

FEATURES

Towards a Catechesis in the Light of Contextual Theology

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of catechesis in the light of contextual theology, and more concretely in the Filipino context, demands awareness of, and participation in the growing ecclesial movement which looks at a more authentic evangelization in the Church today. The contextualization of catechesis is thus to be viewed as a "task... at the service of a more authentic and 'more effective' faith response—more interiorized, true to its task in history, as well as more truly ours".¹

This concern is in cadence with, and may have been occasioned by, the movement of "most of the Afro-Asian countries emerging from colonial status to become independent nations—pulsating with a new dynamism, seeking to assert their own identity, tracing back their roots to the cultural and religious traditions of the past. The Christianity brought to these countries by the colonizing agents had its own missionary success, but today it is beginning to realize the need for a different form of 'presence' among men".²

¹ C. G. Arevalo, "Prenotes to the Contextualization of Theology," *Philippiana Sacra*, Vol. XIV (Jan.-Apr., 1979), p. 15.

² Sylvester Wevitavidanelage, "New Directions in Catechetics in the Missions," *Concilium*, Vol. III (1970), p. 77.

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The problem at once focuses itself on the unity of/in the faith vis-a-vis the varied and culturally diverse peoples the Church addresses herself to, because of her missionary nature and the universal call to holiness and salvation. God revealed Himself in history to man, to Abraham and the chosen people—which revelation found its fullness in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, “The Word made flesh”³. However, as Christ was sent by the Father⁴, He in turn gave authority and power to His apostles “to preach the Good News⁵ to all nations”⁶. The mission of the apostles, which is the mission of the Church, is brought to all nations through evangelization. Catechesis finds its place in the the task of evangelization; it takes the character of a well-ordered, systematic presentation of the Christian mystery⁷, in order that the baptized mature in the initial faith at the level of life, in such a way that “it is called to bring the power of the gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures.”⁸

Catechesis must meet two fundamental requirements: first, it has to be faithful to its object, that is, to the revelation fully manifested and accomplished in Jesus Christ; second, it has to be faithful to the subject of catechesis, that is, to man endeavoring to discover the meaning of himself as he is rooted in his concrete historical circumstance.

Catechetical experience shows that it is difficult to remain faithful to this twofold requirement. Fr. Jaime Bulatao, S.J. attempts to demonstrate this tie-up in the ghetto-type Christianity introduced in Japan:⁹

³ Jn. 1:14. It is to be noted that contextual theology finds its fundamental theological source and model in the fact of the Incarnation. “Incarnational theology” is a more biblical reference to contextual theology, but presently it does not exhaust the meaning of the latter term.

⁴ Confer Jn. 20:21.

⁵ Luke 1:4. It is important that here Luke takes up “Good News” as taking on the meaning of primitive catechesis, i.e., the instruction by word of mouth; the announcement of the good tidings.

⁶ Confer Mt. 28:19-20.

⁷ *Catechesi Tradendae*, par. 5, stresses that the heart of catechesis is a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 53.

⁹ Jaime Bulatao, S.J., “Towards an Asian Theology,” *Philippine Priests' Forum*, Vol. VII (March, 1975), p. 76.

When a Japanese becomes a Catholic, he takes over the entire content of his catechism at the time of his baptism. If he consciously or unconsciously equates this catechism with the "Faith" he will feel obliged to retain that catechism in its original form. A deflection from it or a modification of a portion of the system might be felt as a loss of faith, an unfaithfulness.

The evangelizing work of the Spanish missionaries has been evaluated very differently in our own days, according to one's frame of mind and disposition. On one side are those who raise irate voices against the Spanish friars who (they claim) destroyed the very matrix and fabric of Filipino culture¹⁰; on the other side are those disenchanted with the Filipino brand of Christianity—one turned syncretic, mixed-up with the animistic pre-Christian beliefs, rituals and practices.

Leon Ma. Guerrero, in an assertion of raw nationalism, hurls invectives at the Spanish missionaries thus:

For religious reasons, the early Spanish missionaries did a thorough job of destroying all the repositories of native culture that they could lay their hands on. The rationalization of this vandalism was that, like all primitive cultures, ours was essentially religious, and the ancient manuscripts were consigned to the flames as the work of Satan.¹¹

Jaime Bulatao and Vitaliano Gorospe, on the other hand, feel the strength and influence of this culture to this day, which observation seems contraposed to and belies the nationalistic claims cited above—the Christian belief among the folk ways being a mere exterior veneer superimposed on the native and more interiorized pre-Christian superstitions and rituals. Here we have the so-called "split-level Christianity."¹²

¹⁰ Confer Jose Garcia Espallarga, C.M., "The Philippine Script at the Arrival of the Spaniards," *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. X (1975), pp. 73-94.

¹¹ Leon Ma. Guerrero, "What are Filipinos Like?" *Philippine Contemporary Literature*. Edited by Asuncion David-Maramba, Manila, 1962, pp. 253-260. Similar sentiments are expressed in the writings of the "ilustrados" of the 19th century and later nationalistic literature, the likes of Amado Guerrero in *Philippine Society and Revolution* (1971), and Renato Constantino in *The Filipinos in the Philippines* (1966).

¹² Jaime Bulatao, S.J., *Split-level Christianity*, Quezon City, 1966 p. 13. "Split-level Christianity" is the co-existence within the same person of two or more inconsistent thought-and-behavior patterns.

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The Filipino Christian of today—initiated and nurtured in the faith by the Spanish missionaries—seeks authentic maturing in the faith, aided by reflection on himself as a people and as an individual faithful. And he asks himself these questions: Am I and my brother Filipinos truly Christians? In being Christians, do we preserve our identity as Filipinos? Personally, how has my faith influenced my life? How have I responded to the faith?

The observations mentioned above provide us with a paradoxical, yet valid and firm basis for stating a problem faced by Filipino Christian of today. He reflects how he has not sufficiently benefited from the "leaven" that is the Christian faith, or how the Christian faith has not met the genuinely human yet enriching culture of the Filipino.

Here there is no denying the fact that the Filipinos are a Christian people; nor can it be said that Christianity has remained alien to the Filipino soil and soul. Here is an honest awareness and humble acknowledgement, at this stage of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, of a relative disequilibrium manifested in an undesirable dichotomy between faith and life.

The study does not venture to get into the causes of the present state of Filipino Catholicism. Such a study, more often than not, falls into an unjust, biased, and anachronistic judgment of the past because of what is perceived in the present. At any rate, Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, O.P., an historian, has undertaken the task and proffers an honest, detached and scholarly article which provides a fitting response to the nationalistic affront directed at the Spanish missionaries and friars.¹³

Where the statements and allegations concerning the paradoxical and problematic situation end,¹⁴ the study begins. Con-

¹³ Lucio Gutierrez, O.P., "The Christianization of the Philippines: Myth and Reality," *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XI (1976), pp. 203-291.

¹⁴ Studies on Filipino Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Theology and related disciplines inevitably deal with Filipino religiosity and morality. Confer: Francisco Demetrio, *Dictionary of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs*, 4 Vols. (1970); Felipe Landa Jocano & Paz Mendez, *The Filipino Family in Its Rural and Urban Orientation*, (1974); Felipe Landa Jocano, *Outline of Philippine Mythology* (1969); Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J., *The Filipino Search for Meaning* (1974); Leonardo Mercado, S.V.D. *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (1974), *Elements of Filipino Theology* (1975); *Elements of Filipino Ethics* (1979).

textual theology is proposed as an approach to catechesis; conversely, catechesis becomes a tool of contextualization.

The task of contextualization of catechesis is an ecclesial task. It is a dynamic task, which by itself precludes attempts at an absolute encasement in a mold of any one model or pattern of contextualization. In this study, our objective is to form a clearer picture of fundamental thought patterns and directions in the structure of catechesis which the local Church may take.

Essential necessity and existential relevance demand that the Church of today address herself to the task of contextualized catechesis. The Church finds reason for her being in the mission of Christ to the apostles "to go and preach..." (Mt. 28:19-20); and the reason for contextualization is found in the nature of the Church as the prolongation in history of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Through the Church the nonrepeatable historical event of Incarnation becomes actual, and Christ continues to be actively present in the world. The Incarnation is a historical event but its mystery lives on wherever the Church assumes the social and cultural conditions of the people among whom she dwells. (cf. A.G. 22).

In the march of history, the contemporary Catholic Church is faced with the phenomenon of Third World nations emerging from their colonial status to become independent nations. If the Church would remain identified with western ways brought in by the colonizing powers, then there may result the effect of its being rejected altogether as something foreign, or of separationist nationalistic churches springing up. Where peoples too are cultivating the appreciation and promotion of truly human values and truths in their cultures, it is highly relevant that the Church recognize and bring to the universal patrimony whatever facet of the truth and goodness that particular church may nurture and eventually contribute.

