

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

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Philippine Studies vol. 17, no. 4 (1969): 739–755

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

Charismatic Tension in the Church

H. PAUL LE MAIRE, S.J.

THE *America* editorial of August 17, 1968 on the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* prophetically remarked that the most serious problem raised by the encyclical was not that of artificial birth control, but the problem of the Pope.¹ This has proven to be true.² As a result of the new understanding of the Church sanctioned by Vatican II, in which all members of the Church are recognized as sharing in the prophetic office of Christ³ and as a result of the new emphasis given to the reality of the college of bishops,⁴ theologians were left with the task of harmonizing and synthesizing the role of the people, the role of the bishops and the role of the Pope in the Church.⁵ In the ideal order, it would have been desirable if this question could have been quietly debated and discussed in theological circles, so as not to disturb further the already harassed faith of the non-theologically oriented Catholic, until some conclusion had been reached.

¹ "An Editorial Statement on 'Human Life,'" *America*, 118 (August 17, 1968), pp. 94-95.

² See, for example, *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*, Charles E. Curran, editor (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), pp. 17-148.

³ *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, nn. 12, 35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, nn. 22 ss.

⁵ "...The abstract principle of collegiality was stated [by Vatican II], but what that principle would mean practically for the Pope—how it should be worked out on the institutional level—is still quite unclear." Michael M. Dorcy and James P. Jurich, "A Conversation with Karl Rahner," *America*, 120 (June 28, 1969), p. 734.

Theologians were not to be allowed the luxury of the time necessary for this careful consideration. *Humanae Vitae* catapulted into the public eye the exercise of papal magisterial authority in the post Vatican II Church.⁶ The question may be put in these terms: what does one do when the Pope categorically teaches something in an encyclical—in this case, the condemnation of artificial birth control—and subsequently some national groups of bishops issue statements which modify or express reservations about the papal teaching?⁷ What does one do when this papal teaching is at variance with a substantial segment of the also Spirit-inspired people of God? Further, what does one do when the Pope, instead of pausing for a moment for a re-examination of the question, continues to issue statements that do no more than repeat his original teaching?

Many are, to say the least, perplexed: the theologian, seeking to serve the Church as a theologian; the married Christian, seeking God's will in his life; the confessor, seeking to offer guidance to his penitents. Each of these people is left to solve the problem according to his own conscience.⁸

⁶ Pope Paul VI wrote recently to Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington, D.C., praising him for his defense of *Humanae Vitae*. "Not only did you give immediate acceptance to the teaching of the magisterium, but you also strove...that all the priests and laity should give the same acceptance." Letter dated May 15, 1969; *National Catholic Reporter*, 5 (July 9, 1969), p. 5. The Pope seems to imply in this sentence that Cardinal O'Boyle and the other bishops do not share in the magisterium of the Church, but rather that their duty is to defend the pronouncements of the magisterium. This concept of the bishop and the magisterium is difficult to reconcile with Vatican II.

⁷ Among these groups of bishops, we may mention the Belgian, Dutch, Canadian, French, Austrian and German hierarchies.

⁸ The Philippine Bishops in their pastoral letter on *Humanae Vitae* recognized the right of the individual's conscience, but then went on to state that a person's conscience must be formed according to the authoritative teachings of the Church. This is simply a statement of the problem between conscience and authority; it is not a solution to it. *Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines on the Encyclical Letter "Humanae Vitae"* (Pasay City: Daughters of St. Paul), Part II.

One might say that if Vatican II had simply contented itself with reiterating the function of the Pope, as stated by Vatican I, this problem would never have arisen. But Vatican II did two things: it resurrected the collegial nature of the episcopacy; it resurrected an appreciation of the charismatic element in the Church. Therefore, Vatican II has left us with the problem of how to reconcile these various functions in the Church. We propose to discuss in this article the role of the ecclesial office holder in general and the role of the rest of the people of God.

