¹ He who was without sin, "God made him sin for our sake."⁸² Justice is also brought to bear upon death, which from the beginning of man's history had been allied to sin. Death has justice done to it at the price of the death of the one who was without sin and who along with him was able—by means of his own death—to inflict death upon death.⁸³ In this way the cross of Christ, on which the Son, consubstantial with the Father, renders full justice to God, is also a radical revelation of mercy, or rather of the love that goes against what constitutes the very root of evil in the history of man: against sin and death.

The cross is the most profound condescension of God to man and to what man—especially in difficult and painful moments—looks on as his unhappy destiny. The cross is like a touch of eternal love upon the most painful wounds of man's earthly existence; it is the total fulfillment of the messianic program that Christ once formulated in the synagogue at Nazareth⁸⁴ and then repeated to the messengers sent by John the Baptist.⁸⁵ According to the words once written in the prophecy of Isaiah,⁸⁶ this program consisted in the revelation of merciful love for the poor, the suffering and prisoners, for the blind, the oppressed and sinners. In the paschal mystery the limits of the many-sided evil in which man becomes a sharer during his earthly existence are surpassed: the cross of Christ, in fact, makes us understand the deepest roots of evil, which are fixed in sin and death; thus the cross becomes an eschatological sign. Only in the eschatological fulfillment and definitive renewal of the world will love conquer, in all the elect, the deepest sources of evil, bringing as its fully mature fruit the kingdom of life and holiness and glorious immortality. The foundation of this eschatological fulfillment is already contained in the cross of Christ and in his death. The fact that Christ "was raised the third day"⁸⁷ constitutes the final sign of the messianic mission, a sign that perfects the entire revelation of merciful love in a world that is subject to evil. At the same time it constitutes the sign that foretells "a new heaven and a new earth,"⁸⁸ when God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there will be no more death, or mourning, no crying or pain, for the former things have passed away."⁸⁹



In the eschatological fulfillment mercy will be revealed as love, while in the temporal phase, in human history, which is at the same time the history of sin and death, love must be revealed above all as mercy and must also be actualized as mercy. Christ's messianic program, the program of mercy, becomes the program of his people, the program of the church. At its very center there is always the cross, for it is in the cross that the revelation of merciful love attains its culmination. Until "the former things pass away,"⁹⁰ the cross will remain the point of reference for other words too of the revelation of John: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me."⁹¹ In a special way, God also reveals his mercy when he invites man to have "mercy" on his only Son, the crucified one.

Christ, precisely as the crucified one, is the word that does not pass away⁹² and he is the one who stands at the door and knocks at the heart of every man⁹³ without restricting his freedom, but instead seeking to draw from this very freedom love, which is not only an act of solidarity with the suffering Son of Man, but also a kind of "mercy" shown by each one of us to the Son of the eternal Father. In the whole of this messianic program of Christ, in the whole revelation of mercy through the cross, could man's dignity be more highly respected and ennobled, for, in obtaining mercy, he is in a sense the one who at the same time "shows mercy"?

In a word, is not this the position of Christ with regard to man when he says: "As you did it to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me"?⁹⁴ Do not the words of the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,"⁹⁵ constitute, in a certain sense, a synthesis of the whole of the good news, of the whole of the "wonderful exchange" ("admirabile commercium") contained therein? This exchange is a law of the very plan of salvation, a law which is simple, strong and at the same time "easy." Demonstrating from the very start what the "human heart" is capable of ("to be merciful"), do not these words from the Sermon on the Mount reveal in the same perspective the deep mystery of God: that inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in which love, containing justice, sets in motion mercy, which in its turn reveals the perfection of justice?

The paschal mystery is Christ at the summit of the revelation of the inscrutable mystery of God. It is precisely then that the words pronounced in the Upper Room are completely fulfilled:

"He who has seen me has seen the Father."⁹⁶ In fact, Christ, whom the Father "did not spare"⁹⁷ for the sake of man and who in his passion and in the torment of the cross did not obtain human mercy, has revealed in his resurrection the fullness of the love that the Father has for him and, in him, for all people. "He is not God of the dead, but of the living."⁹⁸ In his resurrection Christ has revealed the God of merciful love, precisely because he accepted the cross as the way to the resurrection. And it is for this reason that—when we recall the cross of Christ, his passion and death—our faith and hope are centered on the risen one: on that Christ who "on the evening of that day, the first day of the week . . . stood among them" in the Upper Room, "where the disciples were . . . breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"⁹⁹

Here is the Son of God, who in his resurrection experienced in a radical way mercy shown to himself, that is to say the love of

the Father which is more powerful than death. And it is also the same Christ, the Son of God, who at the end of his messianic mission—and in a certain sense, even beyond the end—reveals himself as the inexhaustible source of mercy, of the same love that, in a subsequent perspective of the history of salvation in the church, is to be everlastingly confirmed as more powerful than sin. The paschal Christ is the definitive incarnation of mercy, its living sign: in salvation history and in eschatology. In the same spirit, the liturgy of Eastertide places on our lips the words of the psalm: "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo."¹⁰⁰

9. Mother of Mercy

These words of the church at Easter re-echo in the fullness of their prophetic content the words that Mary uttered during her visit to Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah: "His mercy is . . . from generation to generation."¹⁰¹ At the very moment of the incarnation, these words open up a new perspective of salvation history. After the resurrection of Christ, this perspective is new on both the historical and the eschatological level. From that time onward there is a succession of new generations of individuals in the immense human family, in ever-increasing dimensions; there is also a succession of new generations of the people of God, marked with the sign of the cross and of the resurrection and "sealed"¹⁰² with the sign of the paschal mystery of Christ, the absolute revelation of the mercy that Mary proclaimed on the threshold of her kinswoman's house: "His mercy is . . . from generation to generation."¹⁰³

Mary is also the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has. At the same time, still in an exceptional way, she made possible with the sacrifice of her heart her own sharing in revealing God's mercy. This sacrifice is intimately linked with the cross of her Son, at the foot of which she was to stand on Calvary. Her sacrifice is a unique sharing in the revelation of mercy, that is, a sharing in the absolute fidelity of God to his own love, to the covenant that he willed from eternity and that he entered into in time with man, with the people, with humanity; it is a sharing in that revelation that was definitively fulfilled through the cross. No one has experienced, to the same degree as the mother of the crucified one, the mystery of the cross, the overwhelming encounter of divine transcendent justice with love: that "kiss" given by mercy to justice.¹⁰⁴ No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive "fiat."

Mary, then, is the one who has the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God's mercy. She knows its price, she knows how great it is. In this sense, we call her the Mother of Mercy, Our Lady of Mercy or Mother of Divine Mercy; in each one of these titles there is a deep theological meaning, for they express the special preparation of her soul, of her whole personality, so that she was able to perceive, through the complex events, first of Israel, then of every individual and of the whole of humanity, that mercy of which "from generation to generation"¹⁰⁵ people become sharers according to the eternal design of the most Holy Trinity.

The above titles which we attribute to the mother of God speak of her principally, however, as the Mother of the Crucified and Risen One; as the one who, having obtained mercy in an exceptional way, in an equally exceptional way "merits" that mercy throughout her earthly life and, particularly, at the foot of the cross of her Son; and finally as the one, through her hidden and at the same time incomparable sharing in the messianic mission of her Son, was called in a special way to bring close to people that love which he had come to reveal: the love that finds its most concrete expression vis-à-vis the suffering, the poor, those deprived of their own freedom, the blind, the oppressed and sinners, just as Christ spoke of them in the words of the prophecy of Isaiah, first in the synagogue at Nazareth¹⁰⁶ and then in response to the question of the messengers of John the Baptist.¹⁰⁷

It was precisely this "merciful" love, which is manifested above all in contact with moral and physical evil, that the heart of her who, as the Mother of the Crucified and Risen One shared in singularly and exceptionally—that Mary shared in. In her and through her this love continued to be revealed in the history of the church and of humanity. This revelation is especially fruitful because in the mother of God it is based upon the unique tact of her maternal heart, on her particular sensitivity, on her particular fitness to reach all those who most easily accept the merciful love of a mother. This is one of the great life-giving mysteries of Christianity, a mystery intimately connected with the mystery of the incarnation.

"The motherhood of Mary in the order of grace," as the Second Vatican Council explains, "lasts without interruption from the consent which she faithfully gave at the annunciation and which she sustained without hesitation under the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. In fact, being assumed into heaven she has not laid aside this office of salvation but by her manifold intercession she continues to obtain for us the graces of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she takes care of the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home."¹⁰⁸

VI. Mercy . . . From Generation to Generation

10. An Image of Our Generation

We have every right to believe that our generation too was included in the words of the mother of God when she glorified that mercy shared in "from generation to generation" by those who allow themselves to be guided by the fear of God. The words of Mary's Magnificat have a prophetic content that concerns not only the past of Israel but also the whole future of the people of God on earth. In fact, all of us now living on earth are the generation that is aware of the approach of the third millennium and that profoundly feels the change that is occurring in history.

The present generation knows that it is in a privileged position; progress provides it with countless possibilities that only a few decades ago were undreamed of. Man's creative activity, his intelligence and his work, have brought about profound changes both in the field of science and technology and in that of social and cultural life. Man has extended his power over nature and has acquired deeper knowledge of the laws of social behavior. He has seen the obstacles and distances between individuals and nations dissolve or shrink through an increased sense of what is universal, through a clearer awareness of the unity of the human race, through the acceptance of mutual dependence in authentic solidarity, and through the desire and possibility of making contact with one's brothers and sisters beyond artificial geographical divisions and national or racial limits. Today's young people, especially, know that the progress of science and technology can produce not only new material goods but also a wider sharing in knowledge. The extraordinary progress made in the field of information and data processing, for instance, will increase man's creative capacity and provide access to the intellectual and cultural riches of other peoples. New communications techniques will encourage greater participation in events and a wider exchange of ideas. The achievements of biological, psychological and social science will help man to understand better the riches of his own being. It is true that too often this progress is still the privilege of the industrialized countries, but it cannot be denied that the prospect of enabling every people and every country to benefit from it has long ceased to be a mere utopia when there is a real political desire for it.

