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James H. Kroeger, M.M.

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## Evangelization in the Philippine Church: 1965-85

JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.

Philippine Society and the Catholic Church in the Islands have witnessed a momentous evolution in the twenty-year period since the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. This same period is the focus of Pope John Paul II's convocation of an extraordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops in late 1985 to evaluate the Council's impact on the Church in the world. Just as the Pope desired "to exchange and examine experiences and information about the application of the Council at the level of the universal Church and the particular churches,"<sup>1</sup> this article looks at the local Church in the Philippines in the post-Vatican II era and examines her operant vision of evangelization.

The Council's task in Pope John XXIII's own words was to "distinguish the 'signs of the times'," and to "give the Church the possibility to contribute more efficaciously to the solution of the problems of the modern age."<sup>2</sup> This vision has challenged the local Church to renew her evangelizing efforts by discerning social, political, economic, cultural and religious realities and to respond with faith-initiatives prompted by Gospel values.

The year 1965 saw the successful completion of the Council. Likewise, 1965 commemorated the 400th anniversary of the systematic Christian evangelization of the Philippine Islands. The local hierarchy issued two pastoral letters for the quatercentennial commemoration; in addition, they declared 1965 a Jubilee Year for the Philippines; they held the third National Eucharistic

1. John Paul II, "Pope Announces Extraordinary General Assembly of Synod of Bishops to Take Place From 25 November to 8 December," *L'Osservatore Romano-English Edition*, 4 February 1985), p. 1.

2. W. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966), pp. 704-5.

Congress; they established the Philippine Foreign Mission Society. They stated: "Four hundred years ago the evangelization of the Philippines was begun. This anniversary is a suitable time to launch a new evangelization."<sup>3</sup> And, the hierarchy chose the documents of Vatican II as the foundation for the "new evangelization" they were promoting.

Now, twenty years later (and ten years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi* [EN]), a study of the vision and program of evangelization in the Philippines can provide helpful insights for the local church as she continues her essential mission: the evangelization of peoples. This systematic presentation will unfold through a discussion of: (I) the theological method employed, (II) the context in which the vision of evangelization emerged, (III) the vision of evangelization itself, and (IV) an evaluation of the 1965-85 experience of evangelization in the Philippines.

#### AN INNOVATIVE THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Vatican II era saw the emergence of a new direction in theological methodology, a new approach in doing contemporary theology. This is the method of theologizing on life's events and empirical reality; in response to the "signs of the times," one pastorally and theologically discerns the Church's evangelizing mission within the realities and challenges of contemporary events. The *locus theologicus* or the point of departure for this method is the "humanum" (humanity, human history and society, human dignity). This inductive approach sees the world and human reality as setting the agenda of the pastoral-theological reflection process. Then, Tradition, Scripture, the Magisterium, the social sciences and church social teaching all serve to inform this process as essential components of an integral discernment of the Church's mission.

John XXIII promoted this theological method, which is popularly known as the "signs of the times" approach. It was in the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis*, by which Pope John convoked Vatican II, that he first used the expression "signs of the times."<sup>4</sup> This phrase and the inductive theological method it con-

3. CBCP, "Joint Pastoral Letter on the Fourth Centennial of the Evangelization of the Philippines-II," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* (BEF) (March 1965), p. 380.

4. Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 703.

notes became foundational to the Council document *The Church in the Modern World*.<sup>5</sup>

Reading the "signs" is a missionary duty imperative for the Church because these "signs" indicate how God, through his Spirit, is present and active (*adest—Gaudium et Spes* [GS] 26) in the world, e.g., in secular movements as well as in the aspirations of people for equality, participation, justice, peace, integral human development and liberation.

Paul VI, in an entire discourse devoted to the presence, scope, and meaning of the "signs of the times," reaffirmed this valid approach to theology as "the theological interpretation of contemporary history." He saw it as a "method to follow" in ascertaining God's action in the world, in discovering how human events can be perceived as "a simultaneous step forward of the kingdom of God in the human kingdom."<sup>6</sup> He noted the role of reflection, conscience, magisterium, sociology, and Christian faith as integral to this theological method. Paul VI affirmed the presence of the "signs" expression and method in many conciliar and postconciliar documents.

John Paul II has continued employing this theology that sees man-in-society and man-in-history as its subject matter. His oft-quoted principle immediately springs to mind: "man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: *he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church . . . a way that, in a sense, is the basis of all the other ways that the Church must walk.*"<sup>7</sup> In a later document, the same Pope emphasizes a particular focus of this humanity-centered theology: "the Church has to try to meet man in a *special way on the path of his suffering*. In this meeting, man 'becomes the way for the Church,' and this way is one of the most important ones."<sup>8</sup>

This cursory treatment of the "signs" inductive theological method outlines the framework within which the Philippine local Church has developed her approaches to evangelization in the post-Vatican II era. It evidences the local Church's internalization of the Council vision for the Church and her mission in the contemporary world.

5. *Gaudium et Spes* 4, 11, 42.

6. Paul VI, "Signs of the Times," (16 April 1969): *Social Justice Review* 62 (May 1969), pp. 46-48.

7. *Redemptorist Hominis* 14, Italics added.

8. *Salvifici Doloris* 3. Italics added.

This method of theologizing, and its employment within the Philippine local Church, contains many dimensions which recommend its continued use. It is a method eminently pastoral and capable of responding with Gospel and missionary initiatives to real concrete issues of the modern world. The immediacy and concreteness of this method directly lead to faith-inspired action, a praxis-oriented and performative Christian commitment. Thus, as the local faith-community discerns contemporary "signs," as she listens to the cries of the poor, as she absorbs the aspirations of communities and nations, as she identifies herself with humanity's thirst for liberation and salvation, as she denounces all that tramples on man-made-in-God's image, she hears God's call to her mission of evangelization.

#### CONTEXTUALIZATION: ROOTING A VISION OF EVANGELIZATION

No local Church's understanding of her call to spread the good news emerges in isolation or in a vacuum. In this light, one notes two essential factors that have formed the context within which the Philippine Church's post-Vatican II vision of evangelization has evolved: (1) the universal Church's tradition of social teaching, and (2) the comprehensive socio-politico-economic realities of the 1965-85 period.

The social teaching of the universal Church is a rich and complex heritage, an essential part of Christian life. Social teaching of the Church refers to the content of the principal papal, conciliar, and synodal documents which follow in the tradition of *Rerum Novarum* (1891). These documents "seek to apply the Gospel command of love to the structures, systems and institutions of society which are the framework in which all human relationships (personal, political, economic, cultural) take place."<sup>9</sup>

The documents of social teaching represent nearly a century-old tradition. Yet they do not stand as a static or finished product; in every age and social context, this teaching has to be written and re-written as an ongoing endeavor.