THE CHARISMATIC REALITY OF THE CHURCH⁹

In ordinary parlance when a person is labeled as charismatic, we think of a man who exercises a mysterious attraction over other people and is able to rally others to support the ideals he stands for. His gift of leadership is described as charismatic since it defies ordinary human analysis. Thus, John XXIII, Mahatma Gandhi, Ramon Magsaysay, Raul Manglapus, John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, are all men who at one time or another have had the adjective charismatic applied to them.

This, however, does not seem to be the meaning of the word, charism, as we find it used in the letters of St. Paul. In the twelfth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes a charism as any gift of the Spirit which is given to the person for the service of the community. The criterion, therefore, that he proposes for distinguishing a true charism from a false one is that of service to the community and not the voice of authority. All of the people of God, by virtue of belonging to the body of Christ, are recipients of the gifts of the Spirit given for the purpose of fulfilling their functions within the body and developing and perfecting that body. Thus, the people of God is charismatic.

St. Paul makes no attempt to give an exhaustive list of the gifts of the Spirit since he realizes that the Spirit breathes

⁹ See especially Hans Küng, *The Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), pp. 179-191; and Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), pp. 42-83.

where He wills and bestows gifts according to the needs of the people of God in a particular age of history. Each era of the history of God's people and each culture where this people is to be found make, as it were, different demands upon the Spirit. Paul, however, does distinguish toward the end of chapter twelve a number of general categories of gifts:

Within our community God has appointed in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracle-workers, then those who have gifts of healing, or ability to help others or power to guide them, or the gift of ecstatic utterance of various kinds.¹⁰

Hans Küng interestingly remarks that the gift of leadership in the Christian community appears rather far down in Paul's hierarchically ordered listing of the gifts of the Spirit.¹¹ To be an administrator is not as significant in Paul's mind as being an apostle, a prophet or a teacher. Be that as it may, it does become clear from a careful analysis of chapter 12 that the gifts of the Spirit are not exhausted in the officeholders in the Church; nor can these gifts be grouped together under the category of office in the Church. In other words, the work of the Spirit transcends, goes beyond the institutional structure of the Church, for the Spirit breathes where he wills and cannot be regarded as being imprisoned within or limited to the structure of the Church.

In fact it becomes quite clear from St. Paul that something quite opposite to our normal way of thinking of the relationship between office and charism is true. The general category, which includes all of the gifts of the Spirit, is that of charism. Holding office in the Church is one particular example of a charismatic gift bestowed upon a person by the Spirit. The conclusion to be drawn is quite obvious: the officeholder in the Church is responsible for the ordered functioning of the community, but he can make no claim to a direct control over the exercise and living out of the varied charismatic gifts bestowed by the Spirit upon the members of the Church. Each member of the Church, while acknowledging the charism of

¹⁰ 1 Cor 12:27-28.

¹¹ Küng, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

leadership and accepting its guidance, is directly responsible to the Spirit for an accounting of how he has used the gifts he has received. To deny this is to reduce the Church to nothing more than another ordinary human institution; whereas the Church is trans-institutional because of the presence of the Spirit in the Christian community. It is the Spirit which makes the Church the Church, not its institutional structure.

It is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Alloting His gifts "to everyone according as he will" (1 Cor. 12:11), He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks or offices advantageous for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (1 Cor. 12:7). These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church.

Still, extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from them. In any case, judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church, and to whose special competence it belongs not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good (cf. 1 Th. 5:12, 19-21).¹²

The Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II remarks:

... since the Spirit does grant extraordinary gifts, good order always demands that their authenticity should be investigated. The Constitution contents itself with recalling St. Paul's warning about the discernment of spirits, without giving precise norms. But this discernment is one of the most difficult arts in the guidance of men and Churches. The final judgment rests with the holders of office, though this does not dispense or exclude the faithful as a whole from the duty of investigation. According to St. Paul, the main criteria of the true gifts of the Spirit are: devotion to the service of the whole body, and a genuine accord between the development of variety and the promotion of unity in the mystical body. Thus, this section provides a fundamental means of assessing the value of the individual in the Church and also of the local and regional Churches. ... The Church must cease to be afraid of charisms. They are essential characteristics of the Church.

¹² *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 12.

