

THE SIERRA LEONE CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

Topic:

**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH
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WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAY ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT?

687 "No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."⁷ Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. The Spirit of truth who "unveils" Christ to us "will not speak on his own."⁸ Such properly divine self-effacement explains why "the world cannot receive [him], because it neither sees him nor knows him," while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them.⁹

688 The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:

- in the Scriptures he inspired;
- in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;
- in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists;
- in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;
- in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
- in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;
- in the signs of apostolic and missionary life;
- in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.

I. THE JOINT MISSION OF THE SON AND THE SPIRIT

689 The One whom the Father has sent into our hearts, the Spirit of his Son, is truly God.¹⁰ Consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is inseparable from them, in both the inner life of the Trinity and his gift of love for the world. In adoring the Holy Trinity, life-giving, consubstantial, and indivisible, the Church's faith also professes the distinction of persons. When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable. To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him.

690 Jesus is Christ, "anointed," because the Spirit is his anointing, and everything that occurs from the Incarnation on derives from this fullness.¹¹ When Christ is finally glorified,¹² he can in turn send the Spirit from his place with the Father to those who believe in him: he communicates to them his glory,¹³ that is, the Holy Spirit who glorifies him.¹⁴ From that time on, this joint mission will be manifested in the children adopted by the Father in the Body of his Son: the mission of the Spirit of adoption is to unite them to Christ and make them live in him:

The notion of anointing suggests . . . that there is no distance between the Son and the Spirit. Indeed, just as between the surface of the body and the anointing with oil neither reason nor sensation recognizes any intermediary, so the contact of the Son with the Spirit is immediate, so that anyone who would make contact with the Son by faith must first encounter the oil by contact. In fact there is no part that is not covered by the Holy Spirit. That is why the confession of the Son's Lordship is made in the Holy Spirit by those who receive him, the Spirit coming from all sides to those who approach the Son in faith.¹⁵

II. THE NAME, TITLES, AND SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The proper name of the Holy Spirit

691 "Holy Spirit" is the proper name of the one whom we adore and glorify with the Father and the Son. The Church has received this name from the Lord and professes it in the Baptism of her new children.¹⁶

The term "Spirit" translates the Hebrew word *ruah*, which, in its primary sense, means breath, air, wind. Jesus indeed uses the sensory image of the wind to suggest to Nicodemus the transcendent newness of him who is personally God's breath, the divine Spirit.¹⁷ On the other hand, "Spirit" and "Holy" are divine attributes common to the three divine persons. By joining the two terms, Scripture, liturgy, and theological language designate the inexpressible person of the Holy Spirit, without any possible equivocation with other uses of the terms "spirit" and "holy."

Titles of the Holy Spirit

692 When he proclaims and promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus calls him the "Paraclete," literally, "he who is called to one's side," *ad-vocatus*.¹⁸ "Paraclete" is commonly translated by "consoler," and Jesus is the first consoler.¹⁹ The Lord also called the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth."²⁰

693 Besides the proper name of "Holy Spirit," which is most frequently used in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, we also find in St. Paul the titles: the Spirit of the promise,²¹ the Spirit of adoption,²² the Spirit of Christ,²³ the Spirit of the Lord,²⁴ and the Spirit of God ²⁵ - and, in St. Peter, the Spirit of glory.²⁶

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

694 Water. The symbolism of water signifies the Holy Spirit's action in Baptism, since after the invocation of the Holy Spirit it becomes the efficacious sacramental sign of new birth: just as the gestation of our first birth took place in water, so the water of Baptism truly signifies that our birth

into the divine life is given to us in the Holy Spirit. As "by one Spirit we were all baptized," so we are also "made to drink of one Spirit."²⁷ Thus the Spirit is also personally the living water welling up from Christ crucified²⁸ as its source and welling up in us to eternal life.²⁹

695 Anointing. The symbolism of anointing with oil also signifies the Holy Spirit,³⁰ to the point of becoming a synonym for the Holy Spirit. In Christian initiation, anointing is the sacramental sign of Confirmation, called "chrismation" in the Churches of the East. Its full force can be grasped only in relation to the primary anointing accomplished by the Holy Spirit, that of Jesus. Christ (in Hebrew "messiah") means the one "anointed" by God's Spirit. There were several anointed ones of the Lord in the Old Covenant, pre-eminently King David.³¹ But Jesus is God's Anointed in a unique way: the humanity the Son assumed was entirely anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit established him as "Christ."³² The Virgin Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit who, through the angel, proclaimed him the Christ at his birth, and prompted Simeon to come to the temple to see the Christ of the Lord.³³ The Spirit filled Christ and the power of the Spirit went out from him in his acts of healing and of saving.³⁴ Finally, it was the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead.³⁵ Now, fully established as "Christ" in his humanity victorious over death, Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit abundantly until "the saints" constitute - in their union with the humanity of the Son of God - that perfect man "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ":³⁶ "the whole Christ," in St. Augustine's expression.