But side by side with all this, or rather as part of it, there are also the difficulties that appear whenever there is growth. There is unease and a sense of powerlessness regarding the profound response that man knows that he must give. The picture of the world today also contains shadows and imbalances that are not always merely superficial. The pastoral constitution "Gaudium et Spes" of the Second Vatican Council is certainly not the only document that deals with the life of this generation, but it is a document of particular importance. "The dichotomy affecting the modern world," we read in it, "is, in fact, a symptom of a deeper dichotomy that is in man himself. He is the meeting point of many conflicting forces. In his condition as a created being he is subject to a thousand shortcomings, but feels untrammelled in his inclinations and destined for a higher form of life. Torn by a welter of anxieties he is compelled to choose between them and repudiate some among them. Worse still, feeble and sinful as he is, he often does the very thing he hates and does not do what he wants. And so he feels himself divided, and the result is a host of discords in social life."¹⁰⁹

Toward the end of the introductory exposition we read: "... In the face of modern developments there is a growing body of men who are asking the most fundamental of all questions or are glimpsing them with a keener insight: What is man? What is the meaning of suffering, evil, death, which has not been eliminated by all this progress? What is the purpose of these achievements, purchased at so high a price?"

In the span of the 15 years since the end of the Second Vatican Council has this picture of tensions and threats that mark our epoch become less disquieting? It seems not. On the contrary, the tensions and threats that in the council document seem only to be outlined and not to manifest in depth all the dangers hidden within them have revealed themselves more clearly in the space of these years; they have in a different way confirmed that danger, and do not permit us to cherish the illusions of the past.

11. Sources of Uneasiness

Thus, in our world the feeling of being under threat is increasing. There is an increase of that existential fear connected especially, as I said in the encyclical "Redemptor Hominis," with the prospect of a conflict that in view of today's atomic stockpiles could mean the partial self-destruction of humanity. But the threat does not merely concern what human beings can do to human beings through the means provided by military technology; it also concerns many other dangers produced by a materialistic society which—in spite of "humanistic" declarations—accepts the primacy of things over persons. Contemporary man, therefore, fears that by the use of the means invented by this type of society, individuals and the environment, communities, societies and nations can fall victim to

the abuse of power by other individuals, environments and societies. The history of our century offers many examples of this. In spite of all the declarations on the rights of man in his integral dimension, that is to say in his bodily and spiritual existence, we cannot say that these examples belong only to the past.

Man rightly fears falling victim to an oppression that will deprive him of his interior freedom, of the possibility of expressing the truth of which he is convinced, of the faith that he professes, of the ability to obey the voice of conscience that tells him the right path to follow. The technical means at the disposal of modern society conceal within themselves not only the possibility of self-destruction through military conflict, but also the possibility of a "peaceful" subjugation of individuals, of environments, of entire societies and of nations, that for one reason or another might prove inconvenient for those who possess the necessary means and are ready to use them without scruple. An instance is the continued existence of torture, systematically used by authority as a means of domination and political oppression and practiced by subordinates with impunity.

Together with awareness of the biological threat, therefore, there is a growing awareness of yet another threat, even more destructive of what is essentially human, what is intimately bound up with the dignity of the person and his or her right to truth and freedom.

All this is happening against the background of the gigantic remorse caused by the fact that, side by side with wealthy and sufficed people and societies, living in plenty and ruled by consumerism and pleasure, the same human family contains individuals and groups that are suffering from hunger. There are babies dying of hunger under their mothers' eyes. In various parts of the world, in various socio-economic systems, there exist entire areas of poverty, shortage and underdevelopment. This fact is universally known. The state of inequality between individuals and between nations not only still exists; it is increasing. It still happens that side by side with those who are wealthy and living in plenty there exist those who are living in want, suffering misery and often actually dying of hunger; and their number reaches tens, even hundreds of millions. This why moral uneasiness is destined to become even more acute. It is obvious that a fundamental defect, or rather a series of defects, indeed a defective machinery is at the root of contemporary economics and materialistic civilization, which does not allow the human family to break free from such radically unjust situations.

This picture of today's world in which there is so much evil, both physical and moral, so as to make it a world entangled in contradictions and tensions, and at the same time full of threats to human freedom, conscience and religion—this picture explains the uneasiness felt by contemporary man. This uneasiness is experienced not only by those who are disadvantaged or oppressed, but also by those who possess the privileges of wealth, progress and power. And, although there is no lack of people trying to understand the causes of this uneasiness, or trying to react against it with the temporary means offered by technology, wealth or power, still in the very depth of the human spirit this uneasiness is stronger than all temporary means. This uneasiness concerns—as the analyses of the Second Vatican Council rightly pointed out—the fundamental problems of all human existence. It is linked with the very sense of man's

existence in the world, and is an uneasiness for the future of man and all humanity; it demands decisive solutions, which now seem to be forcing themselves upon the human race.

12. Is Justice Enough?

It is not difficult to see that in the modern world the sense of justice has been reawakening on a vast scale; and without doubt this emphasizes that which goes against justice in relationships between individuals, social groups and "classes," between individual peoples and states, and finally between whole political systems, indeed between what are called "worlds." This deep and varied trend, at the basis of which the contemporary human conscience has placed justice, gives proof of the ethical character of the tensions and struggles pervading the world.

The church shares with the people of our time this profound and ardent desire for a life which is just in every aspect, nor does she fail to examine the various aspects of the sort of justice that the life of people and society demands. This is confirmed by the field of Catholic social doctrine, greatly developed in the course of the last century. On the lines of this teaching proceed the education and formation of human consciences in the spirit of justice, and also individual undertakings, especially in the sphere of the apostolate of the laity, which are developing in precisely this spirit.

And yet it would be difficult not to notice that very often programs which start from the idea of justice and which ought to assist its fulfillment among individuals, groups and human societies, in practice suffer from distortions. Although they continue to appeal to the idea of justice, nevertheless experience shows that other negative forces have gained the upper hand over justice, such as spite, hatred and even cruelty. In such cases, the desire to annihilate the enemy, limit his freedom, or even force him into total dependence, becomes the fundamental motive for action; and this contrasts with the essence of justice, which by its nature tends to establish equality and harmony between the parties in conflict. This kind of abuse of the idea of justice and the practical distortion of it show how far human action can deviate from justice itself, even when it is being undertaken in the name of justice. Not in vain did Christ challenge his listeners, faithful to the doctrine of the Old Testament, for their attitude which was manifested in the words: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."¹¹¹ This was the form of distortion of justice at that time; and today's forms continue to be modelled on it. It is obvious, in fact, that in the name of an alleged justice (for example, historical justice or class justice) the neighbor is sometimes destroyed, killed, deprived of liberty or stripped of fundamental human rights. The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, that it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions. It has been precisely historical experience that, among other things, has led to the formulation of the saying: "Summum ius, summa iniuria." This statement does not detract from the value of justice and does not minimize the significance of the order that is based upon it; it only indicates, under another aspect, the need to draw from the powers of the spirit which condition the very order of justice, powers which are still more profound.

The church, having before her eyes the picture of the

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generation to which we belong, shares the uneasiness of so many of the people of our time. Moreover, one cannot fail to be worried by the decline of many fundamental values, which constitute an unquestionable good not only for Christian morality but simply for human morality, for moral culture: these values include respect for human life from the moment of conception, respect for marriage in its indissoluble unity, and respect for the stability of the family. Moral permissiveness strikes especially at this most sensitive sphere of life and society. Hand in hand with this go the crisis of truth in human relationships, lack of responsibility for what one says, the purely utilitarian relationship between individual and individual, the loss of a sense of the authentic common good and the ease with which this good is alienated. Finally, there is the "desacralization" that often turns into "dehumanization": the individual and the society for whom nothing is "sacred" suffer moral decay, in spite of appearances.

VII. The Mercy of God in the Mission of the Church

In connection with this picture of our generation, a picture which cannot fail to cause profound anxiety, there comes to mind once more those words which, by reason of the incarnation of the son of God, resounded in Mary's Magnificat and which sing of "mercy from generation to generation." The church of our time, constantly pondering the eloquence of these inspired words and applying them to the sufferings of the great human family, must become more particularly and profoundly conscious of the need to bear witness in her whole mission to God's mercy, following the footsteps of the tradition of the Old and the New Covenant, and above all of Jesus Christ himself and his apostles. The church must bear witness to the mercy of God revealed in Christ, in the whole of his mission as messiah, professing it in the first place as a salvific truth of faith and as necessary for a life in harmony with faith, and then seeking to introduce it and to make it incarnate in the lives of both her faithful and as far as possible in the lives of all people of good will. Finally, the church—professing mercy and remaining always faithful to it—has the right and the duty to call upon the mercy of God, imploring it in the face of all the manifestations of physical and moral evil, before all the threats that cloud the whole horizon of the life of humanity today.

13. The Church Professes the Mercy of God and Proclaims It

The church must profess and proclaim God's mercy in all its truth, as it has been handed down to us by revelation. We have sought, in the foregoing pages of the present document, to give at least an outline of the truth, which finds such rich expression in the whole of sacred Scripture and in sacred tradition. In the daily life of the church the truth about the mercy of God, expressed in the Bible, resounds as a perennial echo through the many readings of the sacred liturgy. The authentic sense of faith of the people of God perceives this truth, as is shown by various expressions of personal and community piety. It would of course be difficult to give a list or summary of them all, since most of them are vividly inscribed in the depths of people's hearts and minds. Some theologians affirm that mercy is the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God, and the Bible, tradition and the whole faith life of the people of God provide particular proofs of this. It is not a question here of the perfection of the inscrutable essence of God in the mystery of the divinity itself, but of the perfection and attribute whereby man, in the intimate truth of his existence, encounters the living God particularly closely and particularly often. In harmony with Christ's words to Philip,¹¹² the "vision of the Father"—a vision of God through faith—finds precisely in the encounter with his mercy a unique moment of interior simplicity and truth, similar to that which we discover in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

"He who has seen me has seen the Father."¹¹³ The church professes the mercy of God, the church lives by it in her wide experience of faith and also in her teaching, constantly contemplating Christ, concentrating on him, on his life and on his Gospel, on his cross and resurrection, on his whole mystery. Everything that forms the "vision" of Christ in the church's living faith and teaching brings us nearer to the "vision of the Father" in the holiness of his mercy. The church seems in a particular way to profess the mercy of God and to venerate it when she directs herself to the heart of Christ. In fact, it is precisely this drawing close to Christ in the mystery of his heart which enables us to dwell on this point—a point in a sense central and also most accessible on the human level—of the revelation of the merciful love of the Father, a revelation which constituted the central content of the messianic mission of the Son of Man.