"A Church order based on the charisma does not mean ... enthusiasm, which degenerates into arbitrariness and disorder nor legalism which hardens into levelling and uniformity. Neither caprice nor uniformity, neither levelling nor disorder, but order in liberty marks the charismatic Church: 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' (2 Cor. 3.17)" (H. Küng, "The Charismatic Structure of the Church," in *Concilium*, 4 [1965], p. 32).¹³

The Council does nothing really but state the problem that arises when a certain tension begins to exist between the judgment of a Church officeholder and the holder of a different charismatic gift. Both must remain faithful to the Spirit and yet both are faced constantly with the temptation to extinguish the Spirit as He manifests Himself in the other. We cannot say that the word of the office holder is final, absolute and without appeal, for the essence of authority in the Church is not dictatorial, but ministerial, i.e., it exists to be of service to the people of God. When it attempts to be dictatorial and ceases to be service-oriented, it loses its *raison d'être* and the people are called upon to speak out in protest against that authority. To do anything else would be to be false to the Spirit.

As Küng points out,¹⁴ the charismatic, non-institutional aspect of the Church is an essential part of its unchanging nature. To look upon the word of authority in the Church as absolutely binding in all circumstances is tantamount to denying the presence of the Spirit in the Church. One is equivalently denying the charismatic structure of the Church and implicitly saying that there is no difference between authority as exercised in the Church and authority as exercised, for example, in civil society.¹⁵

The implications of Vatican II and recent theological writings on the charismatic aspect of the Church that take the documents of the Council as their starting point demand a change of attitude not only in officeholders in the Church, but also in

¹³ *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (Herbert Volgrimmer, editor; Herder and Herder), I, p. 166.

¹⁴ Küng, *The Church*, pp. 3-6; 179-191.

¹⁵ For further discussion on the nature of ecclesial authority see John L. McKenzie, S.J., *Authority in the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), pp. 89-184; and Curran, *op. cit.*

the people of God as a whole. As we well know from our own human experience, time and patience are required to effect a change of attitude. What *Humanae Vitae* did was to deprive us of the time necessary to study carefully this problem and to bring about a change of point of view in ourselves and others. *Humanae Vitae* has prematurely thrust upon us a problem of disagreement between officeholders in the Church, between the Pope, the Curia and the more conservatively oriented bishops and the more progressively minded ones. It has confronted us with a disagreement between a substantial body of the people of God and the conservative elements in the Church.

While there are unfortunate aspects to every problem in the Church of God, especially one that has to do with ecclesial authority, this disagreement cannot be regarded as a total disaster. The very fact that problems arise in Christ's Church is a sure sign of healthy vitality and potential development. When tension ceases to exist in the affairs of men, we may be quite sure that we have ceased to be human beings and that further progress has been denied us. When tension ceases to exist in the Church, we may be sure that the life-giving Spirit has departed from our midst and that the Church has been reduced simply to the status of being another human institution.

In our baptism we shared really but sacramentally in the death-resurrection event in the life of Christ. That sacrament represents our pledge to live the death-resurrection event in our human and ecclesial lives. By "dying" as a result of the pain and crises of human existence, we rise to a richer, fuller human life. So too, by accepting the death aspect of Christian community life in the Church, we rise to a richer, fuller life in God and in one another. This is the law of human life; this is Paul's law of the cross.

The Christian life also demands a continuous effort at conversion: a dying to the past and the rising to a new life. Applying this reality of conversion to the magisterium, Gregory Baum remarks:

Growth in the understanding of the Gospel always involves an element of conversion. It seems to me inadmissible to think of doctrinal development in the Church simply as a passage from truth to greater truth. What takes place is often also a passage from blindness to seeing. The ecclesiastical magisterium, though equipped with the gift of infallibility, is again and again led to acknowledge its blindness on certain issues, to confess that while God had spoken, it had not really listened, and to avow with gratitude that the Spirit, speaking in the Church or even outside the Church, brought the understanding of what God had revealed from the beginning....¹⁶