In a limited way this study constitutes a humble response to a felt need of the Church striving to be faithful to her Christ-given mission, to the incessant call for evangelization and catechesis by the pope and the College of Bishops, and to the very

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demands of the local Church herself already finding her bearings on pioneering attempts and efforts by indigenous theologians.

II. TOWARDS A CATECHESIS IN THE FILIPINO CONTEXT

1. *Christianity in the Philippines*

The Spanish Missionary Enterprise

The Christianization of the Philippines is to be acknowledged as due historically to the Spanish *frailes* and *conquistadores*, stemming out of a Spanish enterprise.¹⁵ In the process of evangelization the missionaries had to face two things: one, doctrinal orthodoxy in regard to those beliefs considered necessary for salvation; and two, to adapt to the "Indio" circumstance, an existential necessity they had to take in a stride.

In the first years of the colonization-christianization process, it was but inevitable that efforts were directed at the conquest-conversion of peoples—even to the extent of "whole-sale tribes at wholesale baptisms".¹⁶ It was the missionary approach to convert the chieftain of a tribe or kingdom, then to baptize him and automatically in effect to "convert" a people.

It is a gratuitous eventuality that Spain was unique in her colonization/christianization methods.¹⁷ For one thing, Indio tribes did not disappear nor were they deprived of their lands. In effect, Spain and her missionaries took the people out of anonymity, gave them a national personality, and introduced them into the mainstream of global western culture, while at the same time coming into honest confrontation with Indio ways and customs.

The Spanish missionaries have been accused of two things: one, that they did not achieve their purpose of converting the Filipino people to Christianity; and second, that they annihilated

¹⁵ Lucio Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-205.

¹⁶ Blair and J. A. Robertson (eds.), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, (55 vols.), Cleveland, 1903-1909, Vol. 21, pp. 27, 28, 105, 106.

¹⁷ Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Referring to tribes which disappeared in colonies of Dutch and Anglo-Saxon enterprises.

native cultures in their zeal to convert the people to christianity, divesting them of their values and customs, and imposing on them their ways in Christianity.¹⁸

Obviously, both invectives hurled at the friars reflect more a frame of mind rather than an honest picture of the true response of the Filipino to the Christian religion. We can see here the overzealous Christian critic who equates the conversion of peoples with the total fruition that faith should bring in society and individuals; and on the other hand, the anachronistic nationalist who presupposes he had a Filipino identity and a distinct, solid cultural system detached from his pagan ways and at par with that of western civilization.

The Church in the Philippines, which we have now, is the heritage of God's Providence working through men, the Spanish *frailes* and *conquistadores*, in history. It is a Church which had responded to its vocation, the call of evangelization guided by the Spanish missionary ideals and means. The enthusiasm for overwhelming orthodoxy has to be understood in the light of the then recently concluded Council of Trent (1563). The tempo of the Catholic Reformation and the efforts at unity in truth and in the one Church furthered the drive for a monolithic Church.

The Challenge of Contemporary Church

Evangelization in the Universal Church these days takes on different orientations and priorities, in relation to the needs and different cultural milieu the Church finds herself in. Jose Oscar Beozzo quotes Marcelo Carvalheira, who described the missionary thrusts thus:

Evangelization, the theme of the 1974 Roman Synod, was universally appreciated in the five continents, but no consensus was reached about the specific aims and tasks awaiting today's Church in the field of evangelization. The concerns and priorities of the Church of each continent present themselves as:

1. The theme of indigenization, *inculturation* or contextualization, which refers to the mutual relationship

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

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between the Gospel and the life or culture of a people or a continent, was stressed mainly by the Bishops of Africa. They strongly emphasized the awareness and the importance of the local Church.

2. The theme of the *great non-Christian religions* was particularly stressed by the Bishops of Asia, from the Near to the Far East who are in daily contact with the great non-Christian religious traditions of their peoples.

3. The theme of *liberation* in the theological, ethical, and the social sense, was brought in mainly by the Bishops of Latin America, a continent where the huge masses living on the fringe of society are awakening the conscience of Christians to the necessity of an ecclesial praxis of liberation on behalf of the oppressed, bearing in mind the duty of the Church to defend human rights and to realize the justice, peace and solidarity, proclaimed by the whole of Judaeo-Christian tradition and revelation.

4. The theme of the consumer society's *secularization*—a subject treated both practically and theoretically, and including the tendency to secularism—was developed particularly by the Bishops of Western Europe and North America. They spoke of a post-Christian civilization and of a religious indifferentism that stifles the newness of the Gospel.

5. Finally, the theme of systematic atheism and of man's total refusal to make room for the Gospel and religion in general, either in his life or in society. This predicament was more keenly felt by the Synodal Fathers from the Communist countries where militant atheism is a constant challenge.¹⁹

The Challenge of the Local Church of the Philippines

The response of the Church in the Philippines is one not so easy to situate. Geographically, she is grouped with the Asians; but it is obvious that her main concern is not the dialogue with the great non Christian religions. She shares the same historical patterns with the Latin American countries, but culturally also

¹⁹ Quoted by Jose Oscar Beozzo in "Evangelization and History," *Lumen Vitae*, Vol. 33 (1978): from Msgr. Marcelo Carvalheira, *O Sínodo de 1974*, Edicoes Loyola, Sao Paulo, 1974, pp. 6-7.

differs specially in their concept of justice and injustice.²⁰ The Asian concept of justice is different from the liberationists of South America. The Asian concept is communitarian and accepts inequality. The theme of secularization seems valid among the affluent and in urban areas, as in Metro Manila and Cebu; but is belied by the fact that the majority of the faithful or the modal Filipino still clings to the secure rural folk-ways even in the cities.²¹

The theme of systematic atheism, thanks to the benevolence of God, has no place in Philippine society. Here even government affairs are incomplete without the "blessing and invocation" ministered to by the priest. Fiestas and church celebrations are always acknowledged, calendared, and given due consideration by government officials as holidays.

The theme of inculturation, of contextualization, presents itself as one at home in the Filipino setting. A local Church reflecting on her stance and vision at once comes face to face with the disequilibrium brought about by political, socio-economic dependence and the demands of a maturing independent nation. She also comes into dialogue with a people who have responded to the Good News but, at the same time, holding on to meanings and reassurances in their folk-ways and traditions. The integration of these elements, the purification of those indicative of syncretic assimilation, comprise the challenge and a task to be framed out and pursued by the pilgrim church, the local church in the Philippines today.

2. *Filipino Theology and Catechesis*

Filipino Thought

At first, it may seem presumptuous to speak of "Filipino theology". The Filipino people just cannot speak of a tradition at par or approximating those of India, China, and the Greco-Roman

²⁰ Leonardo Mercado, S.V.D., "Contextual Theology in the Philippines," *Philippiniana Sacra*, XIV (1979), pp. 44-46.

²¹ Paz Mendez and Felipe Landa Jocano, *The Filipino Family in its Rural and Urban Orientation*, (Manila: C.E.U. Research Center, 1974).

West, solid and systematized enough to resist and hold its own against foreign incursion—to justify such a claim.

A more serious reason is that insofar as Truth is one, there would seem to be no significance to the term "Filipino thought", except perhaps for a purely historical viewpoint and for nationalistic interests. In fact, when Fr. Leonardo Mercado, S.V.D., came up with his book *Elements of Filipino Theology* (1975), a book review protested strongly, branding the effort as one of the "theological deviations of the day", as "deceptive," and as "pseudo-theology".²² Yet reality does reveal itself capable of diverse perspectives and approaches. Hence, although all thought virtually originates from the formal viewpoint of one reality and one Truth, each tradition of thought in the end brings into focus only a facet, valid yet particular, of the whole reality.²³

In general, the thought of a people develops in two basic stages: first, in the form of what we might call *vital thought* by which immediate experience attains a preliminary structuration and verbalization by way of myth, ritual, song and language, folk-tale, traditional sayings and aphorisms, customary legal, political and religious codes; secondly, in the form of a more *reflexive*, more mediate form of thought, whether conscious or unconscious, analyzing, systematizing, and justifying a vital thought that has reached a high point of growth, or of conflict, thereby demanding a reintegration, a critical evaluation of its boundaries and particular strengths in view of the ulterior possibilities of man.²⁴

E. H. Blair and J. A. Robertson, editors of *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898* make accessible for us the experience which the missionaries had in their first contacts with the natives, and the peculiar beliefs and practices the people had preserved as heritage. A reflexive four-volume thematic compilation of this vital thought, enriched with extant myths, folk-tales, and rituals is given by Francisco Demetrio in his *Dictionary of Philippine*

²² Cf. Quintin Garcia, O.P., "Is there a Filipino Theology?" Book Review, *Unitas*, Vol. 50 (March, 1977), pp. 101-106.