696 Fire. While water signifies birth and the fruitfulness of life given in the Holy Spirit, fire symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit's actions. The prayer of the prophet Elijah, who "arose like fire" and whose "word burned like a torch," brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel.³⁷ This event was a "figure" of the fire of the Holy Spirit, who transforms what he touches. John the Baptist, who goes "before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elijah," proclaims Christ as the one who "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."³⁸ Jesus will say of the Spirit: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!"³⁹ In the form of tongues "as of fire," the Holy Spirit rests on the disciples on the morning of Pentecost and fills them with himself⁴⁰ The spiritual tradition has retained this symbolism of fire as one of the most expressive images of the Holy Spirit's actions.⁴¹ "Do not quench the Spirit."⁴²

697 Cloud and light. These two images occur together in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory - with Moses on Mount Sinai,⁴³ at the tent of meeting,⁴⁴ and during the wandering in the desert,⁴⁵ and with Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.⁴⁶ In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures. The Spirit comes upon the Virgin Mary and "overshadows" her, so that she might conceive and give birth to Jesus.⁴⁷ On the mountain of Transfiguration, the Spirit in the "cloud came and overshadowed" Jesus, Moses and Elijah, Peter, James and John, and "a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'"⁴⁸ Finally, the cloud took Jesus out of the sight of the disciples on the day of his ascension and will reveal him as Son of man in glory on the day of his final coming.⁴⁹

698 The seal is a symbol close to that of anointing. "The Father has set his seal" on Christ and also

seals us in him.⁵⁰ Because this seal indicates the indelible effect of the anointing with the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, the image of the seal (sphragis) has been used in some theological traditions to express the indelible "character" imprinted by these three unrepeatable sacraments.

699 The hand. Jesus heals the sick and blesses little children by laying hands on them.⁵¹ In his name the apostles will do the same.⁵² Even more pointedly, it is by the Apostles' imposition of hands that the Holy Spirit is given.⁵³ The Letter to the Hebrews lists the imposition of hands among the "fundamental elements" of its teaching.⁵⁴ The Church has kept this sign of the all-powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit in its sacramental epicleses.

700 The finger. "It is by the finger of God that [Jesus] cast out demons."⁵⁵ If God's law was written on tablets of stone "by the finger of God," then the "letter from Christ" entrusted to the care of the apostles, is written "with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts."⁵⁶ The hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* invokes the Holy Spirit as the "finger of the Father's right hand."⁵⁷

701 The dove. At the end of the flood, whose symbolism refers to Baptism, a dove released by Noah returns with a fresh olive-tree branch in its beak as a sign that the earth was again habitable.⁵⁸ When Christ comes up from the water of his baptism, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, comes down upon him and remains with him.⁵⁹ The Spirit comes down and remains in the purified hearts of the baptized. In certain churches, the Eucharist is reserved in a metal receptacle in the form of a dove (columbarium) suspended above the altar. Christian iconography traditionally uses a dove to suggest the Spirit.

III. GOD'S SPIRIT AND WORD IN THE TIME OF THE PROMISES

702 From the beginning until "the fullness of time,"⁶⁰ the joint mission of the Father's Word and Spirit remains hidden, but it is at work. God's Spirit prepares for the time of the Messiah. Neither is fully revealed but both are already promised, to be watched for and welcomed at their manifestation. So, for this reason, when the Church reads the Old Testament, she searches there for what the Spirit, "who has spoken through the prophets," wants to tell us about Christ.⁶¹

By "prophets" the faith of the Church here understands all whom the Holy Spirit inspired in living proclamation and the composition of the sacred books, both of the Old and the New Testaments. Jewish tradition distinguishes first the Law (the five first books or Pentateuch), then the Prophets (our historical and prophetic books) and finally the Writings (especially the wisdom literature, in particular the Psalms).⁶²

In creation

703 The Word of God and his Breath are at the origin of the being and life of every creature:⁶³ It

belongs to the Holy Spirit to rule, sanctify, and animate creation, for he is God, consubstantial with the Father and the Son. . . . Power over life pertains to the Spirit, for being God he preserves creation in the Father through the Son.⁶⁴

704 "God fashioned man with his own hands [that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit] and impressed his own form on the flesh he had fashioned, in such a way that even what was visible might bear the divine form."⁶⁵

The Spirit of the promise

705 Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God,"⁶⁶ of his "likeness." The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image"⁶⁷ and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life."