Thus, believing in the presence and action of the Spirit in the Church, we may justly hope that the present tension existing between the papal teaching on artificial birth control and the position of some members of the college of bishops along with the familial problems of many Catholics, will prompt all Christians to seek a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and as a result will bring about a new conversion, a fuller turning toward the way of life proposed by Christ. Thus, also, the desire to "convert" ourselves more fully to the Gospel must prompt all to seek a solution to the serious population problem in the Philippines through a cooperative effort.¹⁷

THE OFFICE HOLDER IN THE CHURCH

St. Ignatius in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus repeats over and over again that authority in the Jesuit Order must be paternal in nature. If we update the word, paternal, we would say that the exercise of authority must be human, i.e., it must show full regard for the dignity and rights of the human person as he is understood in each age of history.¹⁸ Or

¹⁶ Gregory Baum, O.S.A., "The Magisterium in a Changing Church," *Concilium*, 21, Edward Schillebeeckx, editor (Glen Rock: Paulist Press, 1967), p. 79.

¹⁷ For a few interesting pages on the world population problem, see John L. Russell, S.J., "Contraception and the Natural Law," *The Heythrop Journal*, X (April 1969), pp. 125-128.

¹⁸ Gregory Baum believes, for example, that in our day "...the Spirit has led the Church to a [new] understanding of who people are and to the realization that God is redemptively at work in the human family...." Baum, *art. cit.*, p. 79

we might say, as Ignatius often does, that government in the Society of Jesus must be personal.

The figure used by St. John and the Vatican Council to sum up how authority is to be exercised in the Church is pastoral. If we demythologize this particular metaphor, we would say that authority in the Church is to be exercised in a way that is human and personal, that fully recognizes that the charism of office is only one of the many charisms given by the Spirit to the Church. In other words, authority exists only to be of service to the people of God.

The celebration of Word and Sacrament is exercised by an hierarchical priesthood. The bishops as successors of the apostles and their helpers, the priests, are the main celebrants of the liturgical worship. They are the ministers of the Word.... Thanks to their sacred ministry, they have a special share in the prophetic office of Christ, a share which is different from that communicated through baptism [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n. 21]. What is this difference? The share in the prophetic office of Jesus, granted through baptism, is the primary reality in the Church; the share in the prophetic office of Christ bestowed through the sacrament of orders is a ministry of service to the prophetic mission of the entire people, making it more effective, more powerful, more intense. The teaching office of the hierarchical priesthood does not replace the prophetic mission of the people; it is, rather, destined to protect and promote the prophetic mission of the entire Church. Through the teaching ministry of the bishops and their priests, the whole congregation of the faithful becomes more secure, more articulate, more deeply convinced in the exercise of its prophetic office.¹⁹

As a result of what we have seen of the charismatic reality of the Church, it is clear that one of the functions of authority in the Church is to prevent chaos. Chaos can arise either as a result of the conflict among true charisms or as a result of the conflict between a true charism and a false one. Thus, one of the roles of the ecclesial officeholder is to introduce as far as possible into the Church the peace of Christ which is itself a gift of the Spirit. This he does by distinguishing between true and false charisms²⁰ and by ordering and harmonizing the various gifts bestowed by the Spirit upon the people of God.

¹⁹ Baum, *art cit.*, p. 73.

²⁰ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n. 12.

Catholics have always recognized the place of ecclesial offices and in particular the special teaching function of those who hold office in the Church. But this special role of the ecclesial officeholder must not be understood in any exclusive sense, since every member of the people of God shares by baptism in the triple function of Christ: every Christian is priest, prophet and king. Thus, it is the Church as a whole which has inherited the task of continuing Christ's action and presence in the midst of men. When, therefore, officeholders attempt to exercise their prerogatives in an exclusive way which implies a denial of the baptismal character of others, a distortion of the scriptural image of the Church results. The danger of distorting this image is one that the Church must constantly face up to.