²³ Ramon Reyes, "Sources of Filipino Thought," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 21 (1973), p. 429

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

Beliefs and Customs (1970). Histories also abound, notable among which are: Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines* (1521-1898), (1979); John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (1959); Peter Gowing, *Islands under the Cross: The Story of the Church in the Philippines*, (1967); Miguel A. Bernad, *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives* (1972). The sociological and anthropological reflection on Filipino thought is easily derived from the writings of Felipe Landa Jocano, *Outline of Philippine Mythology* (1969) among others; Ma. Delia Coronel, *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (1967) among others.

For elements of the religious thought, the reflections made by Bulatao, Chupungco, Gorospe, and Mercado are indispensable. Jose de Mesa, writing for *Maryhill Studies* has very recently come up with reflections on the theme of Providence in the lowland Filipino context in his book *And God Said, "Bahala Na!"*

Filipino Theology

Efren Rivera identifies Filipino Theology as "Christian faith seeking to find expression in Filipino culture or absorbing from this culture age-old elements of natural revelation and religion, purifying them if necessary from deviations and misuse that paganism and popular superstitions may have fostered, but also being open to an enrichment that it may not have obtained from any other culture past or present."²⁵

At once it can be said that Filipino theology has been in the making ever since the arrival of the Spanish missionaries during the sixteenth century. They and their successors did not think of themselves as theologians, but even then, they performed an important theological function. They had to decide how to adapt Christian doctrine and practice to the life-style, to the vital thought, of their converts. They also had to determine what changes the natives had to undergo so that they could really be

²⁵ Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P., "Towards A Filipino Theology," *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XIV (Jan.-Apr., 1979), pp. 62-63.

said to have accepted Christianity while retaining much of their own culture.²⁶

A more reflexive approach to Filipino thought arose towards the end of the nineteenth century, when for the first time we began to think of ourselves as one people, not as Tagalogs, or Pampangos, or Ilokanos, or Bisayans, but as one Filipino people "having common grievances against Spain."²⁷

But a theological reflection on the Filipino world view, and his relationships with the sacred, surfaced distinctly only in the wake of a pluralism in cultures acknowledged by the Second Vatican Council. Representative among these are the pioneering liturgical indigenization initiated by Anscar Chupungco, who employed the language and approach of Filipino religiosity in *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (1976), and the Maryhill School of Theology's attempts to indigenize ethnic marriage rites. And following suit to South America's liberation theology are those who found a challenging field the socio cultural situation of the Filipino poor: Edicio de la Torre, Antonio Lambino, Catalino Arevalo, and Francisco Claver—all of the Jesuit school.

A distinct group falls on what is called "barrio theology".²⁸ The lowland Filipino thought patterns related to religiosity and ecclesial life becomes a locus for reflection. Prominent among these are Jaime Bulatao, Vitaliano Gorospe, Leonardo Mercado, and Jose M. de Mesa. Barrio theology is premised on the fact that Filipino religious experience is influenced by day to day life experiences and realities. It is a theology with which the ordinary adult Christian in a given non-western culture genuinely feels at home in his faith. It integrates and evaluates elements of the mentality and thought, imagery and sensibility, literary forms and "language of local and traditional cultures."

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁷ Ramon Reyes, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

²⁸ Leonardo Mercado, "Contextual Theology in the Philippines," *Philippiniana Sacra*, XIX (Jan.-Apr., 1979), pp. 49-50.

Elements of Filipino Thought

The Filipino under consideration generally is confined to the lowland Christian groups²⁹, as "these form a socio-cultural entity in sharing a common cultural history and a common belief in Roman Catholicism which have reduced their cultural differences to a point where they are more than counterbalanced by cultural similarities."³⁰ This cultural homogeneity then warrants the extension of the reflection of Filipino thought *mutatis mutandis* to the said groups.

Fundamental Perception of Reality

The Filipino perceives reality basically in terms of his family and the small primary groups to which he belongs. He perceives his family to be composed of his nuclear family, his bilateral kins, his affinal and ritual relatives. The family for him is a locus of emotional intimacy and security, forming a tight in-group. Within the family group, he also distinguishes between the elder and younger generation, between the elder and younger children within the family. Elders are addressed not by their proper names but by their title owing to the position they occupy in the line of generation. Respect for elders is demanded for the younger; sacrifice and suffering, if necessary, for the sake of the younger is expected of the elder.

Beyond his family group, the Filipino sees himself as belonging to a small primary group in a dyadic, pyramidal fashion. In other words, he does not identify horizontally with his class which cuts across the whole community, but vertically with his authority figures distinguished by their wealth, power, prestige, and age. He receives protection and other favors from above and should be ready to do the same towards his ties below. The whole group is held together by reciprocating debts of gratitude between coordinates and between superordinates and subordinates.

²⁹ The main groups are: Cebuano, Tagalog, Ilokano, Bikolano, Waray-waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan — the main source of differentiation being dialects rather than race, religion, or social and economic organization,

³⁰ de Mesa, *op. cit.*, foreword.

Of God and the World

That God exists is a fact for the Filipino. He experiences God as a cosmic co-responsibility that explains events touching on the flux of human life. God's transcendence overwhelms him, however, and God keeps his distance from the real affairs of men. God intervenes only indirectly through the natural moral laws governing human relationships; man relates with God, who is immanent in the will and authority behind the customs and traditions of the folk, otherwise one incurs the "gaba". He relates with God in celebrating life. He explains success, failures and misfortunes in terms of "Swerte"—and these make him sigh "bahala na, may-awa ang Dios!" (Have full confidence, God has mercy!).

God is not the only spirit however; the whole world is full of spirits or non-humans. The Filipino world view is animistic; there is the lingering belief in spirits, *dwatas*, and *anitos*, dwelling in mountains, rivers, trees, houses and other unusual prominent places. They have come to accept their society as a small part of a wider natural social universe inhabited partly by spirits and partly by humans. The physical environment, beyond the control of men, is perceived as under the influence of these powers—which demand a harmonious equilibrium brought about by customary decorum and by ceremonies and rituals. Because of this, the social prescription for so many actions is felt to come from metaphysical demands. His experience with typhoons, earthquakes, epidemics and calamities have taught him to hang on to these myths and have helped him maintain his psyche in dealing with particular situations in times of crises, dangers and depressions.

Of Evil, Sin and Suffering

Because of his personalistic view of the universe, the Filipino suggests that ultimately in life we have to reckon with that ontological dependence of human nature on God and society, as well as with cosmic presences which are seen as the origin of evil. Faced with a physical cataclysm as an earthquake or a

flood, there is a feeling of being at odds with cosmic realities which ultimately transcend our purely human resources and weaknesses.

Finding meaning of oneself in the relationships that he has with his *sakop*, guilt is not so much pronounced as *hiya* for failing or betraying the honor or dignity due him as identified with the *sakop*.

The folk mind has an ambiguous concept of sin. *Kasalanan* (sin) includes the culpable and the inculpable. *Hiya* (shame) as a social sanction and *gaba* (curse, divine retribution) make up for the person's moral integrity. *Kasalanan* is more strongly felt in view of one's betrayal of loyalty in the relationships with fellow men.

Suffering has a healthy salutary value. He experiences the inevitability of suffering; but precisely because of the presence of suffering he feels the reassurance and hope of a future better life.

3. A Cultural Framework

In the previous pages, there is a tacit indication that the task of contextualizing catechesis in the Filipino context is to be brought about by raising issues that are meaningful within the Filipino cultural context. Not all relevant issues can, of course, be attended to. A choice is necessary. Nevertheless, the choice is not accidental but stems from the demands of catechesis itself. We take the broadly permeating *sakop* structure to vehicle the contextualization in the ecclesial sphere; the personal response too, we should note, takes its meaning in relation to this relationship which he has with the *sakop*. The concept of *tuo/pananam-palataya-pananalig* will help us look into the more interior belief and life-response patterns of the modal Christian Filipino.