706 Against all human hope, God promises descendants to Abraham, as the fruit of faith and of the power of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ In Abraham's progeny all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This progeny will be Christ himself,⁶⁹ in whom the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad."⁷⁰ God commits himself by his own solemn oath to giving his beloved Son and "the promised Holy Spirit . . . [who is] the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it."⁷¹

In Theophanies and the Law

707 Theophanies (manifestations of God) light up the way of the promise, from the patriarchs to Moses and from Joshua to the visions that inaugurated the missions of the great prophets. Christian tradition has always recognized that God's Word allowed himself to be seen and heard in these theophanies, in which the cloud of the Holy Spirit both revealed him and concealed him in its shadow.

708 This divine pedagogy appears especially in the gift of the Law.⁷² God gave the Law as a "pedagogue" to lead his people towards Christ.⁷³ But the Law's powerlessness to save man deprived of the divine "likeness," along with the growing awareness of sin that it imparts,⁷⁴ enkindles a desire for the Holy Spirit. The lamentations of the Psalms bear witness to this.

In the Kingdom and the Exile

709 The Law, the sign of God's promise and covenant, ought to have governed the hearts and institutions of that people to whom Abraham's faith gave birth. "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, . . . you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."⁷⁵ But after David, Israel gave in to the temptation of becoming a kingdom like other nations. The Kingdom, however, the object of the promise made to David,⁷⁶ would be the work of the Holy Spirit; it would belong to the poor according to the Spirit.

710 The forgetting of the Law and the infidelity to the covenant end in death: it is the Exile,

apparently the failure of the promises, which is in fact the mysterious fidelity of the Savior God and the beginning of a promised restoration, but according to the Spirit. The People of God had to suffer this purification.⁷⁷ In God's plan, the Exile already stands in the shadow of the Cross, and the Remnant of the poor that returns from the Exile is one of the most transparent prefigurations of the Church.

Expectation of the Messiah and his Spirit

711 "Behold, I am doing a new thing."⁷⁸ Two prophetic lines were to develop, one leading to the expectation of the Messiah, the other pointing to the announcement of a new Spirit. They converge in the small Remnant, the people of the poor, who await in hope the "consolation of Israel" and "the redemption of Jerusalem."⁷⁹

We have seen earlier how Jesus fulfills the prophecies concerning himself. We limit ourselves here to those in which the relationship of the Messiah and his Spirit appears more clearly.

712 The characteristics of the awaited Messiah begin to appear in the "Book of Emmanuel" ("Isaiah said this when he saw his glory,"⁸⁰ speaking of Christ), especially in the first two verses of Isaiah 11:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.⁸¹

713 The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the "Servant songs."⁸² These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus' Passion and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many: not as an outsider, but by embracing our "form as slave."⁸³ Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life.

714 This is why Christ inaugurates the proclamation of the Good News by making his own the following passage from Isaiah:⁸⁴

The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good tidings to the afflicted;
he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.

715 The prophetic texts that directly concern the sending of the Holy Spirit are oracles by which God

speaks to the heart of his people in the language of the promise, with the accents of "love and fidelity."⁸⁵ St. Peter will proclaim their fulfillment on the morning of Pentecost.⁸⁶ According to these promises, at the "end time" the Lord's Spirit will renew the hearts of men, engraving a new law in them. He will gather and reconcile the scattered and divided peoples; he will transform the first creation, and God will dwell there with men in peace.

716 The People of the "poor"⁸⁷ - those who, humble and meek, rely solely on their God's mysterious plans, who await the justice, not of men but of the Messiah - are in the end the great achievement of the Holy Spirit's hidden mission during the time of the promises that prepare for Christ's coming. It is this quality of heart, purified and enlightened by the Spirit, which is expressed in the Psalms. In these poor, the Spirit is making ready "a people prepared for the Lord."⁸⁸

IV. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

John, precursor, prophet, and baptist

717 "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."⁸⁹ John was "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb"⁹⁰ by Christ himself, whom the Virgin Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary's visitation to Elizabeth thus became a visit from God to his people.⁹¹

718 John is "Elijah [who] must come."⁹² The fire of the Spirit dwells in him and makes him the forerunner of the coming Lord. In John, the precursor, the Holy Spirit completes the work of "[making] ready a people prepared for the Lord."⁹³

719 John the Baptist is "more than a prophet."⁹⁴ In him, the Holy Spirit concludes his speaking through the prophets. John completes the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah.⁹⁵ He proclaims the imminence of the consolation of Israel; he is the "voice" of the Consoler who is coming.⁹⁶ As the Spirit of truth will also do, John "came to bear witness to the light."⁹⁷ In John's sight, the Spirit thus brings to completion the careful search of the prophets and fulfills the longing of the angels.⁹⁸ "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. . . . Behold, the Lamb of God."⁹⁹

720 Finally, with John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to man of "the divine likeness," prefiguring what he would achieve with and in Christ. John's baptism was for repentance; baptism in water and the Spirit will be a new birth.¹⁰⁰

"Rejoice, you who are full of grace"

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among

men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722 The Holy Spirit prepared Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"¹⁰² should herself be "full of grace." She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the "Daughter of Zion": "Rejoice."¹⁰³ It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit fulfills the plan of the Father's loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit's power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.¹⁰⁵

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit manifests the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.¹⁰⁶

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love,¹⁰⁷ into communion with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve ("mother of the living"), the mother of the "whole Christ."¹⁰⁸ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,"¹⁰⁹ at the dawn of the "end time" which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.