As often happens in any science, certain aspects of a truth might be overly stressed due to cultural and polemical factors, with the result that other elements are neglected and an imbalance ensues. Regarding the ecclesiastical office, theological science should be especially wary. There is a deep-rooted tendency observable in man's religious history to magnify the role of religious authority figures and to view their teaching as oracular.²¹

Therefore, the pastoral exercise of authority means that the pastor recognizes the responsibility of his flock in the work of putting the Church at the service of men. The pastor is aware of the constant temptation he must face to assume the responsibility that belongs to the people and thus violate the principle of subsidiarity so often defended by the Popes.²² His charism is that of leadership and guidance; it is a far more difficult and complex task in the modern world to be a leader and a guide than it is to be a dictator or an autocrat. The guidance and leadership the pastor offers must be of a positive nature and not merely a repressive force on his people. He must be a real leader in the sense that he inspires men to follow him into the unknown

²¹ Daniel Maguire, "Morality and Magisterium," *Cross Currents*, XVIII (Winter, 1968), p. 54.

²² The principle of subsidiarity, as it has been developed in the social encyclicals, means that a higher body does not take upon itself tasks and responsibilities that can be fulfilled by a subordinate body in society.

future, especially in the realm of perhaps the greatest problem facing the Church today: its relationship to the world.²³ He must be willing to share the risks that are an essential part of any great undertaking; in the Church we are concerned with the greatest undertaking of all—the attempt to have men experience in their lives the saving presence and action of Christ.

The Pope has condemned artificial means of birth control; unfortunately, he did this without the proper consultation of the bishops and the laity.²⁴ For those holders, however, of ecclesial offices, it is not sufficient merely to communicate this condemnation to their people. They must also attempt to promote an understanding of this condemnation and provide room for free discussion; they should also attempt to offer alternative solutions to the problems of their people. Thus, for example, the Philippine Bishops have fully endorsed the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*,²⁵ but as a group they have not offered sufficient leadership in the setting up of rhythm clinics and in educating the people in the area of familial and sexual values and in the dimensions of the population problem. To condemn is easy enough; to offer substitutes is more difficult; to inspire and win confidence is one of the most difficult tasks a leader has to face.

The dimensions of the Philippine population problem are staggering,²⁶ the resolution of which will require the mobilization of all the forces—both public and private—in the Philippines. One cannot help but wish that the Bishops would show just as much interest and decisiveness in this area as they did in upholding the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, an encyclical which shows little appreciation of the population problems in developing nations. It was only after the invitation on the part of the Government to take an active part in the work

²³ For an excellent discussion of this question, see Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 304-338.

²⁴ See H. Paul Le Maire, S.J., "*Humanae Vitae* and the Spirit of Vatican II," *Philippine Studies*, 17 (January 1969), pp. 136-142.

²⁵ See *Pastoral Letter*, ed. cit.

²⁶ See Mercedes B. Concepcion, editor, *Philippine Population in the Seventies* (Manila: Community Publishers, Inc., 1969).

of the Population Commission that the Bishops issued their statement.²⁷ Yet in terms of the good and service of the people of God, this problem is one of the most pressing in the Philippines today.

To issue a statement pointing out the complexities of the population problem, making a number of distinctions and issuing a few warnings is simple enough. But much more than this is required; a cooperative effort at establishing a positive program of population control is needed. Therefore, perhaps the most important sentence in the Bishops' statement is the one found in the first paragraph: "... We present these reflections with the hope that they will serve as bases for a dialogue that will involve all responsible sectors of the country."²⁸ Many are waiting to see what concrete steps the ecclesial leaders of the Philippines are going to take to implement the suggestion they have made. This is the type of leadership and guidance that belongs to the charism of officeholder in the Church.

AN ATTEMPT AT A SOLUTION

The problem outlined at the beginning of this article was how to reconcile the share in the prophetic office of Christ enjoyed by the ecclesial officeholder with that enjoyed by the people of God. Perhaps one of the pitfalls of Catholic theology in the past has been the attempt to offer a theoretical solution to a practical problem or the attempt to solve a particular historical and/or cultural problem by means of a universally valid principle. This is not always possible. The relationship between officeholder in the Church and the people of God seems to admit of no once-for-all dogmatic solution. It has arisen at least in part because of the quest on the part of twentieth century man for freedom and responsibility and a real voice in decisions that affect his life. It must be solved along the same lines, i.e., by a practical working out of lines of procedure.