During the years 1961-81 the corpus of social teaching witnessed a vigorous renewal. All Church documents generally accept-

ed under the rubric of social teaching (*Return Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* excepted) fall within the twenty-year period of 1961 (*Mater et Magistra*) to 1981 (*Laborem Exercens*). This fact helps explain the strong current of social teaching found within the Philippine local Church's vision of evangelization.

Statistically, one finds that nearly one-half of the episcopal documents outlining the local Church's evangelizing mission explicitly mention the social teaching of the universal Church; direct quotes are often cited. Selections from *The Church in the Modern World*, *Populorum Progressio*, and *Justice in the World* appear most frequently. In short, the body of social teaching and the mission vision of the Philippine Church have matured in dialogue with that of the Universal Church.

As noted earlier, there are two key factors for the Philippine contextualization of the local Church's perspective on evangelization. In addition to Church social teaching, local socio-politico-economic realities have heavily influenced the Church in clarifying her mission of preaching the gospel.

While this presentation remains focused on the twenty-year post-Vatican II period, it is necessary to recall that the Philippine Church has a long history of evangelization as promoting a human society based on a Christian faith-perspective. In the more than four centuries that the Church has been a major force in developing a Filipino nation, she has used her influence "on behalf of the poor and oppressed in a way which can be matched by few other national Churches"; "the Church in the Philippines today exists precisely because it was founded on the struggle for justice."<sup>10</sup>

As the Church anchored evangelization within the historical realities of the Philippines during the four centuries from 1565 to 1965, she has continued and reinforced this tradition in the last two decades (1965-85). Thus, a close examination of socio-politico-economic realities serves to contextualize the local Church's directions in evangelization following upon the *aggiornamento* initiated by Vatican II.

The year 1965 was clearly a pivotal year for the Philippine Church. As already noted, it brought the conclusion of Vatican II—with its new directions on the Church's mission in the contemporary world. It also marked the Quatrocentennial of Philippine

10. J. Schumacher, "Has the Philippine Church Been on the Side of Poor?" *Insta* 44 (August-September 1984): 2; J. Schumacher, "Justice," *Life Forum* 15 (June 1983): 27.

Christianity. The political events of this period saw Ferdinand E. Marcos come to power in 1965. Twenty years later Marcos remains as Head of State (a time-span of equal length to all other five Filipino presidents who served the Republic since its independence in 1946). These events have had a grave impact upon the Philippine nation with serious ramifications for the Church.

Using broad sweeping strokes one can proceed to paint the key socio-politico-economic realities of this period—realities, “signs,” and challenges which contextualize the Philippine Church’s evolving vision of evangelization.

Following the impetus of Vatican II, the local hierarchy established five commissions to implement the Council. Among these bodies was the Episcopal Commission on Social Action with its own national secretariat (NASSA). Its early programs were self-help economic projects, community development, and cooperatives; NASSA also initiated *Impact*, a monthly social action review.

The bishops issued a pastoral letter on Social Action in 1967; it emphasized the mission of the Church in the temporal order, human dignity, and the close relationship between development and evangelization. The hierarchy also sponsored the First National Congress for Rural Development; its slogan, “The Church Goes to the Barrios,” captured its focus on Church participation in social transformation.

The year 1968 was proclaimed as “Year of Social Awareness” by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP); two documents—*The Church in the Modern World* and *Populorum Progressio*—figured prominently in the local Church’s call for direct involvement in concrete Philippine social problems and injustices.

In the words of V. Quiazon, 1969 could be fittingly typified by the phrase: “the year of the Church’s awakening to the extremely serious social conditions confronting the Philippines.”<sup>11</sup> This awakening often came slowly and painfully as the Church witnessed student and farmer demonstrations, pickets for Church reform, open letters critical of local Church dignitaries, and stormy congressional and presidential elections. The sixties in the Philip-

11. V. Quiazon, “Catholic Philippines 1969—An Assessment,” *Contemporary Studies* 7 (April 1970): 44.

piners were a period of turmoil and activism; Church social participation was gradually moving "from community development to community organization, from social welfare to social justice, from development to liberation."<sup>12</sup> The Church was forced to re-evaluate and expand her vision of evangelization.

Early in 1970 the CBCP publicly endorsed the movement for a Non-Partisan Constitutional Convention (to be held in 1971). This support reflected a widening vision which saw promoting people's "total welfare—moral, spiritual, economic, social, cultural and political"<sup>13</sup> as part of the Church's mission. Practical concretization of this vision met various challenges in 1970: violent student demonstrations (the so-called "First Quarter Storm"), a declining economy and a growing disparity between wealthy and poor. The church expressed renewed dedication to social amelioration during Pope Paul VI's Asian visit: "It is our resolve, first of all, to be more truly 'the Church of the poor'."<sup>14</sup>

As 1971 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Philippine independence, Horacio de la Costa called upon the Church to continue assisting the Filipino people in fostering "basic justice without loss of basic freedom," in promoting "a national consensus" so as to "help a people find itself."<sup>15</sup> And indeed, with varying degrees of success and commitment, the post-Vatican II local Church had responded through strong social apostolates established in most dioceses all over the country.

The year 1972 is known to every Filipino as marking the declaration of Martial Law. Bishop Claver has noted that "the suspicion is in fact strong that one of the reasons for Martial Law was precisely to put a stop to a process, helped along by [Church] efforts . . . , the evolvment of real people power."<sup>16</sup> This "sign" posed new and challenging questions for the Church and nation.

A succession of events during January 1973 "legitimized" Marcos' continuance in power beyond his 31 December 1973

12. J. Labayen, "Filipino-Christian Spirituality and Social Action Today," *Philippine Priests' Forum* 10 (June 1978): 68.

13. CBCP, "For a Non-Partisan Constitutional Convention," *BEF* 44 (March 1970): 186.

14. Asian Bishops' Conference, "Message of the Conference," *Impact*, January 1971, p. 31.

15. H. de la Costa, "To Find Itself: A Young Nation's Mission," *America*, 19 December 1970, p. 543. Italics added.

16. F. Claver, "Prophecy or Accomodation: The Dilemma of a Discerning Church," *America*, 26 April 1980, p. 354.



elected term as President. Also, meeting in January, the CBCP decided *not* to make a statement on Martial Law; the bishops' wait-and-see approach diminished their image as a body. Only six months later did they respond with the pastoral letter "On Evangelization and Development." In general, though the CBCP itself was cautious, individual bishops were more outspoken on possible abuses under Martial Law; injustices, militarization, perpetuation in office of politicians, inattention to pressing issues of national development, unwarranted arrests, etc. The AMRSP (Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines) took a more prophetic and active stance vis-à-vis Martial Law.