Christ Jesus

727 The entire mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the fullness of time, is contained in this: that the Son is the one anointed by the Father's Spirit since his Incarnation - Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

Everything in the second chapter of the Creed is to be read in this light. Christ's whole work is in fact a joint mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Here, we shall mention only what has to do with Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit and the gift of him by the glorified Lord.

728 Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. Nevertheless, little by little he alludes to him even in his teaching of the multitudes, as when he reveals that his own flesh will be food for the life of the world.¹¹⁰ He also alludes to the Spirit in speaking to Nicodemus,¹¹¹ to the Samaritan woman,¹¹² and to those who take part in the feast of Tabernacles.¹¹³ To his disciples he speaks openly of the Spirit in connection with prayer¹¹⁴ and with the witness they will have to bear.¹¹⁵

729 Only when the hour has arrived for his glorification does Jesus promise the coming of the Holy Spirit, since his Death and Resurrection will fulfill the promise made to the fathers.¹¹⁶ The Spirit of truth, the other Paraclete, will be given by the Father in answer to Jesus' prayer; he will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name; and Jesus will send him from the Father's side, since he comes from the Father. The Holy Spirit will come and we shall know him; he will be with us for ever; he will remain with us. The Spirit will teach us everything, remind us of all that Christ said to us and bear witness to him. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth and will glorify Christ. He will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

730 At last Jesus' hour arrives:¹¹⁷ he commends his spirit into the Father's hands¹¹⁸ at the very moment when by his death he conquers death, so that, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,"¹¹⁹ he might immediately give the Holy Spirit by "breathing" on his disciples.¹²⁰ From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."¹²¹

V. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH IN THE LAST DAYS

Pentecost

731 On the day of Pentecost when the seven weeks of Easter had come to an end, Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as a divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance.¹²²

732 On that day, the Holy Trinity is fully revealed. Since that day, the Kingdom announced by Christ has been open to those who believe in him: in the humility of the flesh and in faith, they already share in the communion of the Holy Trinity. By his coming, which never ceases, the Holy Spirit causes the world to enter into the "last days," the time of the Church, the Kingdom already inherited though not yet consummated.

We have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith: we adore the indivisible Trinity, who has saved us.¹²³

The Holy Spirit - God's gift

733 "God is Love"¹²⁴ and love is his first gift, containing all others. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."¹²⁵

734 Because we are dead or at least wounded through sin, the first effect of the gift of love is the forgiveness of our sins. The communion of the Holy Spirit¹²⁶ in the Church restores to the baptized the divine likeness lost through sin.

735 He, then, gives us the "pledge" or "first fruits" of our inheritance: the very life of the Holy Trinity, which is to love as "God [has] loved us."¹²⁷ This love (the "charity" of 1 Cor 13) is the source of the new life in Christ, made possible because we have received "power" from the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸

736 By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit. He who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear "the fruit of the Spirit: . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."¹²⁹ "We live by the Spirit"; the more we renounce ourselves, the more we "walk by the Spirit."¹³⁰

Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory.¹³¹

The Holy Spirit and the Church

737 The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission henceforth brings Christ's faithful to share in his communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit prepares men and goes out to them with his grace, in order to draw them to Christ. The Spirit manifests the risen Lord to them, recalls his word to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection. He makes present the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, to bring them into communion with God, that they may "bear much fruit."¹³²

738 Thus the Church's mission is not an addition to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but is its sacrament: in her whole being and in all her members, the Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present, and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity (the topic of the next article):

All of us who have received one and the same Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, are in a sense blended together with one another and with God. For if Christ, together with the Father's and his own Spirit, comes to dwell in each of us, though we are many, still the Spirit is one and undivided. He binds together the spirits of each and every one of us, . . . and makes all appear as one in him. For just as the power of Christ's sacred flesh unites those in whom it dwells into one body, I think that in the same way the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in all, leads all into spiritual unity.¹³³

739 Because the Holy Spirit is the anointing of Christ, it is Christ who, as the head of the Body, pours out the Spirit among his members to nourish, heal, and organize them in their mutual

functions, to give them life, send them to bear witness, and associate them to his self-offering to the Father and to his intercession for the whole world. Through the Church's sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body. (This will be the topic of Part Two of the Catechism.)

740 These "mighty works of God," offered to believers in the sacraments of the Church, bear their fruit in the new life in Christ, according to the Spirit. (This will be the topic of Part Three.)

741 "The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with sighs too deep for words."¹³⁴ The Holy Spirit, the artisan of God's works, is the master of prayer. (This will be the topic of Part Four.)