²⁷ *The Manila Times*, July 10, 1969.

²⁸ *Loc. cit.*

St. Cyprian in the third century gave the Church a starting point for solving this twentieth century problem when he wrote: "... I have made it a rule from the beginning of my episcopate not to decide things on my own without consulting you (the presbyters) and having the agreement of the people."²⁹ Therefore, the most important element in attempting to discover a solution to our problem is the establishment of lines of communication between the bishops and the priests and between the clergy and the laity. No longer can any pope or bishop expect to be heard on questions affecting the lives of his people if he has not first heard the voice of the people of God. This is certainly not to claim that matters of faith and morals are to be decided by a Gallup poll type of theologizing, but the other extreme of the pendulum is also to be assiduously avoided—that of having a small segment of the people of God, those holding office, dictate to the Christian community. Consultation and dialogue is the path that will lead to a dissolution of the tension resulting from the variety of charismatic gifts within the Church.

What is perhaps most to be bemoaned in the Catholic Church today is not the open defiance of authority that occurs from time to time, but the ignoring of it—a much more frequent phenomenon. If we are to preserve in the Church a respect for what our leaders have to say, we must open up broader lines of communication with them. Thus, for example, both Paul VI and the Philippine Bishops have issued statements on celibacy with the intention of putting the question of the value and necessity of clerical celibacy to rest. The statements are ignored because they do not "say anything" to significant numbers of priests today. These priests want to take the word of authority with great seriousness, but they do not believe that authority has taken them and their point of view very seriously.

²⁹ Quoted in Küng, *op. cit.*, p. 441. A curious reversal of Cyprian's principle occurred recently. A large number of priests known to this author were sent copies of the Philippine Bishops' Statement on Celibacy after it had been published. It is a shame that this statement was not circulated among the clergy for their comments prior to its publication.

The same judgment may be passed on the controversy over artificial means of birth control. Many Catholics are not happy when they find themselves in a position of having a belief that is at variance with that of their leaders. It should be clear that in today's world neither of these problems will be solved simply by authoritative statements from on high. They can be resolved only by means of dialogue and consultation resulting in mutual understanding. For dialogue and consultation implies a recognition of the voice of the Spirit who communicates Himself through every member of the Church.

The early Christian community had a more vivid realization of this:

... the teaching authority in the early Church was not relegated to a "department"; the community itself was magisterial. The community, seen as a concrete and loving norm of Christian existence, came to be called "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 22:4). Councils and synods became a favored technique for tapping ecclesial wisdom and for revealing the Church's prevalent state of doctrinal consciousness. Particular weight was also attached to the traditions of the community in the great cities which had been the starting point of Christianization. At times, the most important magisterial figures on the scene were individual bishops who through their eloquence and extraordinary ability obtained a voice and influence not suggested by their sees....³⁰

Paul in I Corinthians 12 emphasizes that not all enjoy the same charism in the Church: some are called to be apostles; some, prophets; some, teachers; some leaders. It is through the cooperation of the various charismatic people that the Body of Christ will be built up not for its own glorification, but so as to be of service to the world of men. The bishop must recognize the charism in the theologian and allow him the freedom to carry out his responsibility in the Church. The theologian must recognize the charism of leadership and guidance in the bishop and respect his directives. Both must recognize the charism of the married Christian and pay careful attention to his insights into the Christian married life. In a word each person in the Church must respect and esteem the charism the Spirit has entrusted to the other. Therefore, not only is it im-

³⁰ Maguire, *art. cit.*, p. 41.

portant to set up lines of communication among the various classes of charismatic people in the Church, but respect for the other person as a loving sacrament of the Holy Spirit in our midst must be fostered. For the Catholic University, this means the bringing of the layman into positions of significance in the University. For the Catholic diocese, it means a willingness and a desire on the part of the bishop to hear the voice of his priests and people, especially in the planning and carrying out of pastoral projects and the use that is made of the funds that belong to the diocese.