Social unrest and violations of human dignity marked military rule; in the first two years of Martial Law 20,000 were arrested for so-called political crimes; some 5,000 were detained in military camps as of September 1974; 28 Catholic priests and nuns were apprehended and some of them tortured. As the local Philippine Church prepared for the late-1974 Synod of Bishops in Rome, she had to ask herself: Just what is in evangelization in the spirit of Vatican II and within the present Philippine context?

In 1975 President Marcos took initiatives (e.g. referendum on Martial Law) that were designed to consolidate his regime. Though the Church—laity, clergy, religious, bishops—acted to curb the excesses of Marcos' moves, the government continued to claim its legitimacy and the need to extend Martial Law.

The Church's leadership (CBCP) experienced internal disunity during 1976-77; the heart of the issue was divergent ecclesiologies and concomitantly varied approaches to evangelization. No less than Cardinal Villot from Rome called for internal concord and profound intra-CBCP dialogue regarding the "form that the socio-political involvement of the church in the Philippines should take."<sup>17</sup> Late 1976 also witnessed renewed persecution of the Church through arrests, deportations, raids and closures of media facilities.

The bishops focused three days of their January 1977 CBCP meeting on their problem of disunity and held a colloquium on national issues. They promulgated a pastoral letter "The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News"; it was a stringent rebuke of

17. *Consilium pro Publicis Ecclesial Negotiis*: Document Protocol Number 180/77, 15 January 1977.

several government policies under Martial Law. Central to the CBCP letter is the crystallized vision of evangelization it started:

This is evangelization: the proclamation, above all of salvation from sin; the liberation from everything oppressive to man; the development of man in all his dimensions, personal and communitarian; and ultimately, the renewal of society in all its strata through the interplay of the gospel truths and man's concrete total life (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, N. 9, 29). This is our task. This is our mission.<sup>18</sup>

A litany of Church-government clashes in 1978 would be extensive; of special note are the events surrounding the April 7 elections, the arrest of Jesuit Father Intengan and the death of his staff worker. T. Tantiado, the delay of Cardinal Sin as he was leaving the country on his way to Rome. K. Machado's assessment of the Philippine situation at year-end was: "Authoritarian consolidation continues in the Philippines . . . Developments in 1978 offered few hopes that expansion of popular power or such economic progress would soon begin."<sup>19</sup>

As Manila's Archbishop and CBCP President, Cardinal Sin continued to exercise decisive influence in 1979. He reiterated the policy of "critical collaboration" with the government, adopting a more critical and less collaborative attitude. At mid-year the CBCP's pastoral letter "Exhortation Against Violence" clarified issues on the morality of violence in the context of the continually deteriorating socio-politico-economic situation throughout the country. The Manila Synod held in October unanimously approved a resolution urging the government to lift Martial Law "at the earliest possible time."

The dawn of the decade of the 1980s witnessed continued Church involvement in human development and liberation—always within the framework of holistic evangelization. Key issues confronting the Church were: human rights abuses (from 1972-80 over 60,000 had been detained), militarization (forces had quadrupled since Martial Law began), and the absence of a clear provision for a post-Marcos succession. The unstable sociopolitical situation was by and large due to the fact that "politics in the

18. CBCP, "The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News," *BEF* 51 (January-February 1977): 31.

19. K. Machado, "The Philippines 1978: Authoritarian Consolidation Continues," *Asian Survey* 19 (February 1979): 140.

Philippines begin and end with President Marcos."<sup>20</sup>

Before an assemblage of 1,500 government officials foreign dignitaries, military generals, and journalists, President Marcos announced the lifting of Martial Law on 17 January 1981. The move was carefully timed: three days before the inauguration of U.S.A. President Reagan and exactly one month before the Philippine visit of Pope John Paul II. A broad range of authoritarian controls would continue; thus, commentators only needed brief words to capsulize the situation: "Marcos' vast power remained virtually unchanged";<sup>21</sup> "his one-man rule continues."<sup>22</sup>

The Filipino people welcomed Pope John Paul II with great enthusiasm for his six-day pastoral visit in February 1981. The Pope spoke on diverse subjects: individual and social renewal, human rights, Muslim-Christian harmony, moral principles, missionary activity. Cardinal Sin later noted how the message of justice and peace formed a clear and fundamental pillar in the whole structure of the Pope's ideas.

In response to national issues and events of 1981 (the plebiscite-boycott-arrests-militarization-economic difficulties) the Church continued collective reflection on her evangelizing mission. She concretized her synthesis in the pastoral "A Church Sent" and "Reflections on Pope John Paul II's Addresses."

Church-government relations, never too friendly since the 1972 Martial Law declaration, worsened in 1982. No less than a dozen Church-state clashes occurred in 1982 involving raids on Church institutions and arrests of socially involved religious and lay workers. CBCP President Antonio Mabutas challenged the government to "look into the *root causes* of the present social unrest—rather than merely react on manifestations of dissent."<sup>23</sup> The Archbishop also urged government and military to understand that the thrust of the Church's mission in contemporary society is evangelization through integral human development.

Filipinos remember 1983 as the year marked by the assassination of Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. In this highly charged atmosphere

20. M. Roekaerts, "The Philippines: Five Years of Martial Law," *Pro Mundi Vita: Dossiers*, Asia-Australia Dossier 4 (May-June, 1977): 6.

21. R. Youngblood, "The Philippines in 1981: From 'New Society' to 'New Republic'," *Asian Survey* 22 (February 1982): 226.

22. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Asia 1982 Yearbook* (Hong Kong, 1982), p. 223.

23. A. Mabutas, "Aide Memoire: On-Going Church-Military Dialogue," *Ichthys*, 28, January 1983, p. 4.

the Church's response was crucial. She promoted the stance of nonviolence; her credible voice "evangelized" the masses and helped defuse a situation that potentially could have torn asunder the fabric of Philippine society. The CBCP and Cardinal Sin addressed the problem of massive social and political unrest in the pastoral letter "Reconciliation Today" and by proposing a National Reconciliation Council.

Events continued moving at a hectic pace in 1984—all because of the Aquino assassination. The bishops saw their task as the instruction of the faithful "in the light of the unusual circumstances in our country today." A mid-year pastoral letter "Let There Be Life" confronted three specific national problems: the secret marshals, Amendment Six, and the economic crisis. Cardinal Sin strongly encouraged participation in "the parliament of the streets" so that "the power of non-violence" would be felt. In addition, the CBCP listed itself as an active organization supporting NAMFREL (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections). These actions were representative of the Church's prophetic action in her commitment to integral human development and liberation.