IN BRIEF

742 "Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal 4:6).

743 From the beginning to the end of time, whenever God sends his Son, he always sends his Spirit: their mission is conjoined and inseparable.

744 In the fullness of time the Holy Spirit completes in Mary all the preparations for Christ's coming among the People of God. By the action of the Holy Spirit in her, the Father gives the world Emmanuel "God-with-us" (Mt 1:23).

745 The Son of God was consecrated as Christ (Messiah) by the anointing of the Holy Spirit at his Incarnation (cf. Ps 2:6-7).

746 By his Death and his Resurrection, Jesus is constituted in glory as Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2:36). From his fullness, he poured out the Holy Spirit on the apostles and the Church.

747 The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church. She is the sacrament of the Holy Trinity's communion with men.

Notes

- 6 *Nicene Creed*; see above, par. 465.
7 1 Cor 2:11.
8 Jn 16:13.
9 Jn 14:17.
10 Cf. Gal 4:6.
11 Cf. Jn 3:34.
12 Jn 7:39.
13 Cf. Jn 17:22.
14 Cf. Jn 16:14.
15 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 16:PG 45,1321A-B.
16 Cf. Mt 28:19.
17 Jn 3:5-8.
18 Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.
19 Cf. 1 Jn 2:1.
20 Jn 16:13.
21 Cf. Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13.
22 Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6.
23 Rom 8:9.
24 2 Cor 3:17.
25 Rom 8:9, 14; 15:19; 1 Cor 6:11; 7:40.
26 1 Pet 4:14.
27 1 Cor 12:13.
28 Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:8.
29 Cf. Jn 4:10-14; 738; Ex 17:1-6; Isa 55:1; Zech 14:8; 1 Cor 10:4; Rev 21:6; 22:17.
30 Cf. 1 Jn 2:20:27; 2 Cor 1:21.
31 Cf. Ex 30:22-32; 1 Sam 16:13.
32 Cf. Lk 4:18-19; Isa 61:1.
33 Cf. Lk 2:11,26-27.
34 Cf. Lk 4:1; 6:19; 8:46.
35 Cf. Rom 1:4; 8:11.
36 Eph 4:13; cf. Acts 2:36.
37 Sir 48:1; cf. 1 Kings 18:38-39.
38 Lk 1:17; 3:16.
39 Lk 12:49.
40 Acts 2:3-4.
41 Cf. St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 577 ff.
42 1 Thess 5:1.
43 Cf. Ex 24:15-18.
44 Cf. Ex 33:9-10.
45 Cf. Ex 40:36-38; 1 Cor 10:1-2.
46 Cf. 1 Kings 8:10-12.
47 Lk 1:35.
48 Lk 9:34-35.
49 Cf. Acts 1:9; cf. Lk 21:27.
50 Jn 6:27; cf. 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:3.
51 Cf. Mk 6:5; 8:23; 10:16.
52 Cf. Mk 16:18; Acts 5:12; 14:3.
53 Cf. Acts 8:17-19; 13:3; 19:6.
54 Cf. Heb 6:2.
55 Lk 11:20.
56 Ex 31:18; 2 Cor 3:3.
57 LH, *Easter Season after Ascension*, Hymn at Vespers: *digitus paternae dexteræ*.
58 Cf. Gen 8:8-12.
59 Cf. Mt 3:16 and parallels.
60 Gal 4:4.
61 Cf. 2 Cor 3:14; Jn 5:39,46.
62 Cf. Lk 24:44.
63 Cf. Pss 33:6; 104:30; Gen 1:2; 2:7; Eccl 3:20-21; Ezek 37:10.
64 Byzantine liturgy, *Sundays of the second mode*, *Troparion of Morning Prayer*.
65 St. Irenaeus, *Dem ap. 11*:SCH 62,48-49.
66 Rom 3:23.
67 Cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7.
68 Cf. Gen 18:1-15; Lk 1:26-38. 54-55; Jn 1:12-13; Rom 4:16-21.
69 Cf. Gen 12:3; Gal 3:16.
70 Cf. Jn 11:52.
71 Eph 1:13-14; cf. Gen 22:17-19; Lk 1:73; Jn 3:16; Rom 8:32; Gal 3:14.
72 Cf. Ex 19-20; Deut 1-11; 29-30.
73 Gal 3:24.
74 Cf. Rom 3:20.
75 Ex 19:5-6; Cf. 1 Pet 2:9.
76 Cf. 2 Sam 7; Ps 89; Lk 1:32-33.
77 Cf. Lk 24:26.
78 Isa 43:19.
79 Cf. Zeph 2:3; Lk 2:25,38.
80 Jn 12:41; cf. Isa 6-12.
81 Isa 11:1-2.
82 Cf. Isa 42:1-9; cf. Mt 12:18-21; Jn 1:32-34; then cf. Isa 49:1-6; cf. Mt 3:17; Lk 2:32; finally cf. Isa 50:4-10 and Isa 52:13-53:12.
83 Phil 2:7.
84 Isa 61:1-2; cf. Lk 4:18-19.
85 Cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:25-28; 37:1-14; Jer 31:31-34; and cf. Joel 3:1-5.
86 Cf. Acts 2:17-21.
87 Cf. Zeph 2:3; Pss 22:27; 34:3; Isa 49:13; 61:1; etc.
88 Lk 1:17.
89 Jn 1:6.
90 Lk 1:15, 41.
91 Cf. Lk 1:68.