The ambit of linguistic know-how of the author delimits our metalinguistic scope to the Cebuano and Tagalog dialects. Instru-

mental to his analysis are the dictionaries authored by Yap-Bunye³¹ and Panganiban.³²

Hierarchical Sakop Relationship

The Linguistic Medium. 1. *Umbilical Bonds.* (a) In the first level, a sense of ontological unification of person is contained, expressed and conveyed by the inter-sibling, brother-sister relationship in the Cebuano term *igsoon* and Tagalog *kapatid*. *Igsoon* is rooted in *sood* (adj., closely related); it indicates the epitome of relationships which is achieved only in ontological unity. *Kapatid* and its variant *utol* are rooted in *patid* and *putol* (v., to cut; as applied, it refers to the cutting of the natal umbilical cord), and thus indicates the ontological unity deeply felt by the Filipino experiencing and witnessing that miracle of life we call birth. This is reinforced by the Cebuano term *ginikanan* (parents, literally), which expresses the concrete oneness of life source, that ontological unity among the siblings.

(b) Then there is expressed another dimension to this relationship. Order in respect to generation is well-observed. *Gulang-gulang* (age) is used to describe the nature of inter-sibling relationships, notwithstanding sex. *Gulang* is associated with maturity, wisdom, experience, and authority. The Tagalog term *magulang* (parent), expresses well the embodiment of *gulang*. The *kinamagulangan* (eldest, rendered *panganay* in Tagalog) by virtue of generation, hence of *gulang* (age), participates in the maturity, wisdom, experience, and authority of the *magulang*.

The others are referred to in relation with the order of generation following the *kinamagulangan/panganay*; thus *ikaduha/pangalawa* (second) refers to the sibling immediately born after the eldest; *ikatulo/pangatlo* (third) and so forth. In some Tagalog regions (although the expressions exhibit Chinese influence), the intersibling hierarchy is more expressed in the vocative terms; thus *kuya/ate* for the eldest brother/sister, *diko/ditse* for the

³¹ Elsa P. Yap and Maria V. Bunye, *Cebuano-Visayan Dictionary* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1971).

³² Jose Villa Panganiban, *Diksiyunaryo-Tesaurus Pilipino-Ingles*, (Quezon City: Manlapaz, 1972).

second eldest brother/sister, and *sangko/sanse* or *sianse* for the third eldest brother/sister. Elders are addressed not by their proper names but by their vocative titles as *manong* or *manoy/kuya* and *manang* or *manay/ate*.

Implicit in this system is a hierarchy of respect (*paggalang*) compelling the younger ones to show deference to their older siblings. The greater the gap in age, the greater the respect. The older one is, the more privileges and rights he has over the younger siblings. This also manifests itself in the supportive system whereby the older siblings may make or are expected to make sacrifices (*pagmamalasakit*), as much as postponing marriage plans, for the benefit of the younger siblings.

2. *Other-half-of-life Relationship.* (a) A relationship of ontological complementarity between spouses is best expressed in *kapikas sa kinabuhi/kabiyak ng puso* or *dibdib* (the other half of life/heart) which is a description of the collective reciprocal term *asawa* (spouse). As observed, complementarity of being is expressed; the husband is *bana/asawa* only to his wife, and the wife is *asawa* only to her husband. Other relationships which may be either of the semi-permanent nature or of occasional flings are called *kabit* (attached) or *sabit* (appended), or *asa-asawa*, the reduplication of the term underscoring the pretense and the mockery the arrangement makes apart from a true marital relationship. An inference of ontological meaning is supplied by *magkadugo* (blood compatibility) which complementarity in life and heart in *kapikas sa kinabuhi/kabiyak ng puso* achieves perfection in an offspring.

The husband and wife relationship is not a private affair. It always finds its locus in the *sakop* system. The *mag-asawa* (couple) relationship finds its perfection when it becomes a *mag-anak* (family). Children are needed to forge the link of the fragile, and unstable *mag-asawa* relationship. The *mag-anak* is achieved with the arrival of the first *anak* (offspring). Children are considered *matibay na bigkis ng mag-asawa* (strong ties that bind a couple). Thus the nuclear family already finds and

marks its place, because of the *anak*, in the *angkan* (vertical clans), and the circle of the *kamag-anak* (bilateral kins).

(b) The pattern of authority is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal but equalitarian or egalitarian. This seems to be rooted in the creation myths, whereby man and woman appear at the same time with the splitting of a bamboo pole.³³ And this is carried on how they mutually regard each other as *kapikas/kabiyak* (other half) of each other's life or heart (*kinabuhi/puso*).

Marriage is regarded not merely as a union of individuals, but as an alliance of *angkan*. The *angkan* has influence in the choice of one's mate, wary of the ontological *dautan ang dugo/masamang dugo* (literally, bad blood; as applied, undesirable hereditary characteristics) and thus preventing the spoiling of one's blood lineage. Tradition dictates that the bride and groom formally or informally present their mate to their respective relatives. The newly weds teach each other what to call their new next of kin. If the husband calls his father *Tatay*, his wife must use the same vocative term even though in her own family of orientation, she may call her father *Tatang*, *Itay*, or *Papa*. The number of kin is now doubled for both husband and wife. By acquiring more relatives and thus expanding kinship structure, they can extend and also expect help on a wider scale.

Theoretically, there seems to be no limit on the distance to which relationship might be traced in enumerating kinsmen; it rarely goes beyond third cousins. In practice, physical proximity and the social position of the party influence the likelihood that the relationship will be recognized. There is a loose determination of *malapit* (near) and *malayong* (far) *kamag-anak* (relative).

There is a preoccupation among the fold to introduce one by tracing family relations. Fiestas, marriage celebrations, and the mourning of the dead and other feasts, always lend an occasion to consolidate and reaffirm these relationships. It is in this level of the *sakop* that the meaning and potentials of individuals and

³³ Ma. Delia Coronel, *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore*, Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 1967.

nuclear families take shape. The members of various nuclear families provide each other with material assistance in times of trouble, defend the reputation of kinsmen, and engage preferentially in exchange-of-work arrangements. For the individual, the welfare and honor of the family remains the basic goal, and this aim determines his role within the home and among kinsmen and strangers. Success and failure are also attributed to the *sakop*, who always have something to do with the choice of one's profession, who may have chipped in material aid for schooling expenses, and may have placed him in preferential job opportunities.

3. *Alliances of Social Fiction.* The *sakop* is not confined to blood-relationships. An individual enters into personal alliances through real and ritual kinship, through reciprocal obligations, associational ties, and proven friendship.

The compadrazco³⁴ system, introduced by the Spanish sponsorship traditions, has found indigenous roots and a home in Filipino social orientation. Baptism and marriage, celebrations of life, are the more common ritual fictions. The ritual is entered into not primarily for the child but to establish if not to strengthen ties the parents want to have with the godparents—who become mutually *comadre/compadre*, *kumpare/kumare*, or *pare/mare*. The relationship effected between godchild and godparent is one of semi-parenthood, the godparents become the *amaon/inaama*, *inaon/iniina* (godfather, godmother) of the *inanak/inaanak* (godchild). The relationship of the godchild and the siblings of the godparents in one of *kinakapatid/igso*.

Ritual kinship complements or reinforces but never opposes the indigenous kinship system. The godparenthood complex either makes ritual kinsmen of non-relatives or reinforces existing consanguineal or affinal bonds. This arrangement also serves as a social mechanism for establishing ties and access between the land-lord and the tenant, the *suki* commerce between customer and businessman, the boss and the employee, the *kinatawan* (body,

³⁴ Donn V. Hart, *Compadrazco: Ritual Kinship in the Philippines*, (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1977), p. 1.

representative) or *pangulo* (head, leader) with the *galamay* (fingers) and *tau-tauhan* (subservients).

Society itself follows up this hierarchical *sakop* framework. Communitarian activities and projects find their offing, boast, and completion through the big men. In religious activities, this takes the form of the *hermanos* and *hermanas*. Reverential propriety is observed through the use of intermediaries who are *sood/malapit* (near) and *kusog/malakas* (strong) to make the *lakad* (walk; to arrange matters with authority efficiently and fast) with authority figures. Authority figures easily achieve the corporate personality of the *sakop*; thus the *sakop* and the authority figure or the big man become two aspects of one and the same reality.

Value-Behavior Patterns. The *sakop* relationships mentioned above manifest themselves in values underlying behavior, and which are perpetuated, reinforced and sustained by the same behavior patterns.

1. *Pagtinabangan/bayanihan* or *tulungan* and *isigkalooy/damayan* reflect the spirit and the system or arrangement of mutual help and concern within the *sakop*. *Pagtinabangan/tulungan* (help) is in general reference for any help extended especially for merrier occasions as baptismal and wedding feasts and fiestas, which are truly celebrations of the *sakop* than of the nuclear family. *Isigkalooy/damayan* is mutual help rendered in occasions of bereavement, which help takes the form of material *kalooy/abuloy* and of services rendered.