All events of 1984 were framed by the ongoing Agrava Board investigation of the Aquino assassination as well as by the deepening economic crisis—a continued minus-six (–6) percent economic growth rate and the astronomical U.S.\$26 billion foreign debt.

The Philippines' socio-politico-economic reality showed no signs of amelioration in 1985. The country experienced a 2.5-3.5 percent negative growth in its GNP; exports continued falling by 12 percent. Poverty, hunger, suffering and demoralization remained the lot of countless Filipinos. Harassment, detention, kidnapping and even death faced several Church people who, in Bishop Villena's words, were guilty of only one crime: they were "faithful in proclaiming the good news of liberation."<sup>24</sup> The hierarchy penned a visionary pastoral letter on social transformation entitled "Man, Our Way (The Human Person in Philippine Society)." The Church's proclamation and action, as Cardinal Vidal noted, evidenced that "the Church is alive and responding."<sup>25</sup>

24. R. Villena quoted in: A. Mariano, "Anti-Church Campaign Real, Say Church Groups," *Ichthys*, 5 July 1985, p. 9.

25. R. Vidal, "Interview," *Asia Focus*, 10 May 1985, p. 8.

This chronology of the 1965-85 period in Philippine society is admittedly brief; many events have been treated summarily.<sup>26</sup> However, it is a representative presentation and captures main currents of the complex socio-politico-economic reality. It provides the *context* from which the local Church's mission vision has emerged. This "context-provides-identity" approach furnishes the sensitivity and insight for a "signs"-based program of evangelization.

The events narrated are often negative in nature; that is part of the Philippine situation. Yet, they have a positive dimension. They portray a Church deeply involved with its people, a Church that has "gone to the barrios," to where the people are. They portray a Church identified with farmers, fishermen, squatters, prisoners, slum dwellers, students, businessmen, laborers, cultural communities—identified with them in the oppressions and injustices imposed on them by life's harsh realities. They portray a faithful Church meeting broken humanity in a special way on the path of his suffering.

#### A LOCAL CHURCH'S MISSION VISION: CONTEXTUALIZED, INTEGRAL EVANGELIZATION

The previous section detailed the realities, events, and key figures that have influenced the local Church in seeking a vibrant concretization of her faith, in delineating an experience-based understanding of her mission of evangelization. From this **CONTEXT** one now moves to examine the **CONTENT** of this mission vision.

Research reveals copious documentation issued by the magisterial local Church, the *ecclesia docens*, in the wake of Vatican II. From these writings emerges a rich corpus of teaching on evangelization in the Philippine context. This corpus or "Philippine Perspective" may be examined as a tri-level reality: (A) theological-biblical foundations, (B) an operative ecclesiological vision, and (C) moral imperatives.

26. An extensive, detailed chronology can be found in: J. Kroeger, *The Philippine Church and Evangelization: 1965-1984* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1985), pp. 136-277.

## THEOLOGICAL-BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Philippine Church most frequently bases her mission on two Christian foundations: (1) the fundamental, non-negotiable dignity of the human person, created in God's own image, and (2) the heightened value of all people following upon Christ's Incarnation and Redemptive Act in the Paschal Mystery. Drawing upon the order of creation (God made humanity) and the order of redemption (God saved humanity), the Church recognizes that "in no human philosophy or ideology will you find a stronger foundation for the respect due to the human person than in our Christian faith."<sup>27</sup>

The preeminence of human dignity is constantly emphasized in the Philippine bishops' documents; in this they follow the accent of Vatican II on the "exalted dignity proper to the human person" (GS 26). The concepts of human rights and a human society evolve out of a Christian anthropology. All social activity, development, and liberation are measured by the criterion of "humanization."

The Church believes that "*gloria Dei vivens homo*: wherever man is, man alive, man seeking to be fully alive, *there* is the glory of God."<sup>28</sup> The Church's evangelization recognizes and promotes a theology of human dignity. CBCP documents consistently defend the human sacredness of diverse groups (workers, Moslems, squatters, prisoners, etc.) and they also speak against dehumanizing situations (underdevelopment, militarization, forced referenda, etc.).<sup>29</sup> In short, for the church to emphasize *res sacra homo* is to be pastorally sensitive to the Filipino's acute social difficulties and to relentlessly preach *res sacra homo* is to be faithful to her mission of holistic evangelization.

The Church's Christological faith reinforces the Genesis affirmations of human dignity. Christ became man, assumed body and soul, and elevated mankind to divine sonship; thus, the Church protects "the sacredness of the individual who is the locus of the

27. J. Sin, "Homily for First Death Anniversary of Jose V. Ocampo," 8 January 1983, p. 4. (Original typescript).

28. Bishops' Institute for Social Action, "Reflections and Statements," *Philippine Priests' Forum* 6 (June 1974): 75. Italics added.

29. Consult CBCP pastoral letters dated: 8 January 1967; 20 February 1971; 25-29 January 1977; 14 September 1978; Spring, 1979; 17 February 1982; 11 July 1984; 1985 Letter entitled: "Man, Our Way."

Incarnation.”<sup>30</sup> The Church is guided by Christian humanism; “the Church relates to People through an *incarnational humanism* it learned from Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

The ramifications of the Christian dogma of the Incarnation lead Cardinal Sin to assert: “I believe that man’s way to God is: *through man, in man, and with man.*” Sin explains that “in proposing that we seek God through man, in man, and with man, I do not mean to eliminate Christ from the sacred words, but to include man, to emphasize man, in our contemplation of Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

The Christocentric orientation of evangelization is promoted by the local bishops as they frequently employ the popular pastoral expression “the mind of Christ” to assert that all Church presence, action, and involvement must reflect his “mind” (his sentiments, his mission, his approach, his sufferings, his values). In brief, one of the most basic “theological principles of evangelization [is] . . . the person of Christ.”<sup>33</sup>

A third theological-biblical foundation of the Philippine Church’s approach in preaching the Gospel is the theme of the Kingdom/Reign of God. The CBCP has noted: “Our Lord Jesus has made us associates with Him in directing the march of our history, and therefore, of interpreting its events in so far as they affect the establishment of His Kingdom, the kingdom of justice and of peace and of love.”<sup>34</sup> In the context of evangelization, priests are called upon to understand that “their vocation[is] to the spread of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>35</sup> The Church evangelizes through promoting Kingdom—Gospel values in society; these same values become the norm of judgment in situations that militate against human dignity and a just society. Thus, as evangelizer, “the

30. J. Sin, “Church-State Relations,” *Impact*, April 1982, p. 130.

31. J. Sin, “Church and State Commitment to Human Development,” *Ichthys*, 1 April 1983, p. 2 *Italics added.*

32. J. Sin, “Homily for Centennial Anniversary Convention of the Knights of Columbus,” 28 March 1982, pp. 1-2. (Originally typewritten.)