The church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy—the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer—and when she brings people close to the sources of the Savior's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser. Of great significance in this area is constant meditation on the word of God, and above all conscious and mature participation in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of penance or reconciliation. The Eucharist brings us ever nearer to

that love which is more powerful than death: "For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup," we proclaim not only the death of the Redeemer but also his resurrection, "until he comes" in glory.¹¹⁴ The same eucharistic rite, celebrated in memory of him who in his messianic mission revealed the Father to us by means of his words and his cross, attests to the inexhaustible love by virtue of which he desires always to be united with us and present in our midst, coming to meet every human heart. It is the sacrament of penance or reconciliation that prepares the way for each individual, even those weighed down with great faults. In this sacrament each person can experience mercy in a unique way, that is, the love which is more powerful than sin. This has already been spoken of in the encyclical "Redemptor Hominis," but it will be fitting to return once more to this fundamental theme.

It is precisely because sin exists in the world, which "God so loved . . . that he gave his only Son,"¹¹⁵ that God who "is love"¹¹⁶ cannot reveal himself otherwise than as mercy. This corresponds not only to the most profound truth of that love which God is, but also to the whole interior truth of man and of the world which is man's temporary homeland.

Mercy in itself, as a perfection of the infinite God, is also infinite. Also infinite therefore and inexhaustible is the Father's readiness to receive the prodigal children who return to his home. Infinite are the readiness and power of forgiveness which flow continually from the marvelous value of the sacrifice of the Son. No human sin can prevail over this power or even limit it. On the part of man only a lack of good will can limit it, a lack of readiness to be converted and to repent, in other words persistence in obstinacy, opposing grace and truth, especially in the face of the witness of the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Therefore, the church professes and proclaims conversion. Conversion to God always consists in discovering his mercy, that is, in discovering that love which is patient and kind¹¹⁷ as only the Creator and Father can be; the love to which the "God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ"¹¹⁸ is faithful to the uttermost consequences in the history of his covenant with man: even to the cross and to the death and resurrection of the Son. Conversion to God is always the fruit of the "rediscovery" of this Father, who is rich in mercy.

Authentic knowledge of the God of mercy, the God of tender love, is a constant and inexhaustible source of conversion, not only as a momentary interior act but also as a permanent attitude, as a state of mind. Those who come to know God in this way, who "see" him in this way, can live only in a state of being continually converted to him. They live, therefore, "in statu conversionis"; and it is this state of conversion which marks out the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every man and woman on earth "in statu viatoris." It is obvious that the church professes the mercy of God, revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, not only by the word of her teaching but above all through the deepest pulsation of the life of the whole people of God. By means of this testimony of life, the church fulfils the mission proper to the people of God, the mission which is a sharing in and, in a sense, a continuation of the messianic mission of Christ himself.

The contemporary church is profoundly conscious that only on the basis of the mercy of God will she be able to carry out the tasks that derive from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and, in the first place, the ecumenical task which aims at uniting all those who confess Christ. As she makes many efforts in this direction, the church confesses with humility that only that love which is more powerful than the weakness of human divisions can definitely bring about that unity which Christ implored from the Father and which the Spirit never ceases to beseech for us "with sighs too deep for words."¹¹⁹

14. The Church Seeks to Put Mercy into Practice

Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called "to practice mercy" toward others: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."¹²⁰ The church sees in these words a call to action, and she tries to practice mercy. All the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount indicate the way of conversion and of reform of life, but the one referring to those who are merciful is particularly eloquent in this regard. Man attains to the merciful love of God, his mercy, to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love toward his neighbor.

This authentically evangelical process is not just a spiritual transformation realized once and for all: it is a whole lifestyle, an essential and continuous characteristic of the Christian vocation. It consists in the constant discovery and persevering practice of love as a unifying and also elevating power despite all difficulties of a psychological or social nature: it is a question, in fact, of a merciful love which, by its essence, is a creative love. In reciprocal relationships between persons merciful love is never a unilateral act or process. Even in the cases in which everything would seem to indicate that only one party is giving and offering, and the other only receiving and taking (for example, in the case of a physician giving treatment, a teacher teaching, parents supporting and bringing up their children, a benefactor helping the needy), in reality the one who gives is always also a beneficiary. In any case, he too can easily find himself in the

position of the one who receives, who obtains a benefit, who experiences merciful love; he too can find himself the object of mercy.

In this sense Christ crucified is for us the loftiest model, of spiration and encouragement. When we base ourselves on this disquieting model, we are able with all humility to show mercy to others, knowing that Christ accepts it as if it were shown himself.¹²¹ On the basis of this truth, we must also continually purify all our actions and all our intentions in which mercy understood and practiced in a unilateral way, as a good done to others. An act of merciful love is only really such when we are deeply convinced at the moment that we perform it that we are at the same time receiving mercy from the people who are accepting it from us. If this bilateral and reciprocal quality is absent, our actions are not yet true acts of mercy, nor has there yet been fully completed in us that conversion to which Christ has shown us the way by his words and example, even to the cross nor are we yet sharing fully in the magnificent source of merciful love that has been revealed to us by him.

Thus, the way which Christ showed us in the Sermon on the Mount with the beatitude regarding those who are merciful much richer than what we sometimes find in ordinary human opinions about mercy. These opinions see mercy as a unilateral act or process, presupposing and maintaining a certain distance between the one practicing mercy and the one benefiting from it, between the one who does good and the one who receives it. Hence the attempt to free interpersonal and social relationships from mercy and to base them solely on justice. However, such opinions about mercy fail to see the fundamental link between mercy and justice spoken of by the whole biblical tradition, and above all by the messianic mission of Jesus Christ. True mercy is, so to speak, the most profound source of justice. If justice is itself suitable for "arbitration" between people concerning the reciprocal distribution of objective goods in an equitable manner, love and only love (including that kindly love that we call "mercy") is capable of restoring man to himself.

Mercy that is truly Christian is also, in a certain sense, the most perfect incarnation of "equality" between people, and therefore also the most perfect incarnation of justice as well insofar as justice aims at the same result in its own sphere. However, the equality brought by justice is limited to the realm of objective and extrinsic goods, while love and mercy bring about that people meet one another in that value which is man himself, with the dignity that is proper to him. At the same time "equality" of people through "patient and kind" love¹²² does not take away differences: the person who gives becomes more generous when he feels at the same time benefitted by the person accepting his gift; and vice versa, the person who accepts the gift with the awareness that, in accepting it, he too is doing good is in his own way serving the great cause of the dignity of the person; and this contributes to uniting people in a more profound manner.

Thus, mercy becomes an indispensable element for shaping mutual relationships between people, in a spirit of deeper respect for what is human, and in a spirit of mutual brotherhood. It is impossible to establish this bond between people if they wish to regulate their mutual relationships solely according to the measure of justice. In every sphere of interpersonal relationships justice must, so to speak, be "corrected" to a considerable extent by that love which, as St. Paul proclaims, "is patient and kind" or, in other words, possesses the characteristics of that merciful love which is so much of the essence of the Gospel and Christianity. Let us remember, furthermore, that merciful love also means the cordial tenderness and sensitivity so eloquently spoken of in the parable of the Prodigal Son¹²³ and also in the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin.¹²⁴ Consequently, merciful love is supremely indispensable between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between friends; and it is indispensable in education and in pastoral work.

Its sphere of action, however, is not limited to this. If Paul VI more than once indicated the "civilization of love"¹²⁵ as the goal towards which all efforts in the cultural and social fields as well as in the economic and political fields should tend, it must be added that this goal will never be reached if in our thinking and acting concerning the vast and complex spheres of human society we stop at the criterion of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"¹²⁶ and do not try to transform it in its essence by complementing it with another spirit. Certainly, the Second Vatican Council also leads us in this direction when it speaks repeatedly of the need to make the world more human¹²⁷ and says that the realization of this task is precisely the mission of the church in the modern world. Society can become ever more human only if we introduce into the many-sided setting of interpersonal and social relationships, not merely justice, but also that "merciful love" which constitutes the messianic message of the Gospel.

Society can become "ever more human" only when we introduce into all the mutual relationships which form its moral aspect the moment of forgiveness, which is so much of the essence of the Gospel. Forgiveness demonstrates the presence in the world of the love which is more powerful than sin. Forgiveness is also the fundamental condition for reconciliation, not only in the relationship of God with man, but also in relationships between people. A world from which forgiveness was eliminated would be nothing but a world of cold and unfeeling justice, in the name of which each person would claim his or her own rights vis-à-vis others; the various kinds of selfishness latent in man would transform life and human society into a

system of oppression of the weak by the strong, or into an arena of permanent strife between one group and another.

For this reason, the church must consider it one of her principal duties—at every stage of history and especially in our modern age—to proclaim and to introduce into life the mystery of mercy, supremely revealed in Jesus Christ. Not only for the church herself as the community of believers but also in a certain sense for all humanity, this mystery is the source of a life different from the life which can be built by man, who is exposed to the oppressive forces of the threefold concupiscence active within him.¹²⁸ It is precisely in the name of this mystery that Christ teaches us to forgive always. How often we repeat the words of the prayer which he himself taught us, asking “forgive us our trespasses... we forgive those who trespass against us,” which means those who are guilty of something in our regard.¹²⁹ It is indeed difficult to express the profound value of the attitude which these words describe and inculcate. How many things these words say to every individual about others and about himself. The consciousness of being trespassers against each other goes hand in hand with the call to fraternal solidarity, which St. Paul expressed in his concise exhortation to “forbear one another in love.”¹³⁰ What a lesson of humility is to be found here with regard to man, with regard both to one's neighbor and to oneself. What a school of good will for daily living, in the various conditions of our existence. If we were to ignore this lesson, what would remain of any “humanist” program of life and education?

Christ emphasizes so insistently the need to forgive others that when Peter asked him how many times he should forgive his neighbor he answered with the symbolic number of “seventy times seven,”¹³¹ meaning that he must be able to forgive everyone every time. It is obvious that such a generous requirement of forgiveness does not cancel out the objective requirements of justice. Properly understood, justice constitutes, so to speak, the goal of forgiveness. In no passage of the Gospel message does forgiveness, or mercy as its source, mean indulgence toward evil, toward scandals, toward injury or insult. In any case reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are conditions for forgiveness.