2. *Pakighi-usa/Pagkakaisa* (unity) and *Pakighigala/Pakikipagkapwatao* (being a man among men) refer to that community-unity spirit and the ability to feel for and get along with one's fellow human beings. *Pag-inusara/pagsasarili* (to be a loner, selfish) are abhorred, and they go contrary to the Filipino's group orientation.

3. *Pakig-uban/Pakikisama* (to go along with others) refers to the concern and loyalty for one's cohesiveness with the *sakop* and with its common objectives, tasks, and activities. This entails the fear of failure to measure up to the group expectations as

far as the cooperativeness of a particular member is concerned. Hence, the assumption and maintenance of the *pakikisama* attitude is motivated also by the fear of being branded as one who does not know or is not willing to identify with the group, as one "hindi marunong makisama".

4. *Pagtabon/pagtatakip* (to cover) is the willingness and eagerness to cover up to find excuses for short-comings or deficiencies of one's group or group mates.

5. Tied up with the previously mentioned forms of reciprocity of favors and obligations are the attitudes of *utang-kabobot on/utang-na-loob* (debt of volition, debt of gratitude) and *ulaw/hiya* (shame). *Utang-kabobot-on/utang-na-loob* is the interiorized system for reciprocity. Anybody who has no *utang-na-loob* is considered a *walay-ulaw/walang hiya* (shameless). The *walay-ulaw/walang-hiya* take opportunity or take advantage of one's fellow-man. One who cannot reciprocate favors or has not yet returned the favor received is supposed to feel *hiya/ulaw* (shame), and one who is insensitive and therefore without shame is called *walang-hiya*, which is used seriously only in extreme rage and contempt. The *hiya* functions as a socio cultural device, a sanction, to guarantee that the individual would securely protect and maintain his status or social acceptance in the eyes of others or of the community.

6. *Amor-propio*, for want of a Cebuano or Tagalog term to express its meaning and the wide acceptance the term has gained, is an attitude not uncommon in a society which places personal acceptance in society as vital to the personality. It refers to an extremely touchy sense of personal dignity and concern for one's own sense of excellence, status and social acceptability, so that one takes slight easily and is very intolerant of criticism and has easily wounded pride; this results in an extremely sensitive sense of *ulaw/hiya*.

The Levels of the Sakop. Camilo Osias³⁵, utilizing the highly expressive pronouns in the Ilokano dialect, infers the levels of

³⁵ Camilo Osias, *The Filipino Way of Life: The Pluralized Philosophy* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1940), chapter I.

sakop relationships thus: *siac*, the I or singular stage; *data*, the dual *we* stage; *dacami*, the broader *we* yet exclusive stage; and *datayo*, the *we* all-inclusive stage. The Cebuano and Tagalog roughly correspond to: *ako/ako*, *kitang duha/tayong dalawa*, *kami/kami* and *kitang tanan/tayong lahat*.

It is at the fourth stage that Osias identifies the ideal peak of development of *sakop*-orientedness.

Faith-response Patterns

The Linguistic Medium. 1. *Pagtuo/Pananampalataya*. Among Cebuanos, the act of believing displays two aspects: first, its nature and character; second, its motivation. The act of believing involves not only cognition but also volition. The rootword *tuo* in the dialect is understood as *pagbuyon sa hunahuna sa uban* (literally, to concur, align, be on the same side with, or agree with the mind of others). A close Tagalog counterpart is rendered by the term *sampalataya* (belief) which terms include the meaning of *paniniwala* (belief, trust) and *pananalig* (trust, hope) and *pagsamba* (worship). *Paniniwala* is connected with *palagay ng loob* (entrusting oneself to another), and *pananalig* is in the sense of *pagsalig* (relying or depending on someone for support). In order to align one's mind with another, one must first know what the mind of the other is and then by an act of his will, he must positively bring his own mind to concur or agree with it. The motivation for belief is especially evident in the definition given for the very *pagtuo* which is *pagkalawat sa pagkamao kon pagkadiha sa butang* (to accept the existence or situation of things). This very insight into the truth of things, the motive for belief is also the motive for obedience; *tuo* is also understood in the sense of *pagsugot/pagsunod* (to obey). *Pagtuo* (n.) is also rendered *tinuhu-an/pananampalataya* (belief, faith, creed, doctrine, teaching, dogma).

The meaning of *tuo*, and *sampalataya*, terminologies for faith and belief—contain and convey a highly personalistic notion of belief, that of concurrence, agreeing with the mind of others. *Sampalataya* contributes a rich and distinct dimension of faith,

that of *pagsamba* (worship). As an aside, the meanings of the terms *tuo*, *pagtuo*, *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* reveal the attitude of the believer as one of seriousness and earnestness.

In the folk mind, reduplication always carries some connotation of a falling off from the serious to the trivial, or a reference to the unreal. The reduplicated term conveys a sense of falsity, mockery, pretense, and unreality. The sense of unreality ranges from the downright lie, falsehood or imposture. The *balay-balay/bahay-bahayan* (house house) is a child's dream-house game, which reduplication underlines the unreality of it; *puyo-puyo/kasal-kasalan* (living living/playing married) conveys a mockery of marriage in a non-stable cohabitation; *pari parian* (priest-priest) distinguishes the authentic priest from the bogus, the impostor.

The verb *tuo-tuo* means to pretend or to spread superstition. *Magpatuo-tuo* is to be a pretender; *matuho-tuhoon* means superstitious, or gullible. The drift of meaning is as much as towards falsehood and pretense, as towards triviality and unreality.

2. *Elements of Belief*. Subsumed in the *tinuhu-an/nananampalataya* complex are the elements of belief in God and the spirits, and their interplay in human affairs.

Contemporary Cebuanos and Tagalogs use the term *Dios* for the more armchair terms for God as the Cebuano term *Laon* (the ancient one) and *Bathala* (tag., Lord). Of current use however are the attributes *Magbubuhat/maylikha* (creator), and *Ginoo/Panginoon* (lord). He dwells in *langit/langit* (heavens) or in *kahitas-an/kaitaasan* (heights), which explains God's transcendence, if not non-interference and remoteness in the affairs of men.

The typical modal Filipino views his world as shared by other beings who are *dili ingon nato/hindi kagaya natin* (unlike us), and who influence the flux of human and of nature's occurrences. He believes in the *maayong/mabait* and *dautang/masasamang, espiritu* (good and bad spirits). There are the *engkanto/engkantada, anitos* and *diwatas* (spirits), who take up abode in trees, rivers, big homes, and other more prominent facets of na-

ture. There are the *kalag/kaluluwa* (disembodied spirit of the dead) who are believed to continue relationships with the family, demanding prayers and interceding for favors. Sharing the powers and qualities of spirits "unlike us" are humans endowed with extraordinary powers, the evil *aswang/magkukulam* (witch, sorcerer) and the well-intentioned *tambalan/arbulario* (folk healer). Being part of his world of experience, the Filipino relates and takes into account these spirits in his life and daily affairs. Faced with calamities, he acknowledges some disharmony with nature and the spirits. He assiduously observes traditional customs and practices, thereby restoring the equilibrium in the interplay of human events and nature's ways.

Elements of Religiosity and Asceticism. 1. *Bahala na* and *palad/kapalaran*. Carmen Guerrero Nakpil describes *bahala na* as "an attitude which is half a shrug and half a vast trust in Providence"³⁶. The attitude has been taken for fatalism connected with *palad/kapalaran* (the palm of the hands; fate) or *pagbuot/talaga ng Dios* (the will of God). It is thus rendered as "come what may", "never mind", or "it's up to God". It is understood as an abandonment of duty, as an escapist attitude, as leaving things entirely as a matter of chance. It seems to refer to some cosmic order where man's well-being has its appointed place. However, what seems to be in store for someone is not something that is completely good or completely evil as implied by *dagan sa kinabuhi/gulong ng palad* (flow of life, wheels of fate).

On the contrary, *bahala na* may have developed as a response to the circumstances surrounding the Filipino, and it rather embodies not fatalism but sheer realism and an optimism and hope for the future. Jose de Mesa explains it this way:

Things happen to man, they come to him, as it were, from the outside, and he has no power to change or control them. Man has to relate somehow to this part of his existence, and the first step in this direction is to try to define what is happening and to interpret it in a satisfactory way. It is in this context, that the ca-

³⁶ Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, "Excerpts: My Humble Opinion," *Philippine Contemporary Literature*, Collected Essays, edited by Asuncion David-Maramba, (Manila: Bookmark, 1962), pp. 285-286.

tegies of 'god', 'destiny', and 'chance' enter the scene, depending on whether the events are seen to derive from a personal power, an impersonal order, or no order at all. The purely scientific causal explanation of the world is (ordinarily) not considered.³⁷

It becomes his virtue of responsibility that makes him say, "ako na ang bahala niyan!" (I'll be responsible for that thing!). And it is courage when he is caught in a tight situation, and he courageously fights back saying, "bahala na!" (Let come what may). It is that optimism and the spirit to take necessary risks when confronted with adverse elements in nature, the helpless farmer having done his part of planting addresses God, "bahala na ang Dios!" (I have done my part, God will do his!).