33. CBCP, “Position Paper: Some Reflections and Recommendations Submitted to the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops on ‘Evangelization of the Modern World’ by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines,” Document at General Secretariat: Synodus Episcoporum, Rome (Protocol No. 337 of 11 March 1974), p. 7.

34. CBCP, “On the Population Problems and Family Life,” *BEF* 48 (January 1974): 11.

35. CBCP, “To the Priests of the Philippines,” *BEF* 47 (August 1973): 466,

Church's primary mission is to lead all men and women to eternal salvation in Christ, to the fullness of life in the Kingdom."<sup>36</sup>

In summary, one consistently finds three clear "Theological-Biblical Foundations" underpinning the Philippine Church's vision of evangelization: the Dignity of the Human Person, Christological Elements, and the Biblical Vision of the Reign of God.

#### OPERATIVE ECCLESIOLOGICAL VISION

An examination of the documents of the hierarchy in the Vatican II era reveals two important facts: (1) a *vision* or ecclesiology of integral human development quite strongly emerges and consistently affirms the Church's mission within socio-politico-economic questions; however, (2) these same documents do *not* reveal the lack of unity in pastoral application (selective application, even nonapplication) by some bishops and dioceses. This reality was noted by the seventeen bishop-authors of the 1976 document *Ut Omnes Unum Sint*. A current evaluation notes a growing convergence of views and deeper commitment to evangelization viewed holistically. Proclamation and vision always require concomitant application and concrete implementation.

The bishops have debated the specificity of the Church's mission. Their statements reflect a kind of consciousness-in-transition. They have moved away from asserting that the Church has no mission in the socio-politico-economic order to a wider view which sees human promotion-development-liberation as *integral* to the Church's mission. This movement is illuminated by the gospel and an emphasis on human dignity. This concern is *not only preparatory to evangelization* but is an *essential part* of it (even though such concern for human development does not exhaust the notion of evangelization and salvation).

From the wealth of documentation on the specific nature of the Church's mission, two passages succinctly capture this vision of integral evangelization. The 1977 CBCP pastoral "The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News" envisioned evangelization as including the announcement of salvation-liberation-development and the renewal of society and man's concrete total life (refer to the full quote already cited in the 1977 chronology of events).

36. CBCP, "Reflections on Pope John Paul II's Addresses," *CBCP Monitor* 3 (February 1982): 19.



The 1983 statement of the CBCP President, Antonio Mabutas, affirmed the following:<sup>37</sup>

It is thus imperative that we as Bishops of the Philippines be prophetic vis-a-vis our socio-cultural, economic and political situation and reemphasize with evangelical courage the teachings of the church . . . .

We, therefore, maintain in the light of the mission of the Church:

- that we cannot restrict our mission only to the religious field and disassociate ourselves from temporal problems (EN 34);

- that we cannot ignore the problems concerning justice, integral liberation, development and peace unless we wish to forget the gospel values of love of neighbor who is suffering and in need (EN 31);

- that “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, the Church’s mission for redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” (Justice in the World, Introduction);

- that our “mission involves defending and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person” (Justice in the World, II) . . . .

We believe in the foregoing statement as an authentic expression of our pastoral duty to bear witness to the truth, to proclaim the Lord’s Gospel in today’s situation, and to fulfill our task of evangelization received from the Lord Himself.

Having stated that human promotion-development-liberation is an Integral Dimension of the Church’s Mission of Evangelization, the local bishops present the *specific contribution* of the Church within the Philippine context. Again, drawing upon the documents of the teaching Church written between 1965-85, one finds a clear elucidation of her role in the humanization of Philippine society.

The Church understands that she makes the following contribution *qua* Church, a contribution integral to her mission, a unique contribution that no other sector of society can make to foster total human development. Her specific input includes: (a) societal vision; (b) Church as moral force; (c) formation of conscience; (d) “critical collaboration” involving (i) cooperation and (ii) criticism; (e) proper independence and coordination of various sectors of society; (f) clarification on political involvement versus partisan politics; (g) attention to the needs of specific segments of

37. A. Mabutas, “Archbishop Mabutas’ Statement,” *MSPC Communications*, March 1983, pp. 33, 49.

Philippine society; and , (h) Church as instrument of hope and reconciliation. A brief word is devoted to each of these themes.

The Church shares the task of specifying and clarifying the vision of a truly human society. Hers is a Gospel-vision of society where everyone receives what is due to them to live in dignity, where the poor and underprivileged are made the priority concern of all. As the CBCP noted soon after Martial Law was declared, it is a challenge for Filipino Christians "to build not just a new society, but a new and just society, conceived in freedom, structured by justice, and held together by love."<sup>38</sup>

One particular task of the Church as evangelizer is to add the moral perspective to human society. Here she follows Vatican II in stressing that "it is always and everywhere legitimate for the Church to preach the faith with true freedom, to teach her social doctrine, and . . . to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights or the salvation of souls make such judgments necessary" (GS 76). The bishops state their motivation: "We are not interfering in purely political issues; we are rather concerned with the moral side of the exercise of responsible citizenship."<sup>39</sup> In short, the bishops hold that "moral questions are often involved in politics"; they understand their obligation to speak and teach, because "our country has suffered enough from politics divorced from morality."<sup>40</sup>

Inherent in the Church's moral-spiritual contribution is the obligation of conscience-formation of Church members: "The task of evangelization demands formation of conscience of all social sectors regarding justice, human rights, and the meaning of human life. . . ."<sup>41</sup> Or again, "As Pastors of the Church we must exercise in these troubled times without fear or favor our prophetic mission to form the consciences of the faithful."<sup>42</sup>

"Critical Collaboration" has been the Church's dominant policy and course of action vis-a-vis socio-politico-economic realities—

38. CBCP, "Letter to the President from the Bishops of the Philippines," *Various Reports*, 29 November 1974, p. 26.

39. CBCP, "Statement on the Referendum-Plebiscite," *Philippine Priests' Forum* 8 (September 1976): 93.

40. J. Rosales, "The Statement of the Bishops on the Referendum the Official Clarification," *The Communicator*, 26 February 1975, p. 4.