Theology would be hard pressed to determine doctrinally what concrete rights in the Church the layman is entitled to. Is he, for example, going too far when he asks for a financial report and a voice in planning out the diocesan budget for the following year? The message, however, that Christ came to teach us was the message of love for one another and it is the continuous presence of the Spirit in the Church that inspires us with wisdom and gives us the power to meet the exigencies of this message of love in the changing circumstances of history and culture. Without love in the Church, the only thing that can possibly result from the variety of charismatic gifts is chaos and conflict. As Karl Rahner remarks:

... if Christ directly operates in his Church apart from the hierarchy, if he rules and guides the Church through charismata that are not linked to office and in this sense are extraordinary, and if, nevertheless, there is a valid and irrevocable official ministry in the Church, then harmony between the two "structures" of the Church, the institutional and the charismatic, can only be guaranteed by the one Lord of both, and by him alone, that is to say charismatically.³¹

³¹ Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, pp. 51-52. Rahner more recently remarked: "...As a Christian, I am convinced in my eschatological hope that love and justice will realize themselves again and again without having adequate juridical protections and guarantees. Thus for example a tyrannical Pope will finally be defeated by a powerless Francis of Assisi. That a spirit in the Church that in itself is juridically powerless will prevail against the established juridical power—this is the hope that belongs to the essence of Christianity. And if you want to make laws in the Church that would give some kind of legal power to charity, then you betray the inner meaning of Christianity." "Conversation with Karl Rahner," *art. cit.*, p. 734.

Although authority comes from God in the Church, there is nevertheless an undeniable democratic element in the Church, that is to say that the voice of the people of God should be heard and respected. Perhaps the most fundamental area where this voice of the people is to be heard is in the area of selecting its leaders. Christ left us with no eternally valid blue-print for the selecting of leaders in the Church. History shows us that it has been done in different ways in the Church from the popular proclamation of Ambrose as bishop of Milan to the ultra-secrecy of our own present method of selection. While taking every precaution to avoid the danger of a political campaign in the Church, we must work toward creating structures to enable people to express their inclination in the choosing of their leaders. For it will only be the man who has won the respect of the people by his pastoral zeal, who honors their charismatic gifts and who himself has the charism of leadership who will be able to introduce order and harmony into the various charisms given to the members of the Church. As long as we continue to allow only present office holders to have a voice in selecting their peers and successors in the hierarchical ministry, it does not seem possible that we will be able to resolve the tension arising from the exercise of various roles in the Church. Human nature is always faced with the problem that we are most sympathetic towards those people who share our sentiments. We need leaders who understand and are sympathetic towards the changing, historical forms of the Church as this pilgrim Church makes its way through the different ages of history and attempts to make Christ present and active among people of diverse cultures. To make every effort to guarantee the greatest possible chance of selecting men who are true, charismatic leaders, a broad and valid segment of the Christian people must be consulted.

Leaders whom the people feel they have had a role in selecting are the leaders whom the people will listen to and respect. Ecclesial authority has fallen on bad days in our time to the great detriment of the Church. The way, however, to solve this problem is not the way of the edict and the decree and the constant repetition of a theology of obedience suited for an age

different from ours; it is the way of dialogue, consultation and mutual respect. It seems obvious that if the people of God had been consulted on the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, the result would have been entirely different from the one we now have: either the publication of the encyclical would have been delayed, so that further study could have been made or the encyclical issued would have differed in its condemnation of artificial birth control from the one we now have. Moreover, what is perhaps more fundamental and more important, the people would have gained a new respect for ecclesial authority, for every man respects the person who has first respected him.

The Philippines is faced with a variety of social problems, not the least of which is the population problem. The Philippine Bishops have issued an invitation to dialogue about this problem. It is now up to the various segments of the people of God to respond to this invitation and thus take what may very well be the first step toward resolving or at least lessening the tension we find growing between the people, especially the educated ones, and their ecclesial leaders. We may be sure that the Holy Spirit will not allow tension to result in the disintegration of the Church only if we are willing to shoulder our share of the responsibility for the Church and to take the risk that is involved in every great undertaking.