Hence there is the aspect of courage and the spirit of taking risks. Trust in God's providence provides the strength in situations where nothing more could be done humanly speaking. It also gives the motivation where the limits of the humanly possible have yet to be explored.

2. *Panalangin/Pagpapala* and *Gaba/Busong* or *Parusa*. If the *Magbubuhat/Maylikha* and the *Ginoo/Panginoon* seem to be remote and impersonal, he is supposed to have instituted order in the world of things, in nature, and in the hearts of men through their traditional customs and *tulumanon/pamahin* (observances, customary beliefs and ways). Related with his world view, he observes proper decorum in relating with nature conceived as the abode and protected by spirit *dili ingon nato/hindi kagaya natin*; he observes proper regard not to abuse natural resources which are the *grasya/biyaya ng Dios* (grace, blessings of God). Foremost, he does not dare go against the basic social framework of the hierarchical *sakop* orientation; he deems his priority obligation the respect for parental authority and for elders.

The people's immediate reaction to calamities or accidents is to attribute them to *gaba/parusa* (retribution). Thus typhoons, floods, and being struck by lightning and the like, are attributed to the immanent retribution of God. Feeling ill after a visit to

³⁷ de Mesa, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

the woods would mean that one had intruded and disrupted harmony with the spirits "unlike us". A pregnant woman having painful and difficult birth pangs remembers she is not reconciled with her mother or her mother-in-law; she has incurred their *gaba/busong* (curse).

Gaba/busong may take the form of a social character affecting the *sakop* and the individual. This may call for proportionate reparation not only payable by the individual but by the *sakop* as well. The influence and punishment of the crime of a father who is a murderer and a womanizer is inherited by the son who may pay (*bayad utang*) for the crime with his life by being murderer himself, or with the daughter being raped or made pregnant by other men.

Gaba/busong or *parusa* is primarily due then to a violation of God's will expressed and embodied in the folk customs and traditions. It is an immanent justice of God, a divine retribution. Influence and control over people is not only the domain of God, but of men as well. The *barangan/magkukulam* may also inflict positively sought harms. The *tambalan/arbularyo* restores the harmony between the spirits and the people, and between the people and people.

Panalangin/Pagpapala or *Grasya/Biyaya* is bestowed through good behavior. It refers to material gifts and opportunities which give added power and chance to succeed in undertakings. Food is thus *grasya/biyaya ng Dios*. *Milagro/himala* (miracles) which are conceived as positive divine interventions are not considered impossible; they are in fact expected to happen, but in extraordinary cases. People are supposed to share this goodwill with fellowmen through *kalooy/awa* (compassion).

Gaba/busong is averted and taken out through the *awa* (mercy of God) by the *pangayo'g pasaylo/paghingi ng patawad* (asking forgiveness) for transgressing God's will, the harmony of nature, and the harmony with the *sakop*.

3. *Panaad/panata*. Asceticism in the folk mind starts with an interior personal response and commitment to God, who has imbued him with life, with all the *grasya/biyaya* at his disposal

and as a distinctive thanksgiving and reconciliatory gesture with his God who he may have transgressed in his dealing with the world of things, and with the world of men.

Panaad (from Ceb. *saad*, vow) and *panata* with its variant *pangako* (from Tag. *ako*, the self being a personal guarantee), underscores primarily the personalistic aspect of relating with God.

Panaad/panata predominantly takes the forms of petition, thanksgiving, and atonement for sin. It is understood as petition as when one makes the novena to the saints and the Blessed Virgin (who definitely shared human qualities and experiences with humanity, and who are *sood/malapit* to God) for their intercessory powers. Here is a childlike confidence that the saints would obtain for one from God his petition — what with his more devout and regular prayers, and his improved behavior—that he may find favor with God.

Panaad/panata also refers to the promises done on account of being granted one's petition; the vow may have been made explicit with the petition, or may come as a spontaneous overflow of awe, humility, and thanksgiving. Thus one promises to knee-walk the aisle of Quiapo if one's beloved gets cured of a disease given up for lost by medical men; or one may frequent on wednesdays the shrine of the Perpetual Help of Baclaran for similar reasons.

Finally, the *panaad/panata* is given the value of atonement of sins. It should be noted that *sala* includes the voluntary as well as involuntary transgressions. It could mean *kasalanan* (sin), *kapintasan* (undesirable trait and *kakulangan* (imperfections). *Pagkakasala* means to miss the point, or to deviate. The flagellant who undergoes the whippings, the heat of the sun and the social humiliation and compassion more than just confesses his sin and guilt, but in his own self imposed way, makes reparation for his weaknesses, his imperfections, and his self, his life orientation, his link and communication with God.

4. *Kaangayan/Pagkabagayan* (Harmony). A fitting summary to the Filipino thought and religiosity is his concern for

harmony. This explains the quality that maintains his personal psyche as a whole man, in harmony with the *sakop*, in harmony with nature, and in harmony with God.

He is confronted with elements of the truth of revelation of *tinuhuang Kristiano/pananampalatayang Kristiyano* and comes to know and is moved to live his life with its teachings and principles for living and relating with men, the Church, and ultimately with Christ.

His contact with revelation however happened in history. The Filipino does not cut himself from his cultural rootedness. The sick may be brought to the medical practitioner, while at the same time he may revert to the reliable traditional and personalistic *tambalan/arbulario*. In the same manner, the religious and moral Filipino Christian, who knows theology from the university and from the Church, may pay respects for the dead by offering the mass with the priest, while at home and at a more interior level he feels he should offer food sacrifices to the tune of the Spanish-Latin formularies of the woman-prayer-leader, a sort of an archaic *babaylan* (priestess). The Filipino Christian acknowledges the body of *tinuhuan/pananampalataya*, but he does not deem it inconsistent but rather complementary to consult and value the traditional *tuo-tuo/pamahin* patterns.

The next number outlines principles to guide us to the meeting of these elements with Church teachings, taking into consideration the demands of catechesis and contextualization. The more notable elements of Filipino thought and structure will find their place incorporated in catechesis; elements that need purification will however be sifted.

4. *The Incorporation in Our Catechesis*

Our Sharing in the Life of Jesus Christ

The mystery of Jesus Christ, which occupies the core of catechesis, finds revealing predispositions in Filipino thought. The New Testament christology comes into dialogue with the thought

patterns and themes, and brings to light and exhibits a fruitful articulation of facets of the mystery.

That Jesus Christ has assumed us men as his *igsoon*/*kapatid*, being sons with the Son, points to a prototype of a new relationship of sonship with God. In this relationships, all are brothers (cf. Mt. 23:8), and children of God (cf. Jn. 1:12; Acts 2:24; 4:32). Men become children of God because the Word became man and entered our human family (cf. Jn. 1:14-18). In sonship, we are heirs to the inheritance of God's kingdom (Gal. 4:7).

This brotherhood in Christ is expressed in graphic detail — underlying the ontological unity with Christians that Christ himself claimed—when he addressed Saul: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you persecute." (Acts 9:4-6). We can paraphrase the statement thus: "The Christians whom you persecute are my *igsoon*, my *kapatid*." The Christians are *igsoon* as they share with Christ the fullness and epitome of *sood*, that ontological relatedness to the extent and by virtue of which Christ could say, "I am Jesus, the one whom you persecute." The Christians are *kapatid* or *utol* of Christ as they have been reborn into a new lifestream, a divine navel, *pusod*, from which they have derived their new life.

There is however maintained the hierarchy of sonship in relation to the godhead. Jesus is the Son among the sons of God, the *kinamagulangan*/*panganay* (first-born) of many brothers (cf. Rom. 8:29). Jesus Christ shares the *gulang* (age), and the wisdom (Mt. 11:25-26), the authority and power (Mt. 21:23-27; Mk. 11:27-33) of God. He is the Word made incarnate.