41. CBCP, "Collated Reflections and Recommendations on Evangelization," *BEF* 48 (March 1974): 167.

42. CBCP, "On the Referendum of February 27, 1975," *BEF* 49 (January 1975): 26.

especially after Martial Law was declared. As is evident, "Critical Collaboration" is a two-dimensional principle of (i) cooperation—with all authentic initiatives for justice and human development, and (ii) criticism—of acts, decrees, and situations contrary to humanity's integral welfare. With Gospel motivation, the Church must speak out and proclaim the truth—as St. Paul puts it, *opportune, importune* "in season, out of season." Cardinal Sin notes that "through this critical collaboration, the Philippine Church continues to be listened to in these uncertain times."<sup>43</sup>

The Church alone is not responsible for the promotion of justice in society; her involvement is not a monopoly; she does not propose specific socioeconomic and political systems. Hers is the task to foster mutual cooperation between various independent bodies. All agencies (civic, government, business, private, religious) have their proper autonomy (GS 36, 76; AA 7); with them the Church collaborates in humanity's struggle to achieve its aspirations for a full human life.

Such an active role in social questions has brought criticism of Church interference or involvement in "pulpit politics." As a group of bishops noted in 1981, "the Church cannot say that she must not be politically involved because her mission is 'only spiritual'."<sup>44</sup> She *is* politically involved, not in the sense of direct partisan politics, but in the politics of social amelioration and human development; such involvement is a constitutive element in preaching the Gospel in the Philippines today. To remain apolitical would mean shirking her evangelizing mission.

In conformity with her option for the needy, the Church has often focused attention and service on specific segments of society (e.g. *sacadas*, political detainees, unemployed, etc.). In addition, she actively seeks to be a catalyst for reconciliation and hope—particularly in situations of heightened tension due to the Aquino assassination and the continuing economic crisis.

The foregoing thematic synopses have attempted to capsule the specific contribution that the Church-qua-Church is making to human development-liberation in the Philippines. All these elements are mutually linked. They illustrate the complex nature of

43. J. Sin, "Sin in West Berlin," *Philippine Priests' Forum* 10 (March 1978): 56.

44. Mindanao Bishops, "MSPC-MISSA Guidelines," *Ichthys*, 9 October 1981, p. 4.

evangelization (EN 17) and provide a Philippine perspective of an inculturated integral evangelization.

The concretization of the local Church's evangelizing mission is focused on the organization of basic ecclesial communities (BECs). The hierarchy has specifically asserted that against all the immense social problems, "the development of the Basic Christian Community movement [BECs] stands out as the one hopeful sign on the horizon."<sup>45</sup> The BECs are a contemporary mode of "being Church" because they function as centers of integration of people's faith-life and faith-involvement. They serve as instruments for the effective evangelization and participation of people; they foster growth into communities of witness and service in love. The BECs have often met with suspicion—even persecution—by military and government; however, such difficulties have not dampened Church commitment to them. The mission of evangelization is a constant challenge and urges the Church to renewed enthusiasm under the lead of the befriending Spirit (GS3).

#### MORAL IMPERATIVES

As this discussion moves from theological-biblical foundations and an operant ecclesiological vision to moral imperatives, the focus remains on evangelization which is "the essential mission of the Church"; evangelization is "the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity" (EN 14). This entire paper, in its attempt to highlight the Philippine Church's vision of evangelization in the post-Vatican II era, must be read in the context of the Church as Evangelizer; "she exists in order to evangelize" (EN 14). In a word, the Church's sole imperative is evangelization.

Specific tasks flow from the Church's commitment to preach the good news, especially in her effort to make the message relevant to humanity's need for integral liberation and salvation.

As the local Church continues employing the "signs of the times" as a *locus theologicus*, a movement or pattern becomes evident: discernment-to-action. Faith-involvement follows upon faith-discernment. Only in this way is the individual or community sure their response/action is sincerely Christian. A comprehensive

45. Seventeen Bishops, "A Pastoral of Total Faith-Commitment," *Ichthys*, 14 January 1983, p. 3.

"signs" discernment employs several criteria to insure authenticity: Scriptures, Church social teaching, the voice of the Magisterium, the content of the apostolic faith, the presence of the fruits of the Spirit, etc. Only with this integral approach does the Church evangelize "all the strata of humanity. . . [by] transforming humanity from within and making it new" (EN 18).

The discernment-to-action methodology of the local Church requires norms or pastoral guidelines to direct individuals/communities in their mission of integral evangelization. This is a particular task of each local Church; Paul VI has clearly stated:<sup>46</sup>

It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church.

The Philippine Church has rather successfully spoken about theological principles, Gospel values, and moral priorities by which Christians and BECs are to guide their commitment; her concrete pastoral guidelines require further clarity through a continual process of discernment.

The specific contributions of the Church to human development and liberation (which have already been outlined in this section) function as solid bases upon which Christians, using their consciences and proper discernment, can determine their concrete course of action. In addition, the local Church has consistently rejected violence as a Christian means of societal transformation; this stance is unpopular since the temptation to violence remains attractive—in light of difficult, almost unbearable, exigencies prevailing in the Philippines today.<sup>47</sup>

Additional norms to guide the Church's involvement are found in the diverse pastoral letters authored by the bishops in recent years. They note that evangelization must be guided by a preferential option for the poor, by human aspirations for integral

46. *Octogesima Adveniens*, p. 4.

47. CBCP, "Education for Justice," *BEF* 52 (December 1978): 679; CBCP, "Exhortation Against Violence," *BEF* 53 (November-December 1979): 523-28; Seventeen Bishops, "A Pastoral of Total Faith-Commitment," *Ichthyus* 14 January 1984, pp. 3-4. For an extensive listing of additional statements by the bishops on violence/non-violence, see J. Kroeger's *The Philippine Church and Evangelization*, pp. 401-3.

development, by the double fidelity of being both Christian and Filipino, by a Christian view of suffering, by the search for truth, national harmony and reconciliation.

In the Philippines today, ideologies are certainly a pastoral and theological "burning point." A recent CBCP document described the situation:<sup>48</sup>

In view of the unjust situations obtaining in the country, one can say that a war of ideologies is now raging in both urban and rural areas. The objective is the heart and mind of the Filipino: to attract and capture his loyalty and allegiance by presenting before him alternative societies that promise a better future.

The problem of diverse ideologies came to the fore in the later seventies and early eighties. Due to deteriorating social conditions under Martial Law, increased government militarization, and stepped-up activity of the NPA (New People's Army), alternative societal and political structures were being proposed.