Thus the fundamental structure of justice always enters into the sphere of mercy. Mercy, however, has the power to confer on justice a new content, which is expressed most simply and fully in forgiveness. Forgiveness, in fact, shows that, over and above the process of “compensation” and “restitution” which is specific to justice, love is necessary so that man may affirm himself as man. Fulfillment of the conditions of justice is especially indispensable in order that love may reveal its own nature. In analyzing the parable of the Prodigal Son, we have already called attention to the fact that he who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential value of the person, a point which cannot be lost and the affirmation of which, or its rediscovery, is a source of the greatest joy.

The church rightly considers it her duty and the purpose of her mission to guard the authenticity of forgiveness, both in life and behavior and in educational and pastoral work. She protects it simply by guarding its source, which is the mystery of the mercy of God himself as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The basis of the church's mission, in all the spheres spoken of in the numerous pronouncements of the most recent council and in the centuries-old experience of the apostolate, is none other than “drawing from the wells of the Savior.”¹³² This is what provides many guidelines for the mission of the church in the lives of individual Christians, of individual communities, and also of the whole people of God. This “drawing from the wells of the Savior” can be done only in the spirit of that poverty to which we are called by the words and example of the Lord: “You received without pay, give without pay.”¹³³ Thus in all the ways of the church's life and ministry—through the evangelical poverty of her ministers and stewards and of the whole people which bears witness to “the mighty works” of its Lord—the God who is “rich in mercy” has been made still more clearly manifest.

this mystery which bears within itself the most complete revelation of mercy, that is, of that love which is more powerful than death, more powerful than sin and every evil, the love which lifts man up when he falls into the abyss and frees him from the greatest threats.

Modern man feels these threats. What has been said above in this regard is only a rough outline. Modern man often anxiously wonders about the solution to the terrible tensions which have built up in the world and which entangle humanity. And if at times he lacks the courage to utter the word “mercy,” or if in his conscience empty of religious content he does not find the equivalent, so much greater is the need for the church to utter this word, not only in her own name but also in the name of all the men and women of our time.

Everything that I have said in the present document on mercy should therefore be continually transformed into an ardent prayer: into a cry that implores mercy according to the needs of man in the modern world. May this cry be full of that truth about mercy which has found such rich expression in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, as also in the authentic life of faith of countless generations of the People of God. With this cry let us, like the sacred writers, call upon the God who cannot despise anything that he has made,¹³⁴ the God who is faithful to himself, to his fatherhood and his love. And, like the prophets, let us appeal to that love which has maternal characteristics and which, like a mother, follows each of her children, each lost sheep, even if they should number millions, even if in the world evil should prevail over goodness, even if contemporary humanity should deserve a new “flood” on account of its sins, as once the generation of Noah did. Let us have recourse to that fatherly love revealed to us by Christ in his messianic mission, a love which reached its culmination in his cross, in his death and resurrection. Let us have recourse to God through Christ, mindful of the words of Mary's “Magnificat,” which proclaim mercy “from generation to generation.” Let us implore God's mercy for the present generation. May the church which, following the example of Mary, also seeks to be the spiritual mother of mankind, express in this prayer her maternal solicitude and at the same time her confident love, that love from which is born the most burning need for prayer.

Let us offer up our petitions, directed by the faith, by the hope and by the charity which Christ has planted in our hearts. This attitude is likewise love of God, whom modern man has sometimes separated far from himself, made extraneous to himself, proclaiming in various ways that God is “superfluous.” This is, therefore, love of God, the insulting rejection of whom by modern man we feel profoundly, and we are ready to cry out with Christ on the Cross: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

At the same time it is love of people, of all men and women without any exception or division: without difference of race, culture, language or world outlook, without distinction between friends and enemies. This is love for people—it desires every true good for each individual and for every human community, every family, every nation, every social group, for young people, adults, parents, the elderly—a love for everyone without exception. This is love, or rather an anxious solicitude to ensure for each individual every true good and to remove and drive away every sort of evil.

And, if any of our contemporaries do not share the faith and hope which lead me, as a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God,¹³⁵ to implore God's mercy for humanity in this hour of history, let them at least try to understand the reason for my concern. It is dictated by love for man, for all that is human and which, according to the intuitions of many of our contemporaries, is threatened by an immense danger. The mystery

of Christ, which reveals to us the great vocation of man and which led me to emphasize in the encyclical “Redemptor Hominis” his incomparable dignity, also obliges me to proclaim mercy as God's merciful love, revealed in that same mystery of Christ. It likewise obliges me to have recourse to that mercy and to beg for it at this difficult, critical phase of the history of the church and of the world, as we approach the end of the second millennium.

In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, in the spirit of his messianic mission, enduring in the history of humanity, we raise our voices and pray that the love which is in the Father may once again be revealed at this stage of history, and that, through the work of the Son and Holy Spirit, it may be shown to be present in our modern world and to be more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death. We pray for this through the intercession of her who does not cease to proclaim “mercy... from generation to generation,” and also through the intercession of those for whom there have been completely fulfilled the words of the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”¹³⁶

In continuing the great task of implementing the Second Vatican Council, in which we can rightly see a new phase of the self-realization of the church—in keeping with the epoch in which has been our destiny to live—the church herself must be constantly guided by the full consciousness that in this work it is not permissible for her, for any reason, to withdraw into herself. The reason for her existence is, in fact, to reveal God, that Father who allows us to “see” him in Christ.¹⁴⁰ No matter how strong the resistance of human history may be, no matter how great the denial of God in the human world, so much the greater must be the church's closeness to that mystery which, hidden for centuries in God, was then truly shared with man, in time, through Jesus Christ.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the 30th day of November, the First Sunday of Advent, in the year 1980, the third of the pontificate.

Footnotes

1. Eph. 2:4.
2. Cf. Jn. 1:18; Heb. 1:1f.
3. Jn. 14:8-9.
4. Eph. 2:4-5.
5. 2 Cor. 1:3.
6. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, “Gaudium et Spes,” 22: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1042.
7. Cf. ibid.
8. 1 Tim. 6:16.
9. Rom. 1:20.
10. Jn. 1:18.
11. 1 Tim. 6:16.
12. Tit. 3:4.
13. Eph. 2:4.
14. Cf. Gen. 1:28.
15. Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World, “Gaudium et Spes,” 9: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1032.
16. 2 Cor. 1:3.
17. Mt. 6:4, 6, 18.
18. Cf. Eph. 3:18; also Lk. 11:5-13.
19. Lk. 4:18-19.
20. Lk. 7:19.
21. Lk. 7:22-23.
22. Jn. 4:16.
23. Eph. 2:4.
24. Lk. 15:11-32.
25. Lk. 10:30-37.
26. Mt. 18:23-35.
27. Mt. 18:12-14; Lk. 15:3-7.
28. Lk. 15:8-19.
29. Mt. 22:38.
30. Mt. 5:7.
31. Cf. Judges 3:7-9.
32. Cf. 1 Kgs. 8:22-53.
33. Cf. Micah 7:18-20.
34. Cf. Is. 1:18; 51:4-16.
35. Cf. Bar. 2:11-3, 8.
36. Cf. Neh. 9.
37. Cf. e.g., Hosea 2:21-25 and 15; Is. 54:6-8.
38. Cf. Jer. 31:20; Ez. 39:25-29.
39. Cf. 2 Sam. 11; 12:24; 10.
40. Job passim.
41. Esther 4:17f.
42. Cf. e.g., Neh. 9:30-32; Tob. 3:2-3, 11-12; 8:16-17; 1 Mac. 4:24.
43. Cf. Ex. 3:7f.
44. Cf. Is. 63:9.
45. Ex. 34:6.

15. The Church Appeals to the Mercy of God

The church proclaims the truth of God's mercy revealed in the crucified and Risen Christ, and she professes it in various ways. Furthermore, she seeks to practice mercy toward people through people, and she sees in this an indispensable condition for solicitude for a better and “more human” world, today and tomorrow. However, at no time and in no historical period—especially at a moment as critical as our own—can the church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it. Precisely this is the fundamental right and duty of the church in Christ Jesus, her right and duty toward God and toward humanity. The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word “mercy,” moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy, “with loud cries.”¹³⁵ These “loud cries” should be the mark of the church of our times, cries uttered to God to implore his mercy, the certain manifestation of which she professes and proclaims as having already come in Jesus crucified and risen, that is, in the Paschal Mystery. It is

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46. Cf. Num. 14:18; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86 (85); Wis. 15:1; Sir. 2:11; Joel 2:13.
 47. Cf. Is. 63:16.
 48. Cf. Ex. 4:22.
 49. Cf. Hosea 2:3.
 50. Cf. Hos. 11:7-9; Jer. 31:20; Is. 54:7.
 51. Cf. Ps. 103 (102) and 145 (144).

52. In describing mercy, the books of the Old Testament use two expressions in particular, each having a different semantic nuance. First there is the term "hesed," which indicates a profound attitude of "goodness." When this is established between two individuals. They do not just wish each other well; they are also faithful to each other by virtue of an interior commitment, and therefore also by virtue of a faithfulness to themselves. Since "hesed" also means "grace" or "love," this occurs precisely on the basis of this fidelity. The fact that the commitment in question has not only a moral character but almost a juridical one makes no difference. When in the Old Testament the word "hesed" is used of the Lord, this always occurs in connection with the covenant that God established with Israel. Nevertheless, since, in harmony with the covenant entered into, God had made a commitment to respect it, "hesed" also acquired a certain sense a legal content. The juridical commitment on God's part ceased to oblige whenever Israel broke the covenant and did not respect its conditions. But precisely at this point, "hesed," in ceasing to be a juridical obligation, revealed its deeper aspect: it showed itself as what it was at the beginning, that is, as love that gives, love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin.

This fidelity vis-a-vis the unfaithful "daughter of my people" (cf. Lam. 4:3, 6) is, in brief, on God's part, fidelity to himself. This becomes obvious in the frequent recurrence together of the two terms "hesed" and "emet" (grace and fidelity), which could be considered a case of hendiadys (cf. e.g., Ex. 34:6; 2 Sam. 2:6; 15:20; Ps. 25(24):10; 40(39):11-12; 85(84):11; 138(137):2; Mic. 7:20). "It is not for

your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name" (Ezek. 36:22). Therefore Israel, although burdened with guilt for having broken the covenant, cannot lay claim to God's "hesed" on the basis of (legal) justice; yet it can and must go on hoping and trusting to obtain it, since the God of the covenant is really "responsible for his love." The fruits of this love are forgiveness and restoration to grace the reestablishment of the interior covenant.