The paschal mystery itself is given light in the role supportive of his brothers this first-born fulfilled: the *pagsugot-pagsunod* (obedience) of Christ the Son to God's plan; the very human and experiential *pakighigala*/*pakikipagkapwatao* (being a man among men) which made Christ literally one among us, except for sin; the *pagmamalasakit* (sacrifice) Jesus underwent to redeem salvation for us his brothers; and the manner with which Christ shared the resurrection with all humanity, the broadest *sakop* he identifies himself with. The salutary or salvific role

of *pagmamalasakit* strikes an important feature on Filipino religiosity and asceticism, as will be treated later.

Ecclesial Union in the Whole Christ

The profound ontological relatedness of *igsoon/kapatid* relationship leads the Filipino to the deeply relational *kahigalaan/kapatiran* (brotherhood, association) set-up which finds its ontological manifestation in the *mag-asawa*, *mag-anak*, *angkan*, *ka-mag-anak*, and the extended *sakop* relationships.

The ontological relationship of the individual with the *mag-anak*, *angkan*, *kamag-anakan*, and the *sakop* in general finds an easy inference with that predisposition to realize that christians together constitute the mystical body of Christ. Westerners express this through "corporate personality", which reflection however does not exhaust that richness of mystical identity of Christ being one and in all, in the particular and the total.

The allegory of the vine (cf. Mt. 7:21-23; 8:10; 11:28-30; Jn. 15:1-11) demonstrates that mystical thought of "the branch which is in the vine, and the vine in the branch." The corresponding interdependence of the individual with the *mag-anak*, between the individual and the *angkan*, between the individual and the *sakop* speak of a natural predisposition for experiencing the Mystery of Christ. The vision and the orientation however is not lost. Christ remains the *kinatawan* (body, embodiment) and the *pangulo* (head, leader) in this mystical body. In fact he is the Big Man, who is *sood/malapit* and *malakas* par excellence.

The relationship of the husband and wife, the *mag-asawa*, lends us rich insights as to how the Church has been referred to as the "bride of Christ". The *kapikas sa kinabuhik/kabiyak ng puso* relationship speaks of the ontological dependence of the bride on the groom, and brings to perfection that love of the groom—the wife being subject to her husband as her head (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23), and yet looked upon as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and the two bring in one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24). So while the Christians as a whole are subject to Christ as their Head, they are made to realize that as members of his

body, and being of his flesh and his bones (thus *kapikas sa kinabuhi*, other-half-of-life), they were the object of his special love and self-sacrifice, *pagmamalasakit* in the task of their purification by him (Eph. 5:22-32).

The missionary and self-propagating nature of the Church finds expression in the transitus which is effected with the advent of the *anak* to the *mag-asawa* whereby the couple now becomes a *mag-anak*, a *sakop* unit (a local church) which cements its bonds with the rest of the *sakop* the universal Catholic Church.

Union with the Holy Trinity

The variety of relationships involving the individual, the relationship with the *igsoon/kapatid*, with the *kapikas sa kinabuhi/kabiyak ng puso*, and with the *sakop* to which one belongs, extends the Filipino, enriches him, gives him his fullness, brings him, without doubt, his deepest satisfactions. It is in the Trinity that he will discover this richness of relationships within unity. Identity is brought out in the light of relationships.

1. *The Son*. I am *igsoon/kapatid* of the Son, and not of the Father or of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the *kinamagulangang/panganay* who has revealed the wisdom and the will of the Father in a gesture of authentic *pagtuo*; Christ perfected his role in the *pagmamalasakit* which won salvation for us his brothers at the price of his own blood.

2. *The Father*. Sharing in the life of the Son begotten by the Father, I become, through this sharing, the begotten of the Father, the son of the Father. He is the source of the *grasya/biyaya*, indeed, the ultimate source of the whole life stream; he is the Big Man behind the *angkan*.

3. *The Holy Spirit*. Sharing in the life of the Son, I share his relation with the Spirit. The Spirit is the love, life, and *dugo* (blood) itself, by which the Son is related to the Father, and the sons related to the Son, and the Father. It is the Spirit who infuses new life into the Christians and transforms them into brothers in Christ, and the one who creates a new man who comes forth at baptism.

The Filipino Christian who has integrated his special type of relationship with the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, finds himself from then on placed in a certain position towards them. He becomes aware that he is in the divine life stream; the invisible world of grace becomes a reality for him.

Elements in Sacramental Life

The sacraments find dialogical predispositions in the Filipino thought, especially in line with the concept of signs or *tanda*.

1. *Baptism and Confirmation.* The sacraments of initiation have been among those which have found root in the Filipino thought and life patterns. It has come into an enriching dialogue with the *sakop* system, which has bound people through the *compadrinazgo* system into a broader and more diverse ties and relationships. In baptism the followers of Christ acquire a new kindred far more numerous than those whom he may have abandoned for the sake of Christ and the gospel (cf. Mk. 10:28-30). That we become *igsoon/kapatid* of Christ, and a son of the Father, through the gift of life of the Spirit (cf. Jn. 3:36; I Jn. 2:29; Gal. 4:1-11) should remain among the solid elements of *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* in catechesis. That through baptism we are ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ necessarily flows from our sonship in the Father. Hence, there is the challenge to extend the limits of *sakop* relationships from the rather limited *data/kitang duha/tayong dalawa* relationships (which corresponds to the nuclear family concerns) to the *dacami/kami/kami* stage (corresponding to the local community, the *angkan*, or the parish) to its peak of development of *sakop* orientation which is expressed in the all-inclusive *datayo/kitang tanan/tayong lahat* stage, which is the awareness of brotherhood and incorporation in Christ, the mystical body, the universal Church.

The sacrament of confirmation functions in relation to the sacrament of baptism, whereby the sharing the life infused by the Spirit, by which we become sons because of our brotherhood with the Son of God—is more deeply given due attention so as to evoke authentic *pagtuo/pagsampalataya*.

2. *Eucharist*. The Filipino *fiesta* is a cultural manifestation lending a reflective predisposition at the catechesis on the eucharist. The *fiesta* is largely a celebration of the *sakop*; the *fiesta* has occupied that peak of *sakop* activities. In particular, the sharing of the meal occupies a central place in the celebration. In effect, the individual enhances his identification with the *sakop*, he reaffirms his identity which is achieved in the relationships that he has with them, and which he therefore religiously maintains.

The Eucharist was instituted in the context of the paschal meal and anticipates the messianic banquet. It is then an ecclesial activity; it is the apex of ecclesial activities. It is in the partaking of the true body that the mystical body results. The eucharist is the bond of union between the members of the Body and the Head, and it is the bond of union between the members themselves. Here is the sense in John 6:54-58: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the Father who has life sent me and I have life because of the Father, so the man who feeds on me will have life because of me."

3. *Matrimony*. A very fertile ground is found in the marital relationship in the nuclear Filipino family. The *kapikas sa kinabuhi/kabiyak ng puso* relationship is a natural proclivity to that which is expressed in Eph. 5:22-33, where the love of husband and wife, a mutual self-giving unto death, symbolizes and is modelled on the love of Christ and his bride and Body, the Church.

The advent of the *mag-anak* underlines how the home becomes a fruitful cell of the mystical body (cf. 1 Cor. 7:39). The woman is equal to the man in all that concerns the unity, fidelity, and indissolubility of marriage (1 Cor. 7:10); yet hierarchy is maintained in that the husband is the head, just as Christ is the head of the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3, 7; Col. 3:18ff.; 1 Tim. 2:11ff.).

5. *Orders*. The inherent hierarchical organization of the *sakop*, with its *kinamagulangan/panganay* and the *lawas/kinatawan* or *ulo/pangulo* having influence in wisdom, and authority,

is very much in dialogue with the early Church presbyter or elder (Acts 11:30; 14:22; 20:28-35). The recent attention to the basic christian communities and local ministries in the Church of Mindanao have found indigenous roots, and exhibits its manifestations in the *kaabag* ministries.

6. *Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick*. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32) illustrates for the Filipino what it is to be a sinner. It is the loss of one's orientation; it is being selfish; it is breaking the relationship of ontological dependency with the *sakop*. In the allegorization of the parable the details provide a powerful picture of the sad state to which the sinner is reduced when he departs from his heavenly Father. He incurs the *gaba/parusa*: the loss of money, the great famine, absolute want; he becomes a hireling under a Gentile master, he becomes a feeder of swine.

He realizes the situation. He seeks repentance or *pasaylo/pagpapatawad*, which is the sincere admission of sinfulness with a determination to destroy sin by returning to God. Then the erring son makes his personal *panaad/panata* the force of which he may considered one among the servants—he is ready to take up that proportional salutary *malasakit*.

In reconciling himself with the family, the erring individual asks the help of intermediaries. He may even send advance feelers as to how the family may take his return. This may be a predisposition for that mediating role which the priest occupies in the form which we have now in reconciliation.