The Philippine hierarchy was, in general, late in seeing the ideological question. A capsulized statement of their present position would be: recognize the role of ideologies in society; use unbiased societal analysis as a sociological tool; seek to form the faithful's consciences on the question; insist on the primacy of faith-Gospel approaches—for the Christian, faith judges ideology; avoid ideologizing the faith or "coloring" of Church apostolates; reject the class-struggle ideology; be alert to "instrumentalization" attempts from left or right; base BECs on sound ecclesiology.

The initiatives of the *ecclesia docens* in the Philippines to promote an integral evangelization have included the development of an appropriate spirituality. Zeal for holistic human development "must spring from true holiness of life . . . as the Second Vatican Council suggests."<sup>49</sup>

The spiritual, the transcendent, the faith-perspective is essential in fostering growth into fuller humanity and more genuine Christianity. As affirmed by the CBCP, a spirituality for human development.<sup>50</sup>

48. CBCP, "Reflections on Pope John Paul II's Addresses," *CBCP Monitor* 3 (February 1982): 23.

49. CBCP, "The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News," *BEF* 51 (January-February 1977): 34.

50. CBCP, "Reflections on Pope John Paul II's Addresses," *CBCP Monitor* 3 (February 1982): 4.

. . . must have Christ for its center, should be deepened by prayer, the Word of God, and the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist, and must be translated into apostolic and evangelizing activities in union with the local and universal Church.

The Filipino-Christian spirituality of integral human promotion also incorporates Christ's dying and rising (the Paschal Mystery), ongoing conversion, popular religiosity, and Marian dimensions. A vision of development-liberation that overlooks a spirituality is inadequate, unrealistic, and usually ends in failure. A faith-vision lived concretely (a spirituality) is an imperative for the Church to accomplish her mission of holistic evangelization.

#### AN EVALUATIVE CRITIQUE: THE LOCAL CHURCH'S EXPERIENCE OF EVANGELIZATION, 1965-85

Every generation necessarily must be evangelized anew. Every people and their social milieu can be challenged with the Gospel and its values. Every Christian Community needs self-evaluation as an *ecclesia semper reformanda* to determine its faithfulness to its essentially missionary nature (AG 2). What have been the trends, strengths and weaknesses within the Philippine Church from 1965-85? What challenges remain and what conclusions can be reached?

The post-Vatican II twenty-year experience of the Philippines has been the starting point for this presentation. The contextual reality could be identified as a "social volcano"; this "volcano" is everything that a Third World country is—politically, socially, culturally, economically, religiously. The tensions straining the social fabric have been numerous: vast population, mass poverty, underdevelopment, malnutrition, unemployment, spiraling inflation, militarization, insurgency, absence of justice, etc. There has been a devaluation of life itself!<sup>51</sup>

Precisely from the very ills of Philippine society and the obstacles to human development, the local Church has fashioned her response: from the negative, dehumanizing life realities has emerged a positive vision of the Church's mission to evangelize. Working back from the impediments to human development, the Philippine bishops have clarified their theology, pastoral programs,

51. CBCP, "Let There Be Life," *CBCP Monitor* 5 (September-October 1984): 19.

and even their own ecclesiology and mission. Note the inductive theological method at work; observe also the clear relationship between the context and the resulting magisterial teaching.

The unfolding events since the Council have shown the relatively strong credibility of the Church. While admitting various deficiencies and setbacks, one sees a Church actually committed to being a "Church of the Poor." This credibility derives from identification with the "little people"—especially in face of oppression. The result, as stated by Bishop Escaler in 1981, is that: "At no time in our history has the official Church been so credible, trusted and looked upon by her people as the voice of the voiceless and as a protector of their basic human rights."<sup>52</sup> In short, the Philippine Church has put on the mind of the poor Christ.

There has been growth-in-awareness on the part of the local Church on several important fronts: analysis of societal structures, the moral dimensions of socio-politico-economic realities, the need for dialogue and reconciliation, a more "activist" posture in preaching. These points serve as evidence that the Church and her bishop-pastors who are evangelizers are themselves being evangelized in the process (EN 15).

Other characteristics show the Philippine Church as being renewed in the spirit of Vatican II. The local Church is participative in nature, stressing the involvement and co-responsibility of the laity—especially in the BECs. She has employed the social teaching of the universal Church to enlighten local realities; this universal-local dialogue has generated an impressive body of indigenized social teaching.

An evaluative critique necessarily treats strengths and weaknesses. Several characteristics of the local Church (which are positive strengths) have already been noted: the BEC movement, the localized social teaching, the facility in using the "signs" method of pastoral-theological reflection, the social services rendered to countless Filipinos facing dehumanization due to various social ills, the fact that the Church helped avert violence in the volatile period after the Aquino assassination. Other important additions—strengths—must be added.

The difficulties and persecutions that the Church endures because of her dedication are a clear strength. Arrests, imprisonment,

52. F. Escaler, "A Church in Crisis—Mindanao," *Ichthys*, 30 October 1981, p. 9.



charges of "subversion," deportation/murder of missionaries and Filipino religious leaders, etc. show a Church that has moved toward coexistence with the oppressed. The Church—*ecclesia martyrum*—travels the path of suffering humanity in fulfillment of her mission.

As a result, her moral authority has increased; her authenticity as a servant church is more readily perceived. The thirteen years since the declaration of Martial Law have shown her to be the most competent institution to publicly speak out on questions of social morality and justice.

Further assets of the local Church include the growing abundance of vocations, her vision of evangelization based on doctrinally sound principles, and her successful combination of the Christian faith with Filipino values in a nation-building commitment. The vicissitudes of the 1965-85 experience have shown that the Christian faith of the people (often disparagingly characterized as "nominal") is, in fact, deeply internalized.

Limitations, weaknesses, and tensions are also inherent in the Philippine Church. The lack of unity-of-purpose on the part of the ecclesial leadership (CBCP) has been perhaps the most serious limitation. Many pastoral opportunities have been missed due to this disunity and the CBCP's silent or discordant voice. These tensions have negatively influenced the broader Church membership. In addition, those wishing to discredit the Church and neutralize her influence have capitalized on this situation. In recent years, however, from the nadir of unity in 1976, there has been a growing commitment of more bishops to a truly integral evangelization, not only in words but concomitantly in deeds. The spreading deterioration of the national situation, the continuance of the Marcos regime, and the deft leadership of Cardinal Sin are all contributing factors to the bishops' own conscientization.

Some crucial "derived weaknesses" (i.e. ramifications of the CBCP disharmony) have been: weak pastoral guidelines and social analysis, an underdeveloped appreciation of the role of the laity, weak Church strategy for promoting a just society with the resulting growth of Marxist-Maoist influences among students. Two additional limitations have been: the sometimes strained relationship with the religious (AMRSP) on particular issues of development and liberation; the timidity of some bishops to engage in necessary social amelioration programs for fear of possible infil-

tration or instrumentalization.