The second word in the terminology of the Old Testament serves to define mercy is "rahamim." This has a different nuance from that of "hesed." While "hesed" highlights the marks of fidelity to self and of "responsibility for one's own love" (which are in a certain sense masculine characteristics), "rahamim," in its very root, denotes the love of a mother ("reham" mother's womb). From the deep and original bond—indeed the unity—that links a mother to her child there springs a particular relationship to the child, a particular love. Of this love one can say that it is completely gratuitous, not merited, and that in this aspect it constitutes an interior necessity: an exigency of the heart. It is, as it were, a "feminine" variation of the masculine fidelity to self expressed by "hesed." Against this psychological background, "rahamim" generates a whole range of feelings, including goodness and tenderness, patience and understanding, that is, readiness to forgive.

The Old Testament attributes to the Lord precisely these characteristics, when it uses the term "rahamim" in speaking of him. We read in Isaiah: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Is. 49:15). This love, faithful and invincible thanks to the mysterious power of motherhood, is expressed in the Old Testament texts in various ways: as salvation from dangers, especially from enemies; also as forgiveness of sins—of individuals and also for the whole of Israel; and finally in readiness to

fulfill the (eschatological) promise and hope, in spite of human infidelity, as we read in Hosea: "I will love their faithlessness, I will love them freely" (Hosea 14:5).

In the terminology of the Old Testament we also find other expressions, referring in different ways to the same basic content. But the two terms mentioned above deserve special attention. They clearly show their original anthropomorphic aspect: in describing God's mercy, the biblical authors use terms that correspond to the consciousness and experience of their contemporaries. The Greek terminology in the Septuagint translation does not show as great a wealth as the Hebrew: therefore it does not offer all the semantic nuances proper to the original text. At any rate the New Testament builds upon the wealth and depth that already marked the Old.

In this way, we have inherited from the Old Testament—as it were in a special synthesis—not only the wealth of expressions used by those books in order to define God's mercy, but also a specific and obviously anthropomorphic "psychology" of God: the image of his anxious love, which in contact with evil, and in particular with the sin of the individual and of the people, is manifested as mercy. This image is made up not only of the rather general content of the verb "hanan" but also of the content of "hesed" and "rahamim." The term "hanan" expresses a wider concept: it means in fact the manifestation of grace, which involves, so to speak, a constant predisposition to be generous, benevolent and merciful.

In addition to these basic semantic elements, the Old Testament concept of mercy is also made up of what is included in the verb "hamal," which literally means "to spare" (a defeated enemy) but also "to show mercy and compassion," and in consequence forgiveness and remission of guilt. There is also the term "has," which expresses pity and compassion, but especially in the affective sense. These terms appear more rarely in the biblical texts to denote mercy. In addition,

one must note the word "emet," already mentioned: it means primarily "solidity, security" (in the Greek of the Septuagint, "truth") and then "fidelity," and in this way it seems to link up with the semantic content proper to the term "hesed."

53. Ps. 40(39):11; 98(97):2f; Is. 45:21; 51:5, 8; 56:1.
 54. Wis. 11:24.
 55. 1 Jn. 4:16.
 56. Jer. 31:3.
 57. Is. 54:100.
 58. Jon. 4:2, 11; Ps. 145(144):9; Sir. 18:8-14; Wis. 11:24-12:1.
 59. 1 Jn. 14:9.
 60. In both places it is a case of "hesed," i.e., the fidelity that God manifests to his own love for the people, fidelity to the promises that will find their definitive fulfillment precisely in the motherhood of the Mother of God (cf. Lk. 1:49-54).
 61. Cf. Lk. 1:72. Here too it is a case of mercy in the meaning of "hesed," insofar as in the following sentences, in which Zechariah speaks of the "tender mercy of our God," there is clearly expressed the second meaning, namely, "rahamim" (Latin translation: "viscera misericordiae"), which rather identifies God's mercy with a mother's love.
 62. Cf. Lk. 15:14-32.
 63. Lk. 15:18-19.
 64. Lk. 15:20.
 65. Lk. 15:32.
 66. Cf. Lk. 15:3-6.
 67. Cf. Lk. 15:8-9.
 68. 1 Cor. 13:4-8.
 69. Cf. Rom. 12:21.
 70. Cf. the liturgy of the Easter Vigil: the Exsultet.
 71. Acts 10:38.
 72. Mt. 9:35.
 73. Cf. Mk. 15:37; Jn. 19:30.
 74. Is. 53:5.
 75. 2 Cor. 5:21.
 76. Ibid.
 77. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.
 78. Jn. 3:16.
 79. Cf. Jn. 14:9.
 80. Mt. 10:28.
 81. Phil. 2:8.
 82. 2 Cor. 5:21.

83. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:54-55.
 84. Cf. Lk. 4:18-21.
 85. Cf. Lk. 7:20-23.
 86. Cf. Is. 35:5; 61:1-3.
 87. 1 Cor. 15:4.
 88. Rev. 21:1.
 89. Rev. 21:4.
 90. Cf. Rev. 21:4.
 91. Rev. 3:20.
 92. Cf. Mt. 24:35.
 93. Cf. Rev. 3:20.
 94. Mt. 25:40.
 95. Mt. 5:7.
 96. Jn. 14:9.
 97. Rom. 8:32.
 98. Mk. 12:27.
 99. Jn. 29:19-23.
 100. Ps. 89(88):2.
 101. Lk. 1:50.
 102. Cf. 2 Cor. 1:21-22.
 103. Lk. 1:50.
 104. Cf. Ps. 85(84):11.
 105. Lk. 1:50.
 106. Cf. Lk. 4:18.
 107. Cf. Lk. 7:22.
 108. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen Gentium," p. 63.
 109. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et Spes," 10: AAS 58 (1960), p. 1032.
 110. Ibid.
 111. Mt. 5:38.
 112. Cf. Jn. 14:9-10.
 113. Jn. 14:9.
 114. Cf. 1 Cor. 11:26; acclamation in the Roman Missal.

115. Jn. 3:16.
 116. 1 Jn. 4:8.
 117. Cf. 1 Cor. 13:4.
 118. 2 Cor. 1:3.
 119. Rom. 8:26.
 120. Mt. 5:7.
 121. Cf. Mt. 25:34-40.
 122. Cf. 1 Cor. 13:4.
 123. Cf. Lk. 15:11-32.
 124. Cf. Lk. 15:1-10.
 125. Cf. "Insegnamenti di Paolo VI," XIII (1975), p. 1568 (close of Holy Year, Dec. 25, 1975).
 126. Mt. 5:38.
 127. Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "Gaudium et Spes," 40 AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1057-1059; Pope Paul VI: Apostolic Exhortation "Paterna cum Benevolentia," in particular nos. 1-6: AAS 67 (1975), pp. 7-9, 17-23.
 128. Cf. 1 Jn. 2:16.
 129. Mt. 6:12.
 130. Eph. 4:2; cf. Gal. 6:2.
 131. Mt. 18:22.
 132. Cf. Lk. 15:32.
 133. Cf. Is. 12:3.
 134. Mt. 10:8.
 135. Cf. Heb. 5:7.
 136. Cf. Wis. 11:24; Ps. 145 (144):9; Gen. 1:31.
 137. Lk. 23:34.
 138. Cf. 1 Cor. 4:1.
 139. Mt. 5:7.
 140. Cf. Jn. 14:9.

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The Gospels and families (from 7)

saying: "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and child and brothers and sisters, yes even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." (Lk 14:26) Matthew's gospel keeps us from understanding "hate" in a spiritual sense.

In Matthew's gospel Jesus says, "every-one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake will receive a hundred-fold, and inherit eternal life." (Mt 19:29)

Leaving your family is one thing, but Mark places an even higher price on discipleship. In his gospel we hear Jesus say, "And brother will deliver up brother to death, and father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (Mk 13:12-13)

The invitation "Come, follow me" seems to require leaving behind all relationships. My point is clarified by Luke's description of a discussion Jesus had with a rich man. The man asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responds, "You know the commandments . . . honor your father and mother?" To which the man answered, "These I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The man, because he was very rich, left dejected. Jesus reflecting said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (Lk 18:18-25)

Luke's story shows a man being called to leave his family behind, uncared for. "Sell all that you have and come follow me." Jesus does not say sell all, except enough to provide for your family and follow me.

THE GOSPELS are portraying a very non-traditional view of family responsibility. For example, in Luke's gospel, a man volunteers to follow Jesus wherever He goes. Only, the man says, "If he could first go and bury his father." Jesus responds, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead." Another said, "I will follow you Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home (family)." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk 9:59-62)

The gospels portray Jesus proposing a further readjustment of family relationships. During a teaching session Jesus is

informed that his mother and his brothers and sisters—his family—are waiting outside. In reply, Jesus says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister, and mother—my family.'" (Mk 3:33-35)

If we are to follow Jesus according to the gospels, it seems that we must reject even our family relationships. The gospel writers strongly imply that the mission of God creates a new order of relationships. So significant is this new order that it even ends the traditional bonds of family.



st. paul writes to the church in corinth

by Fr. John J. Castelot

The letters of St. Paul serve as a rather sobering corrective to our very natural tendency to idealize the first Christians. It is so easy to transform the old days into "the good old days."

This happened in the New Testament itself, with the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. Its author, St. Luke, looking back late in the first century, painted a consistently rosy picture of life among first generation Christians. He had his own very good reasons for doing so.

We may ask with a sigh why we can't be like the first Christians. We have the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, the same Eucharist. Paul reassures us that we are not all that different.

Paul's converts were not overnight saints, but real flesh-and-blood people, struggling to meet the challenge of the Christian ideal in a pagan, often hostile world.

Paul's correspondence with the church of Corinth reflects a real-life parish with more than its share of problems. The case he deals with in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5, is a first-class shocker. A man in the community is living in an incestuous union with his stepmother. Paul can hardly believe his ears! Not even their pagan neighbors, bad as they were, would countenance such behavior—and the Christian community was supposed to be an example!

Apparently some Corinthian Christians had been so carried away that they considered themselves free from society's ordinary restraints. This attitude reveals itself more than once in this letter.

IF THE MAN'S actions upset Paul, the reactions of Corinthians upset him even more. They have done nothing to correct the situation; they actually seemed

quite proud of their sophistication: "Still you continue to be self-satisfied, instead of grieving, and getting rid of the offender!" (1 Cor. 5:2).