There remains a challenge for catechesis to integrate the sense of *pagkakasala*, which is both voluntary and involuntary, into the social dimension of sin, not however understating the accountability of the individual.

The development of catechesis in the Filipino context generally may benefit of the thought patterns and the dialogical approach given. The catechesis on the importance and place of Mary on the Church may present her as one faithful member of this Mystical Body—a model (a mini Church by herself) and an assurance of the fulness of incorporation into the kingdom of God.

The symbols of faith, the creeds, may also be a locus coming into dialogue with the thought patterns. The importance and meaning of formulary prayers may be given light, not as formulae, but as communication maintained between sons and their Father, through the Son and their brother.

Distillation of Tinuhuan/Pananampalataya

The resources offered by Filipino thought is complemented by an internal check mechanism—the distinction of *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* from the *tuo-tuo/pamahiin*. There is a wide range of *tuo-tuo/pamahiin*: some are outright mockery of *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* as is the sense of the present usage of the term *diwatero/magdidiwata* (idolater, sorcerer); some are imitation or a pretense of the authentic faith as the buying and selling of prayers in Qiapo; the adulterated yet simple faith of the devotee of San Roque who comes and wipes his dog for some shamanistic effect; and the psyche-maintaining complex of beliefs to explain natural phenomena and day to day experiences, as in the eclipse wherein the moon is supposed to be eaten by the *Bakunawa* (Ceb., serpent dragon), or in the motivating of children to be in the house at evening twilight otherwise they may bump and be harmed by *dwendes* and spirits *dili ingon nato/hindi kagaya natin*.

Some elements of Christian *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* become mixed up with the elements of *tuo-tuo/pamahiin*. They therefore command our attention.

1. *The "santos" as middle-men.* That God is an absentee, detached God seems to be a carry over of archaic folk religions. Therefore, the role played by demi-gods, the gods of the seas, rivers, trees, are now played by the saints, who are not uncommonly referred to as *dios-dios* found in the altars of the churches and in homes. They are conceived of as protectors (hence, *patron*) and as causing *gaba/husong* if angered. The task of catechesis seems to be that the realization of brotherhood in Christ should make the faithful acknowledge that God is not an unknown and distant God, but has in fact been made known to us and made accessible by his Son, our brother. The exemplary character of

saints need the attention of catechesis. The mediatorship of saints must be explained as a participation of and dependent on the unique mediatorship of Christ, *ang nagpakataong Panganay* (the incarnate first-born).

2. *The influence of spirits.* The animistic world view of the Filipino is carried over in the belief of spirits both good and bad, who seem to have so much influence on the world of men. A number of times families have asked the author to bless their homes. Invariably, he was always asked to perform some kind of exorcist ritual. *Duwendes*, *engkantos*, and *kalag* were feared to be cohabiting with them. The task of catechesis would then be to inculcate in the belief system of the faithful the proper place of spirits and their limited sphere of influence vis-a-vis Christ (cf. Col. 1:15-23). Catechists should be wary of the "santos" being taken for *dios-dios*, which expression certainly smacks of *tuo-tuo*.

3. *The complement of "pagmamalasakit/sacrifice".* The focus in the consideration of the paschal mystery by the Filipino has been in Christ's *pagmamalasakit* aspect. This we infer from the attention he has given the figure of the suffering servant, the representation of the suffering Christ in Filipino culture expressed in the *santo entierro*, the *Jesus Nazareno* and the grieving *Dolorosa*. The celebration itself of the mystery on Holy Week comes to its peak and is overwhelming in terms of attendance and manifestations of asceticism on Good Fridays, which does not quite persist and turn to triumphant worship until Easter Sunday. An integral catechesis therefore calls forth that the Risen Christ be more felt in the faithful's lives—which caps and completes the aspect of salutary *pagmamalasakit*.

4. *Paggalang for Hiya.* Societies which influence the personalities of individuals so much seem to have their behavior sanctions manifested in conformity with society. The *hiya* which the Filipino feels deep in his being, should find its more interior counterpart in the values of *utang-na loob ang paggalang*. The Christian who realizes that being a brother of Christ, he is the son of God—and that God is both transcendent and immanent (which anyhow he feels in the *gaba*), should mature out of one's

loob (being volition) because of authentic respect and worship of his Father.

5. *The panaad/panata response.* The wide range of the *panaad/panata* from the immature "if you grant me this, I will do this" to the interiorized repentance of a sinner the likes of the prodigal son—mandates that catechesis make use of this predisposition of spirituality, especially in providing the directions towards a maturing communication of God and man, and not merely off-and on contractual exchange of material benefits for *move-nas* and sacrifices.

6. *The challenge of the extended "we".* Parochialism is not the sense of the local church. There remains therefore the challenge of society itself to extend its *sakop* boundaries and reach that peak of development where everyone is an inclusive member of the *datayo/kitang tanan/tayong lahat*—the local churches subsumed in the universal church.

III. CONCLUSION

With a necessity stemming from the nature of the Church as missionary, she witnesses to the authority and power given her to teach, rule and sanctify all men and the whole man. The universality of her mission speaks of a revelation intended for all men of all cultures. Relevance has all the more prodded on the contemporary Church to come into a loving dialogue with the "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties" of the faithful and of all men. The local church in the Philippines has manifested this longing in the anxieties of an emergent nation, an emergent church—awakening to a sense of disequilibrium, and anxious to uphold a socio-cultural identity in loving and fruitful dialogue with the faith.

The documents of the Second Vatican Council and the documents following its spirit stand for the growing awareness and commitment of the Church to the mission Christ entrusted her—now with a special reference to contemporary demands of a variety of peoples and a diversity of cultures. The local Church

in the Philippines responds to the call to mission. Local theologians and pastors have been adept and generous to lend their experience to ordered reflection, a praxis.

The contextualization of catechesis is one directly emerging from the Church mission itself—addressed to all peoples and meeting all cultures. The author sees the task as one of harnessing indigenous cultural thought patterns, especially predisposed to the Good News and vitally bringing ecclesial and personal life into fruition and perfection.

The Filipino world view on God, spirits, and men, expressed in the thought-and-life structure of the *sakop* and its values manifested in behavior, meet the nature of an authentic catechesis as highly Christocentric, Trinitarian, ecclesial, sacramental, and authentically personal.

In particular, the originality of Filipino thought remains grounded in that particular vision of man characterized by a deep sense of dependence upon other man, dependence upon his brothers, sisters and fellow men to whom he is bound by *utang-na-loob*, *pagamalasakit*, and *paggalang*, and the mutual dependence of husband and wife. Behind the Filipino's need for social acceptance, negatively manifested in *amor propio* and *pagtatakip* and positively in the virtues of *pakikipagkapwatao*, *bayanihan*, *pakikisama*, is the Filipino's awareness that to be a man is to be dependent in his very being upon one's beloved, one's fellowmen, one's ancestors, one's God.

With a personalistic view of the universe, which he shares with other beings, he seems to signify that ultimately in life we have to reckon not only with nature and human nature, but also with cosmic presences or spirits, seem to be the origin of evil. Because there is evil, an evil which is not merely a lack of order in nature and in man, but a positive violation of order by cosmic presences or spirits, man in struggling with it, must suffer and God together with him. Thus the Filipino sees that salutary effect and necessity of suffering in life. Life may be sorrowful, but precisely because suffering is ultimately salutary or salvific, there is hope that beyond suffering there is another time and another place.

An added feature the originality of Filipino religiosity may exhibit is that internal check system delineating the authentic belief, worship, values, and observances in the *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* from the wide range of seeming contrary responses including the spurious, the superstitious, the comic, the naive, and the unreal, in the *tuo-tuo/pamahiin* complex.

The research is not intended to be comprehensive and exhaustive of Filipino thought, especially in the dialogue with the Christian message. The work has the character of a stepping stone and a challenge for researchers to take up the endeavor where the author may have left it. In following up this humble opus, it is recommended that the particular elements in the faith, in liturgy, in spirituality, in official catechetical programs and catechisms squeeze out the substance of thought and values and made to serve the Gospel message. For one thing, the distillation of the *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* from the *tuo-tuo/pamahiin* remains a task to be taken up.

Finally, the study has been made in an effort of *pagmamalasakit* of a *kinamagulangan/panganay* (the author being a priest) as a humble contribution towards the awareness and commitment to his *Igsoon/kapatid* Jesus Christ and his *igsoon/kapatid* in Him, the Filipino *sakop* of the local Church so that together with the universal Church *datayo/kitang tanan/tayong lahat* may give our *tinuhuan/pananampalataya* to God. So be it.

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