92 *Mt 17:10-13; cf. Lk 1:78.*
93 *Lk 1:17.*
94 *Lk 7:26.*
95 *Cf. Mt 11:13-14.*
96 *Jn 1:23; cf. Isa 40:1-3.*
97 *Jn 1:7; cf. Jn 15:26; 5:35.*
98 *Cf. 1 Pet 1:10-12.*
99 *Jn 1:33-36.*
100 *Cf. Jn 3:5.*
101 *Cf. Prov 8:1-9:6; Sir 24.*
102 *Col 2:9.*
103 *Cf. Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:14.*
104 *Cf. Lk 1:46-55.*
105 *Cf. Lk 1:26-38; Rom 4:18-21; Gal 4:26-28.*
106 *Cf. Lk 1:15-19; Mt 2:11.*
107 *Cf. Lk 2:14.*
108 *Cf. Jn 19:25-27.*
109 *Acts 1:14.*
110 *Cf. Jn 6:27,51,62-63.*
111 *Cf. Jn 3:5-8.*
112 *Cf. Jn 4:10,14,23-24.*
113 *Cf. Jn 7:37-39.*
114 *Cf. Lk 11:13.*
115 *Cf. Mt 10:19-20.*
116 *Cf. Jn 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-15; 17:26.*
117 *Cf. Jn 13:1; 17:1.*
118 *Cf. Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30.*
119 *Rom 6:4.*
120 *Cf. Jn 20:22.*
121 *Jn 20:21; cf. Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47-48; Acts 1:8.*
122 *Cf. Acts 2:33-36.*
123 *Byzantine liturgy, Pentecost Vespers, Troparion, repeated after communion.*
124 *1 Jn 4:8,1.*
125 *Rom 5:5.*
126 *2 Cor 13:14.*
127 *1 Jn 4: 12; cf. Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:21.*
128 *Acts 1:8; cf. 1 Cor 13.*
129 *Gal 5:22-23.*
130 *Gal 5:25; cf. Mt 16:24-26.*
131 *St. Basil, De Spiritu Sancto, 15,36:PG 32,132.*
132 *Jn 15:8,16.*
133 *St. Cyril of Alexandria, In Jo. ev., 11,11:PG 74,561.*
134 *Rom 8:26.*

The Late Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, Belgium Léon Josef Cardinal Suenens who was one of the leading figures at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) wrote in his book: 'Life of the Spirit':

*Without the Holy Spirit, God is far away,
Christ stays in the past,
The Gospel is a dead letter,
The Church is simply an organisation,
Authority a matter of domination,
Mission a matter of propaganda,
The liturgy no more than evocation,
Christian living a slave morality.*

*But in the Holy Spirit:
The cosmos is resurrected and groans with
The birth-pangs of the kingdom,
The risen Christ is there,
The Gospel is the power of life,
The Church shows forth life of the Trinity,
Authority is a liberating service,
Mission is a Pentecost,
The Liturgy is both memorial and anticipation,
Human action is deified.*

“The Church is catholic from the very outset ... her universality is not the result of the successive inclusion of various communities. Indeed from the first moment the Holy Spirit created her as the Church of all peoples”.

(Pope Benedict XVI)

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

ARCHDIOCESE OF FREETOWN

Wellington gets a new Catholic Church

The new Church of St Francis Xavier was on 21st May 2011 blessed and opened by Archbishop Edward. T. Charles. The Church is a long rectangular building in the Conforti Compound at Wellington, Saynoh Junction. Amazingly, in the same compound we have Conforti Nursery and Primary schools and a new Church dedicated to St Francis Xavier. Conforti is the founder of the Xaverian Missionaries and St Francis Xavier their Patron Saint. Conforti became a missionary after reading and studying the life of St Francis Xavier. This year in October on the Mission Sunday (23rd) Conforti will be declared a Saint in Rome

The new Church of St Francis Xavier has a capacity of 450 people, 3 doors, 14 windows, 3 areas, main hall, one step down a smaller section and then a higher section for the sanctuary and altar. The Eucharist is at 8 am on Sundays, 6.30 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The pews, lectern, altar, Blessed Sacrament tabernacle and its stand, stations of the cross and holy water fonts were all locally made. Behind the altar high up on the wall is the picture of the Holy Spirit, underneath is the Cross with the Risen Lord on it carved by Patrick Swaray.