What a way to carry out their mission to transform society! As for Paul, he would brook no further delay.

Under the circumstances, Paul can only cast an absentee vote, but he leaves no doubt what that vote is. He may be physically absent, but he is very actively present in spirit. "I . . . have already passed sentence in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ on the man who did this deed." (1 Cor. 5:3)

But another translation of this passage could be suggested, based on the order of the words in Greek: "I have already passed sentence on the man who did this deed in the name of the Lord Jesus." This could indicate that the fellow, with tacit approval of the community, had been so audacious as to think he was entering a Christian marriage!

Paul's decision is clear and he expects the community to concur. "I hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord." (1 Cor. 5:5) To us, thinking as we do today, this suggests physical punishment for the sake of spiritual salvation.

However, Paul was not that simplistic. Thinking in Semitic categories, he would not have tended to split the human person into flesh and spirit, body and soul. A person was an integral person.

WITHIN THE community the man enjoyed protection from the pressures of a disoriented society (Satan) and experienced love and moral support and peace.

Cut off from society, the man would be handed over to his own resources, at the mercy of all sorts of hostile pressures. Paul hoped this separation from the community would bring the man to his senses.

The awakening would be painful: In this sense it would involve "the destruction of the flesh." But Paul's unexpressed hope is that the man would return to the shelter of the community, where he can "be saved on the day of the Lord."

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ers are recognition of the truth that people C photo)

ne enemies

firms their message by doing many signs and wonders through their hands.

The city slowly becomes divided over Paul and Barnabas. Most townspeople take sides in the dispute. Some side with the Jews who oppose the two missionaries. Others side with Paul and Barnabas.

Feelings grow more intense as time goes on. The dispute becomes more heated. Hostilities grow.

Finally some gentiles and some Jews make a move against Paul and Barnabas. Their leaders encourage a plot against the two. They plan to capture them and stone them.

Paul and Barnabas hear of the plot in time to escape from Iconium. With the help of their friends they slip out of the city unnoticed. They take to the highway once again. They decide to go south to the towns of Lystra and Derbe.

They stay in these towns for short periods. They also spend time with families in the surrounding countryside. Everywhere they go, they tell everyone the good news about Jesus Christ.

Suggestions for parents, teachers and young people using the Children's Story Hour for a catechetical moment:

PROJECTS:

1. Make paper bag puppets to represent Paul and Barnabas. Put on a puppet show for your family or friends that tells the story of their stay in Iconium.
2. Create a billboard for the synagogue in Iconium advertising the fact that Paul and Barnabas are going to be there for a service. Tell what they will be preaching about and indicate the day and time of the service.

Read and discuss the story. Questions like the following may be used to guide your discussion.

QUESTIONS:

- Why were Paul and Barnabas wandering about Iconium?
- What did they do when they got to Iconium? Is this similar to anything they have done in other cities?
- How did people respond to what Paul and Barnabas preached in Iconium?
- How does the Lord show Paul and Barnabas that he is with them?
- What is it that the two men do wherever they go?

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Question Box

Why do we put corpse of Jesus on our crosses?

by Msgr. R. T. Bosler

Q From my attendance at relatives' weddings, I know that Protestant churches never place the corpse of Jesus on display crosses. If Catholics also believe that Christ rose from the dead, why don't we follow the same custom?

A There's a lot of history behind the difference. Crosses and candles are something relatively new in Protestant churches. It was only in this century that they began to display ornamental crosses on church buildings and on altar tables. There was a reason for this. At the time of the Reformation there was superstition and ignorance among the uneducated masses of Europe, many of whom attributed magic powers to statues, crosses, blessed candles, relics, etc. The Reformers condemned all this as superstition and idolatry and cleared the churches of all ornamentation—though the Lutherans and Anglicans used some discretion.

Today there is a growing trend within Protestantism to recognize the importance of symbols in worship and to place more emphasis on the sacraments at a time when Catholics are purifying their worship of excessive symbolism and emphasizing the importance of Scripture. All this may be part of the movement to church unity; certainly, Catholics and Protestants feel more at home in one another's modern churches than they do in the older buildings.

The early Christians did not use the cross as a symbol because of its connection with the execution of the lowest type of criminal. After the Emperor Constantine claimed to have conquered his enemy under the sign of a cross seen in the sky



and he himself thereupon abolished crucifixion as a form of execution, the cross became the great symbol of victory for Christians.

The earliest crucifixes (crosses with a representation of Christ) appeared in the fifth century. The body of Christ was presented as triumphant with a victory crown on the head and the eyes open. However, as more and more emphasis was placed on the Mass as a remembrance of the sacrifice of Calvary, the crucifixes began to portray the sufferings of Jesus. The crown of thorns replaced the royal crown in the 13th century.

The great plagues that made Europeans so conscious of death turned them to contemplation of the bloody death of Jesus and led to the desire for realistic depictions of the dead Christ on the cross.

The trend today in Catholic art is to return to the triumphant crucifixes of the early church, reflecting the new stress on the Resurrection in Catholic worship and devotion.

Q During November people usually say the Rosary for their deceased. Are we supposed to meditate only on the sorrowful mysteries all during November?

A The Rosary is a private devotion. You are free to meditate on any mysteries you choose. Since the Mass for the day of burial is now called the Mass of the Resurrection, the glorious mysteries would seem appropriate when remembering the dead.

Q Is the fast before Communion to be one hour before Mass begins or one hour from the time Communion is received?

A One hour before Communion.

(Msgr. Bosler welcomes questions from readers. Those of general interest will be answered here. Write to him at 600 North Alabama, Indianapolis, Ind. 46204.)

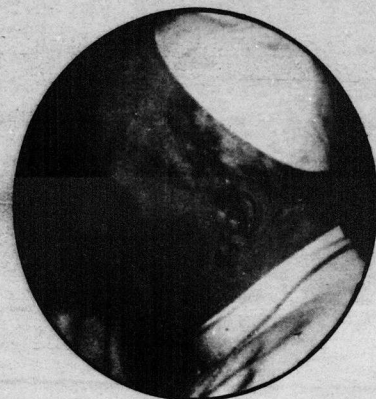
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by Msgr. John J. Doyle

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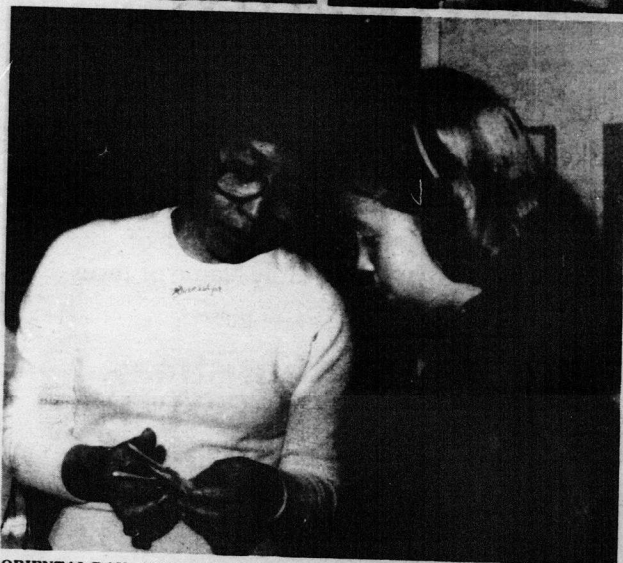
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ORIENTAL DAY—Fifth graders in Mrs. Julie Monahan's class at St. Pius X school, Indianapolis, recently celebrated an "Oriental Day." Students dressed in oriental costumes, heard lectures, ate food from the Far East, and tried their hand at oriental crafts. Pictured here, are (top left) Eileen Caito, gently trying to eat with oriental sticks; Chris Quigley, intent on the Japanese craft of origami; and Mrs. Mitsuyo Woodward, guest lecturer, showing a student how to construct butterflies from paper, an origami skill. (Photos by Peter Feuerherd)

Forum will discuss draft registration

A public forum to discuss draft registration will be held at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 7, at All Saints Episcopal Church at 16th and Central, Indianapolis.

Panelists will include Col. Clark S. Ketterman, commander of the Selective Ser-

vice section of the Indiana National Guard, discussing the current status of draft registration; a representative of the American Legion, giving the pro-registration position; Robert J. Rumsey, associate secretary of Friends World Committee,

presenting the case for conscientious objection; and Tim Boal, pastor of Second Moravian Church, speaking on draft resistance.

The forum is sponsored by New Call to Peacemaking, a Christian pacifist organization.

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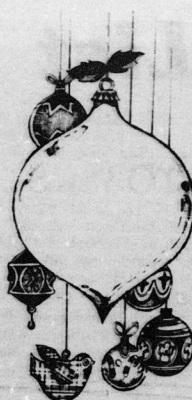
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the Active List

December 5

The regular monthly nocturnal adoration for First Friday will be held at Holy Spirit Church, Indianapolis from 9 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday. Neighboring parishioners are invited to participate.

The annual Catholic Social Services Christmas program is under way. Persons interested in sponsoring a family or contributing a donation are directed to call 317-632-9401.

►Dec. 13: Mary Catherine Wild, harpist.

►Dec. 20: The Ambassadors, chorus from southside K of C council, Joe Rathz, director.

December 6, 7

The Christmas bazaar at St. Bernadette parish, 4826 Fletcher Ave., Indianapolis, will be held from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

December 6

A series of Advent concerts will be held at St. Mark Church, U.S. 31S at Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. They begin at 5 p.m. and include the following:

►Dec. 6: Victor DeFelice, tenor, Mrs. Ruth Greenwell, soprano, Mrs. Rosalynn DeFelice, organist.

December 7

An open house for eighth graders and their parents will be held at Chatared High School, Indianapolis, from 1 to 4 p.m. Following an opening program, tours may be made of the school. A door prize—a scholarship to be used at Chatared—will be awarded at the end of the afternoon.

ST. BERNADETTE

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

December 6 & December 7
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. & 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Lots of Baked Goods, Christmas Decorations and Gifts will be on Sale. Proceeds go towards the purchase of school equipment.

4826 Fletcher Avenue — Indianapolis, Indiana

St. Mary parish at Aurora will have a smorgasbord and holiday boutique from noon until 5 p.m.

The monthly Ultraya for the Indianapolis Cursillo movement will be held at Holy Cross parish house, 126 N. Oriental, at 7:30 p.m.

A Natural Family Planning program is being conducted at St. Maurice parish, Napoleon, from 2 to 4 p.m. Any married or engaged couple is welcome.