In light of this critique, one recalls the words of Paul VI in 1967: "Development demands bold transformations, innovations that go deep. Urgent reforms should be undertaken without delay."<sup>53</sup> An assessment of the Philippine Church's mission of integral evangelization notes that these bold transformations, deep innovations, and urgent reforms have been begun in the local Church. Yet, due to weaknesses, the mission has not been fully accomplished. The Church is *in via* and constantly must strive to have greater impact on society through renewed and deeper commitment.

Many challenges confront the local Church. She must deeply comprehend that she exists in a society-in-transition/transformation. Some term the Philippines a "society-in-revolution." How does she relate with various people's movements and diverse political sectors seeking societal change? Must the Church take a more "activist" approach, using more coercive, prophetic action to influence structural change within current Philippine society? Violence, militarization, ideologies, insurgency, the NPA, the twenty-year-old Marcos regime, national security, economic difficulties . . . the list of "signs" is demandingly extensive.

The Church is challenged to avoid naivete in her social involvement; her collaboration must always be critical. She must renew her Christian option for the poor and her dedication to integral evangelization—even if current tensions and realities make the task far more complicated and difficult. She is to be a living sacrament of hope, light, and salvation shining in the Philippine darkness, never despairing or growing weary in her mission.

The Church's task is to locally incarnate the ecclesial vision of Vatican II. This challenge has been concretized for the Philippine context by Cardinal Sin who (quoting another Asian bishop) noted:<sup>54</sup>

We should have no illusions: religion will be severely tested in the Third World, and the test will be precisely the social question. No religion, be it Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism, that is unable to [help to] create a world in which justice dwells, has a chance of seeing much of the third millennium.

53. *Populorum Progressio* 32.

54. J. Sin "The City on the Hill," Vienna, Austria, 11 October 1981, Philippine pamphlet form, p. 16.

This lengthy investigation of the context and content of the Philippine Church's vision of evangelization reveals several important insights or conclusions. It also portrays the identity and physiognomy of the local Church, marked with the imprint of the Second Vatican Council.

The central conclusion one perceives is that "integrality" is an interpretative key unlocking the realities of the local Church. This means that human promotion-development-liberation are integral dimensions of evangelization; they are *not* only a "*praeparatio evangelica*" or "indirect evangelization." They are part and parcel of the Church's total mission of preaching the Good News.

"Integrality" as an interpretative key also means that human promotion-development-liberation do not alone constitute the totality of evangelization; in a word, they serve as one of several integral dimensions of the Church's complex evangelizing activity (EN 17). The Philippine Church embodies this clearly integral perspective—integral in the wider sense as including: the witness of a Christian life-style, the service and renewal of man-in-society, a concrete "dialogue of life" with the poor and the followers of other faiths, social amelioration within Gospel and ecclesial norms, the explicit proclamation of the Good News, entrance into the ecclesial community and adherence to faith in Christ and Church teaching, the growth in spirituality integrated with the sacraments and the scriptures, the apostolic initiative to share faith with others. For the Philippine local Church, the totality/integrality of evangelization and mission embraces all these elements. This is evangelization; this is mission.

This composite picture of holistic evangelization emerges from an exhaustive investigation of all the documents authored by the Philippine bishops since 1965. Such a complete statement on evangelization with precise terminology has not been formulated by the bishops themselves in one single document. Yet, by coalescing many diverse sources, one observes that a holistic vision/perspective is present and operative. In the author's opinion, the forthcoming CBCP pastoral letter "Man, Our Way"<sup>55</sup> is a noteworthy contribution of the Philippine hierarchy in one inclusive statement of the integral, yet complex, nature of holistic evangelization.

55. CBCP, "Man, Our Way," *CBCP Monitor* 6 (July-August 1985): 21-46.

In the spirit of service to the local Church, some recommendations can be explicated to facilitate the continued implementation of a program of integral evangelization.

The Church, within the broader Philippine society-in-transition, must maintain a profound sense of Christian Realism; this will enable her to effectively evangelize—even amid the swift cross-currents of today's and tomorrow's social situations. And, with a clear faith-realism, the magisterial voice of the local Church should continue her pastoral-letter-approach to evangelization. This method has proven effective in elaborating an holistic vision of her mission, in counteracting slanted media and ideological propaganda, and in communicating the essential magisterial contribution to an inductive theological method which seeks an authentic ecclesial reading of the "signs of the times." The only caution necessary is for the hierarchy to ceaselessly remind itself that the drafting and promulgation of pastoral letters does not complete its mission; its vision must be actualized within viable Christian faith-communities.

In addition, the Philippine Church has much to gain from coordinated pastoral planning for effective evangelization. Her pastoral-theological reflection process needs strengthening. A systematic presentation of the local Church's "indigenous social teaching" in the form of a thematic resource-manual would be most helpful for all sectors of the Church.

An integral vision of evangelization must be viewed as a treasure of the Philippine Church. This can serve well as a model for mission. For the local Church, this model is eminently applicable in her continual self-evangelization, as well as in her apostolic outreach to the various Filipino cultural and tribal groups. In addition, Filipinos, who themselves have been evangelized by this approach, are equipped to respond to the invitation of recent popes "to give shining witness amid the ancient and noble cultures of Asia," to become "the foremost missionaries of the Church in Asia."<sup>56</sup>

56. John Paul II, "Homily for Mass with Indigenous Tribes," in P. de Achutegui, ed. *John Paul II in the Philippines: Addresses and Homilies* (Manila, 1981), pp. 185-86.

The Vatican II era has not simply been a 20-year period of peace, serenity, and tranquility for the local Church in the Philippines. Renewal and *aggiornamento* have proven to be formulae for inner searching, purification, new approaches, deeper involvement. Thus, the two post-Council decades have witnessed a significant refashioning of the configuration of the Church and her evangelizing mission. She has reason to praise her Lord because "the Church of the Philippines is a living church." Echoing the words of the hierarchy, she gives thanks for "the truly tremendous fact: Ours is a Church alive."<sup>57</sup>

*Author's Postscript:* This article was completed and accepted for publication before the 22-25 February 1986 popular "people's power" revolution in the Philippines. The role that the Church and Cardinal Sin played in overturning the Marcos regime can be seen as a concrete manifestation of the holistic vision of evangelization that has been emerging in the local church since Vatican II. The February 1986 events further corroborate the Philippine Church's valid insights into integral evangelization.

57. Pansol Colloquium of Bishops, "Reflections on the Philippine Church, 1982," *Ichthys*, 24 December 1982, p. 2.