This new church is part of the St Peter the Rock Parish, Calaba Town which now has St Charles Lwanga Church, Allen Town, Holy Family Catholic Community up Mayenkinch Hills where a new church is being built, and St Francis Xavier in between Holy Cross Parish, Kissy and St Peter the Rock, Calaba Town

Rev. Fr Eugenio MONTESI S.X.

Launching of Catholic Charismatic Renewal at St Anthony's Parish, Freetown

To God be the glory for a new baby has been born St. Anthony.s Parish on Pentecost Sunday 12th June 2011. As it has been the wish of his grace the Archbishop Dr Edward Tamba Charles, that by the time he gives his full blessings to the group, we should have spread all over the Catholic Churches. And this is what exactly this group under the dynamic leadership of Bro. Tony Obiesie and our able Spiritual Director Rev. Fr John Garrick are doing. In his homily Rev. Fr Garrick brought out the need of the charismatic in our Churches today as Late Pope John Paul II of blessed memory himself recommends that, there is need for charismatic type of worship in the Catholic Church today.

He explained how the group started in Sierra Leone 2002, and how the devil waged war against the group leading to its barn. However, to God be the glory that Archbishop Edward Tamba Charles thought it fit to lift up the barn and we thank God for his life and guidance. Fr Garrick explained the need of worshipping God in truth and in spirit as in John 4: 23-24. He said the Catholic Church has

all what it takes but we are not avail ourselves of these opportunities. He said we need to witness for Christ, as the Apostles of old did, Act of the Apostles, 3: 22-24.

But we Catholics think the task lies on only the Priest of course, he said they have been ordained by God to lead us but the task of getting your Salvation lies on your very self remember the word of God says in Philippians 2: 12 “You should work out your Salvation with fear and trembling” Also he said we have been complacent and comfortable with where we are (sin) so much that we are not bothered on how to move out of it, thinking that because everybody is doing it, so it is right, remember the word of God says” there is a way that seemed right to man but the ends is destruction”, and at the end of the day leading us to be running helter-skelter looking for miracles. He admonished us to beware of the words in the scripture which says: in Matthew 7: 21-23 “not everyone who says to me Lord! Lord! Will enter the kingdom of God but only those who do the will of my Father. Many will say Lord did we not prophesy in your name, drive out demons, perform miracles in your name, then I will tell them, I never knew you evil doers”.

1. Human spirit – the urge in you that lead you to something good or bad
2. Diabolic spirit – which is evil spirit that manifest itself in either witchcraft, marine spirit etc
3. Holy Spirit the advocate, spirit of the true and living God. Act of Apostle 1: 8 and this was the Spirit the Apostles were waiting for 2000 ago at the Upper Room Act 2 and we are here today at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church to receive that same Holy Spirit when it would have descend upon us it would stay with us forever, that is our prayer for parishioners of St. Anthony. Bro Tony express his joy and pray that this group will do marvels in Saint Anthony’s Church.

Sacred Heart Cathedral Fellowship Day Mondays 6: 30

St Martin de Porres Parish Fellowship Day Wednesdays 6: 30

St Anthony.s Parish Fellowship Day Wednesdays 6: 30

As you worship with us your lives will be richly blessed. Thank you and God bless you.

Sister Ann-Marie TULSIDAS

(Saint Anthony’s Parish, Brookfields, Freetown).

DIOCESE OF KENEMA

Holy Trinity Parish in Kenema Celebrates her 20th Anniversary

On Trinity Sunday 19th June 2011, Bishop Patrick Daniel Koroma, Fr Thomas Philip C.S.Sp. (Parish Priest), Fr Augustine Berewa C.S.Sp. (Superior), Fr Anthony Sevali C.S.Sp. (Spiritan Shrine, Bo); and Fr Dominic Johnson (Rector of St Kizito.s Pre-Major Seminary, Kenema) joined the parishioners of Holy Trinity Parish, Kenema in celebrating 20 years of the existence of their parish. The long liturgy was very joyful. In his homily Bishop Koroma thanked all those who have worked so hard in building up the parish and he said he is pleased with the ongoing development of the parish. During the mass a family presented a very powerful public address system to the parish. Holy

Trinity Parish was created in 1991 by Bishop John O. Roridan C.S.Sp. The opening of Holy Trinity Secondary School, Kenema in 1964 and the establishment of Our Lady of the Rosary SCC in Simbeck, Kenema in 1972 were two significant stages in the development of the Christian Community that is now called Holy Trinity Parish, Kenema.