Secunia High School, Indianapolis, announces its annual open house from 1 to 4 p.m. Eighth graders and their parents are extended a special invitation to attend.

December 9

The Ave Maria Guild will have a Christmas pitch-in luncheon at noon at St. Paul Hermitage, Beech Grove.

A leisure day for women is scheduled at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, west of New Albany, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 812-923-8810 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for reservations.

December 10

A luncheon and card party set for 11:30 a.m. will be held

at St. Mark parish hall, Indianapolis. Card games will begin at 12:30 p.m.

The residents of St. Augustine Home for the Aged will be guests at a Christmas party at the home at 1:30 p.m. The St. Augustine Guild will host the party.

Dec. 10, 11

The annual Madrigal dinners at Marian College will be held in the Allison Mansion. Wassail reception will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by a festive dinner. The 16-member Madrigal group and the 43-voice Marian Choral will perform. Call 924-3291, extension 215, for reservations at \$8.50 per person.

December 11

United Catholic Singles' Club (ages 35-65) will have a Christmas dinner at St. Pius X Knights of Columbus Hall, 71st and Keystone, Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. Reservations requested. Call 542-9348 or 546-7569.

December 12

The Indianapolis Cursillo Community will sponsor an Ultraya at St. Thomas Aquinas community room, Indianapolis, at 7:30 p.m.

The residents of St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis will be guests of the Home's Guild for a Christmas party at 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 12, 13

"Santa's Workshop" is the theme for the Christmas bazaar at St. Augustine Home, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. The bazaar hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days.

December 12-14

Retreat schedules for the weekend include the following:
►Intensive Journal workshop, Kordes Center, phone 812-367-9952, Ferdinand.
►Marriage Encounter weekend, Canyon Inn, McCormick Creek State Park, hosted by Bedford couples, phone 812-332-6993.

►Life in the Spirit Workshop for beginners interested in the Charismatic renewal, Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis; call Sister Sue Jenkins, 317-283-2819.

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►Christmas Family Retreat, Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, Mount St. Francis, IN, 812-923-8818.

reservations call Debbie or Cindy Rhinaman, 638-1634.

December 14

Four parishes will join for a retreat program for teens in their junior and senior years in high school from 2 to 8 p.m. at St. Columba parish, Columbus. The parishes include St. Maurice, Napoleon; St. Maurice, R.R. 6, Greensburg; St. Columba and St. Bartholomew, Columbus. Teens from St. John parish, Osgood, and St. John parish, Enochburg are invited to join as guests of the host parishes. Father Kim Wolf and a retreat team from the Archdiocesan Vocations Office will direct the program.

December 13

The high school placement test for public school students interested in attending Providence High School, Clarksville, in 1981-82 will be administered from 8:30 a.m. to noon. For more information call Ms. Lippman, 812-945-2538.

St. Patrick Youth Organization will sponsor a breakfast in the parish hall, 936 Prospect St., Indianapolis, beginning at 10 a.m. For information and/or

'Fifth Wheelers' slate party

The Fifth Wheelers, a club for widows and widowers, will have its annual Christmas party on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 1520 Riverside Drive, Indianapolis.

A cocktail hour at 5:30

p.m., dinner at 6:30, and entertainment and dancing to a live band is planned. Reservations and information may be obtained from Mary Worthington at 862-6510 or Betty Martin at 784-3239.

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† **ASHER, David J. Jr.**, 39, Las Vegas fire victim, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Son of Mr. and Mrs. David J. Asher Sr.; brother of Patricia Shewman, Richard, James and Gary Asher.

† **BARD, Raymond George**, 59, St. Michael, Charlestown, Nov. 17. Brother of Dorothy M. Mike-sell, Roy and Martin Bard.

† **BENNETT, Joseph Earl**, 61, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, Nov. 22. Survivors: Helen Wylie, Jerrilyn Bennett and Mary Lou Rini.

† **COYLE, Steven Edward**, 26, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 21. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Coyle; brother of Paul, Jon, William and Ronald; grandson of Emmett Lemaire, Cordelia Coyle and Marcella Young.

† **DONATO, Dr. Albert M.**, St. Matthew, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Husband of Marie; father of Elaine D. Boltin and Albert M. Jr.; brother of Mrs. Thomas A. Cortese.

† **GARTLAND, Delight Maher**, 90, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Mother of Kathryn Finerman, Mary Ellen Martin and Elizabeth Grimes.

† **GORGOL, Elsie A.**, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Mother of Connie Curtis, Robert and Charles Gorgol; sister of Bess Gallagher.

† **GRINSTEAD, Joseph R.**, 62, Nativity, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Husband of Helen; father of Mary Helen Murphy, Jo Ellen Johnson, Marge Stahley and Joseph B.; brother of Robert, Harold, James, Mar-

garet Eley, Betty Clark, Dorothy Burns and Mildred Reynolds.

† **GUENZEL, Warren R.**, 42, St. Patrick, Terre Haute, Nov. 22.

† **JOLISSAINT, Bertha C.**, 80, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 23. Wife of Frank; mother of Carylon Seger, Marylon Ehlers, Dolores Schulte and Therese Leavy; sister of Oliva McKinley.

† **KIENZLE, Louva R.**, 68, St. Andrew, Richmond, Nov. 26. Wife of Charles; sister of Helen Johnson.

† **KOEHLER, Genevieve (Mc-**

Grath), 80, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 1.

† **KRAUS, Marie K.**, St. Andrew, Richmond, Nov. 20. Mother-in-law of Virginia Kraus.

† **LAURENZANA, Maria Christina**, 86, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Maria Caselli.

† **LEWIS, Mary Elizabeth (Kipper)**, 83, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 22. Mother of Mrs. Leon T. Caine and James A. Lewis Jr.; sister of Mrs. Clyde Jones.

† **LOGAN, Ray W.**, 66, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Husband of Clara; father of William and Robert; brother of John.

† **MARBAUGH, M. Gertrude**, 77, St. Augustine Home, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Mother of Ann and James E.

† **MICHEL, Regina Lee**, 86, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 25. Wife of William; mother of Mary Lee Rossbach.

† **NOBBE, Albert**, 77, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 25. Husband of Gladys; father of Wilma Fryar, Robert, Eugene, Werner and Paul Nobbe; brother of Sylvester, Harry and Raymond Nobbe and Margaret Welch.

† **OLSON, Raymond W.**, 62, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 28. Husband of Mary (Newton); father of Theresa, David, Joe, Dana and Paul Olson.

† **RAAB, Anton**, St. Charles, Bloomington, Nov. 24.

† **RATZ, Margaret M.**, 77, St. Michael, Brookville, Nov. 26. Mother of Irene Bruns, Alice Gessell, Patricia Moody, Dolores Bossert, Bonnie Hornback, Joseph, William, Eugene, Thomas and David Ratz; half-sister of Kathleen LaHaye.

† **REPPHAN, Walter**, 71, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 22. Husband of Ann.

† **RICHTER, Helen M.**, 62, St. Catherine, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Ora A.; mother of Lorelei Quesser, Becky Cook, Mary Ann Crawford, John and Michael Richter.

† **RODIE, Charlie**, 69, Sacred Heart, Terre Haute, Nov. 24. Husband of Elizabeth; father of Martha Concannon, Camilla Bush and Mary Jo Hoole; brother of Martha Daniels and Albert Rodie.

† **SCHAEFER, Clara L.**, 76, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Wife of Bernard; mother of Norma Saltee and Carolyn Sullivan; sister of Ann Cotton.

† **SCHAFER, James Edward**, 53, St. Michael, Charlestown, Nov. 22. Husband of Patricia; father of Susan Reynolds, Cynthia Grace, Judith, Denise and Dennis Schafer; brother of Mary Albertson.

† **SITZMAN, Clara**, 85, St. Meinrad Church, St. Meinrad; mother of Arthur, Mrs. Henry Lee Holtzman, Mrs. Dan Roos and Mrs. James Lueken; sister of Agnes Sitzman.

† **SMITH, Mary A. (Steinert)**, 85, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 26. Sister of Joseph Steinert, Mrs. Ehren Beaucon and Agnes Hubler.

† **SUESZ, Margaret**, 82, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Wife of Leo; mother of Leonard Suesz, Dorothy Wheatley, Joanne Hufaker and Margie Miller.

† **SULLIVAN, Adelaide E.**, 68, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Wife of Michael; mother of Mary Ellen Perron, Kitty Cottrion and Joseph Sullivan.

† **TINIUS, William F.**, 63, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 26. Father of Timothy, Thomas and Tama; son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Fred Tinius; brother of A. Frederick, Frank, Pat, John and George Tin-

ius, Marie Braunbeck, Margaret Gunther and Rosie Block.

† **VILLIER, Lucile E. (Stevart)**, 64, Holy Family, New Albany, Nov. 26. Wife of Howard Sr. mother of Howard Jr., William and Robert.

† **VORNHOLT, Margare (Sanders)**, 63, St. Anthony, Clarksville, Nov. 29. Mother of Dr. Lawrence L. Vornholt; sister of James and Walter Sanders.

† **WERNER, William A.**, 87, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Husband of Josephine; father of Barbara Schaefer, brother of Edna Higgins.

† **WESTBROOK, Thelma G.**, 77, St. Charles, Bloomington, Nov. 11. Wife of Martin; sister of Loren Mae Jones.

† **WIWL, Edna**, 82, St. Peter, Franklin County, Nov. 14. Mother of Lorena Riehle.

Sister James Marie Strasburger

OLDENBURG, Ind.—The Mass of Christian Burial for Franciscan Sister James Marie Strasburger, 92, was held at the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis here on Nov. 21.

An Oldenburg native, Sister James Marie (nee Clara) was born on Aug. 29, 1888. She entered the Franciscan congregation on July 2, 1920.

Before entering the community, she taught in the public schools in Franklin County. As a Sister she taught in schools in Ohio and Indiana including Immaculate Conception Academy, Oldenburg; St. Joseph, Shelbyville; St. Andrew, Richmond; and St. Mary Academy, Indianapolis. She also served as supervisor of the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Catholic Schools for 19 years.

There are no immediate survivors.

Local Hispanics discuss issues

ROCHESTER—Leaders of the Hispanic communities of Indiana met here to discuss the theme of the His-

panic family, education and the mass media.

The conference, sponsored by the Hispanic Concerns Committee of the Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality (IICHE) featured a wide range of discussions that focused on, as one participant described it, "The problem of getting into the Anglo (white) system without losing traditional Hispanic values."

Conference leaders discussed the need for Hispanics to insist on full par-

ticipation in the political and social systems of American society.

Among the participants were Oldenburg Franciscan Sisters Rosanne Taylor and Carmen De Barros, Brother Arturo R. O'Campo, and Father Mauro Rodas.

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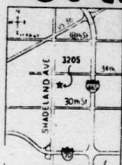
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What's Cookin'?

It's almost like motherly love

by Cynthia Dewes

Next to motherly love and warm baths, one of the most comforting things in this world has to be a bowl of homemade soup—especially in these nippy fall days. Soup is satisfying to cook and satisfying to eat, usually economical to fix and adaptable to any number of diners. It is a great way to use up leftovers or utilize seasonal or regional foods. The French, for example have elevated fish heads and veggies into an elegant national pride called Bouillabaisse.

The Basques of southern France and northern Spain have developed another characteristic soup which is almost a stew.

Basque Soup

Soak one (1) lb. white pea beans and ½ lb. dried peas overnight in water (unless they are the quick-cooking type). Next day, put them in a deep kettle with a meaty ham bone, two (2) bay leaves, an onion stuck with two (2) cloves and three (3) quarts of water. Cook one (1) hour or until beans are tender. Drain, reserving liquid. In bean liquid cook six (6) potatoes cut small, four (4) sliced carrots, four (4) diced turnips, five (5) cut-up leeks, six (6) chopped garlic cloves, one (1) tsp. thyme, one (1) bay leaf. When tender, add one (1) small shredded cabbage, the beans and peas, meat from ham bone and twelve (12) sausages. Cook until cabbage is just tender and soup very thick. Sprinkle grated Swiss cheese on top and serve hot.

Serves 6 to 8

Served with warm bread and a salad, such soups make perfect dinners for winter evenings. Here's another:

Barley-Vegetable Soup

2 lb. soup bone (½ meat)
2 tablespoons shortening
2 quarts water
1½ tablespoons salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons parsley
¼ cup barley
1 cup cubed carrots
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup chopped celery
2 cups cooked tomatoes (1 lb. can)
1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)

Remove meat from bone; cut meat into cubes and brown in hot shortening. Place meat, bone, water, seasonings and parsley in kettle. Cover and cook one (1) hour. Add barley and cook one (1) more hour. Cool (preferably overnight) and skim fat. Remove bone, add vegetables and cook 45 minutes. Add peas or leftovers and continue cooking fifteen (15) minutes.

Serves 8

Italians are also famous for a meal-in-itself soup. This version of Minestrone is easy to make and delicious, especially when re-heated.

Minestrone

½ cup olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery

4 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 six ounce can tomato paste
1 can beef broth or consomme soup, undiluted
9 cups water
1 cup coarsely chopped cabbage
2 carrots, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
Pinch of sage
1 lb. can kidney beans
1 cup green beans or peas
Any leftover veggies you have
1 cup elbow macaroni

Heat oil in large pot. Add next four (4) ingredients and cook until soft. Stir in tomato paste and next seven (7) ingredients. Mix well, bring to boil. Cover and simmer slowly one (1) hour. Add remaining ingredients. Cook ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes more or until macaroni is tender. Serve hot with grated Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.

Makes 8 generous servings

Fancy soups are sometimes called Bisques, while down home types are Chowders. Here we have a Bisque using a fancy vegetable and a Chowder using a plain one.

Mushroom Bisque

1 small onion, minced
1 lb. mushrooms, chopped fine
¼ cup butter
¼ cup flour
¾ teaspoon salt
Dash of cayenne
1 cup chicken broth

3 cups milk
2 tablespoons dry sherry
Minced parsley

Cook onion and mushrooms in butter in three (3) quart saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms are tender, about ten (10) minutes. Stir in flour, salt and cayenne. Gradually stir in broth and milk, cook and stir until thickened. Simmer five (5) minutes. Stir in sherry and sprinkle with parsley.

Serves 4

Corn Chowder

5 slices bacon
1 lb. can (2 cups) whole kernel corn
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 cup diced raw pared potatoes
½ teaspoon salt
1 can cream of celery soup
1½ cups milk

In large saucepan, cook bacon till crisp. Remove bacon, reserving drippings. Drain corn, reserving liquid. To bacon drippings in saucepan, add reserved corn liquid, the onion, potatoes and salt. Cover and simmer fifteen (15) minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add soup, milk and corn and heat through. Crumble bacon over chowder, and perhaps add a pat of butter.

Makes 5 or 6 servings

Potato and leek soups also come to mind when we recite the litany of favorite homemade vegetable soups.

Commercial products like Soup Starter are helpful when the cook has less time to spare. Even canned tomato soup tastes wonderful when made with milk or cream and served with a dollop of unsweetened (real) whipped cream on top. Combining congenial canned soups is another way to imitate the goodness of homemade soup.

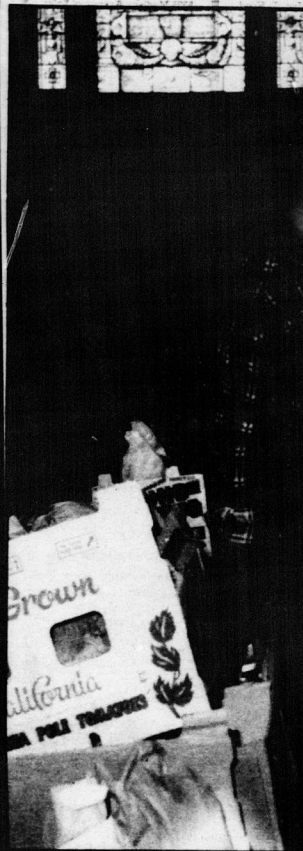
So when the cold weather sharpens appetites, use the soup of the day to satisfy them ... or maybe, the soup d'jour.

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The Thanksgiving Food Basket Program at Holy Cross Church, just completed, was a great success because of the generous support of many people. The Parish Unit of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was augmented by many volunteers who gave many hours of their time to pack the baskets and deliver them. Many others gave food supplies and financial contributions. The monetary contributions to St. Vincent de Paul Society are all tax deductible.

There were 124 calls made serving 246 adults and 276 children.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL WHO SERVED



Viewing with Arnold

The saga of 'Gloria'

by James W. Arnold

With "Gloria," the unique husband-and-wife movie team of Cassavetes and Rowlands makes a pure entertainment film for the first time, and it's very good news. The people who've been making them lately haven't been terribly entertaining.

Writer-director John Cassavetes, who supports his true vocation by acting in thrillers ("Two Minute Warning," "The Fury"), is a movie-making maverick who follows his own vision. He is unquestionably the most original major director on the American scene. While others have bemoaned their status as slaves in the Hollywood factory, but gladly accepted their wages, he's been out there making his own kind of films mostly for the love of it, and somehow surviving economically.

Just about every two years since 1968, Cassavetes and actress-spouse Gena Rowlands have turned out original movies, sometimes strange but always fascinating: "Faces," "Minnie and Moscovitz," "A Woman Under the Influence." Their relationship is one-of-a-kind in movie history, a genuine family enterprise.

Their films have tended to be realistic, emotion-churning dramas close to the lives of everyday people, often improvised, full of brilliant scenes, but never quite putting it all together.

Their last project, "Opening Night" (1978), about a



stage actress facing the truth of her fading youth, was sufficiently adult and intelligent so that it was practically shut out of theaters.

HAPPILY, that won't be the case with "Gloria,"

which is a compromise with popular taste, but still fresh and excitingly, intelligently offbeat.

Here, big blonde Rowlands (now 46) plays a role that nobody has ever played before. She's a tough New York woman with an underworld background, now modestly retired and settled into middle age. Suddenly, she's saddled with a small Puerto Rican boy (curly-headed John Adames), the only survivor of a family "hit" by the Mob because the father has become an FBI informer.

Gloria doesn't want the kid, doesn't even like kids. She's as much a movie type as Humphrey Bogart.

The boy isn't that crazy about her, either. But the gang wants to kill the child to finish their lesson in terror, and partly from instinct, partly from self-preservation, Gloria takes the boy on the run.

What follows then is a chase movie, through the streets and subways of the Bronx and Manhattan settling down briefly now and then in a restaurant, hotel, flophouse, tenement or one of those vast old New York apartment houses. The visuals are lovingly supported by a guitar and jazz score by Bill ("Rocky") Conti.

The relationship between woman and boy, at first abrasive, grows from crisis to crisis into something like love. Never maudlin, but understated, natural, warmly amusing.

THERE is no deep moral, although "Gloria" is obliquely about motherhood, just as Cassavetes' "Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976), another Mafia-based film, was indirectly about fatherhood. This is an odd couple we learn to cherish. Their adventures are unpredictable and guaranteed to keep us awake.

Perhaps the most refreshing angle in the movie is how Gloria turns the tables on our familiar expectations of the woman-as-victim. Without losing any of her essential womanliness, she consistently outthinks and outguits the Mob on every level, from the punk muscleman to the slick bosses in their three-piece suits.

Gloria knows a bad guy when she sees one, shoots first and with devastating effect, and even rubs it in on

the enemy's macho pride for letting a woman beat them.

It's fantasy, of course, just as when the underdog hero is Bronson or Eastwood. But there's a delight that's undeniable.

Cassavetes handles all this action and violence with sensitivity, emphasizing the complex humanity of players on all sides, and avoiding the easy shock.

Typical is the opening sequence in which the boy's family—parents, sister, grandmother—are obliterated in a raid on an apartment within the shadow of Yankee Stadium. The audience feels the horror—it knows all the victims and killers as individuals—but actually sees none of it. The mobsters have no relish for their job. No sexual or sadistic innuendo is ever suggested against either Gloria or the boy.

WHILE the mix of humanity and exhilarating action is what keys this movie, Cassavetes also has one marvelous and touching idea.

Gloria insists on taking the boy to a cemetery to "say goodbye" to his family. That it's not the right cemetery doesn't matter, because "all dead people are together anyway." So the kid, in some puzzlement, talks to

the tombstones.

This sets up a brilliant finale in another cemetery when the boy assumes Gloria is dead. It's the purest example this year of feeling without sentimentality.

(Solid action movie, tempered with human feeling recommended for adults and mature youth).

NCOMP rating: A-3—morally unobjectionable for adults.

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