Theresa VANDI (Kenema)

36th Annual Patronal Feast of St Paul's Cathedral Parish, Kenema

Saint Paul's Cathedral Parish of Kenema diocese hosted this year 2011, a good number of dedicated anniversaries, such as the Golden Jubilee of Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Henry Ganda Emeritus, 1961 – 2011; 59th Anniversary of Rt. Rev. John O. Riordan CSSp Emeritus, 1952 – 2011; 9th Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination of Rt. Rev. Patrick Daniel Koroma 2002 – 2011 and the 36th Annual Patronal Feast of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish 1975 – 2011.

On the 3rd of July, 2011 more than three thousand of Cathedral worshipping community and invitees flooded the Church in colourful attire. This was in honour of her 36 years of existence as the Mother Church and Parish of the diocese of Kenema and also to celebrate the Bishop's anniversaries that fell on June 29th

In his homily, Bishop Daniel Koroma, stressed on Unity, Love thorough acquaintances of members in the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and other Church organisations, and for the elders to continue encouraging the youth to participate fully in church activities hence they will be leaders tomorrow.

Finally, the Thanksgiving Mass ended with fabulous presentations of 6.5 Horse Power Lawn Mower bought by a group of Cathedral Church members, popularly known as "Benefactor", the offering of certificates of Merits to Church groups and individuals and plenty of essential gifts were donated to Bishop Koroma. Furthermore, the occasion was also marked by Disco Music and dancing, Miss Cathedral contest and some cultural display.

Mr Peterkin SESAY (St Paul.s Cathedral, Kenema)

DIOCESE OF BO

Thousands Witness the First Episcopal Ordination in Bo

On Saturday 7th May 2011 Bishop-Elect Charles Campbell was ordained first bishop of the Diocese of Bo during a beautiful Eucharistic Celebration held at Christ the King College, Bo by His Excellency Archbishop George Anthonysamy (Apostolic Nuncio to Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Gambia). Several bishops and priests from Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gambia and Nigeria came to grace the occasion.

In addressing the congregation shortly after his episcopal ordination, Bishop Charles Campbell announced that the guiding principle he intends to use in exercising his episcopal ministry is: “the Church as the Family of God”.

The new bishop has taken as his motto: Fiat Voluntas Tua (thy will be done). Doing God's will is both a pleasure and a great honour. We pray that the good Lord who has begun the good work in him will see him through his episcopal ministry especially in addressing the many challenges in the new Diocese of Bo.

DIOCESE OF MAKENI

Church of Mary Our Help at Tintafor, Lungi opens

After some very hectic work by the Salesians and Parish Communities at Tintafor and its neighbouring villages all was in place for the solemn opening and blessing of the new parish Church at Tintafor on May 21, 2011. It was a very colourful beautiful occasion. The foundation stone was laid by His Lordship Bishop George Biguzzi S.X. on May 24 2008. Due to occasional difficulties the building was not completed until 2011.

Bishop Biguzzi gave a run down on the whole ceremony and added that “the dedication of a Church is a very solemn ceremony ... we will do all that needs to be done and not worry about time”. This indeed was done beautifully. The Church was incensed and blessed with Holy Water inside and outside. Then the oil of Chrism was put on the altar and on the walls of the Church where four crosses had been inserted.

We were very happy to have some visiting clergy and religious from the Diocese of Makeni as well as a very large crowd of lay people from our own and neighbouring parishes. We thank God for this beautiful day. A special thanks to Bishop Biguzzi, without whom this ceremony could not have taken place. We are also grateful to all those who in one way or another contributed towards the realisation of our dream.

Harry O'BRIEN S.D.B.

ARTICLES

A REFLECTION ON THE NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

by Rev. Fr. Joseph E. Bangura (Catholic Archdiocese of Freetown)

It was originally a presentation given at the Meeting of Archdiocesan Priest Confraternity in Freetown, on the 24th May 2011.

On the 14th of May 2011, I was asked by Fr. Peter Konteh to give a talk to the Catholic Women.s Association, Western Area on the new translation of the Mass. I was shocked when I realized that majority of them were hearing about this new translation for the first time. Why the shock? About a month before this date, the Archbishop sent to all the priests working in both the Archdiocese of Freetown and the Diocese of Bo copies of the new translation with an instruction to help our people understand and appreciate it. Then the quotation in Hosea 4:6 came to mind, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me”.

Hearing the news of a new translation of the Mass, many have asked the question: Why a New Translation of the Roman Missal? To answer this question, a historical overview of the Roman Missal will help us to appreciate this new translation. Before the council of Trent, the use of rites varied from diocese to diocese. The Roman Rites came to prominence during the reign of Pepin III. When his Son Charlemagne ascended the throne, he wrote to the Pope for a sacramentry to be used in his empire. This was a means to unify his empire. However, despite this attempt there were still other rites and sacramentaries depending on your area or diocese.

1570 Roman Missal

1570 the saw the first Roman Missal which was an attempt by the council of Trent to impose some form of uniformity. In the midst of this attempt however, there were also other rites like the Ambrosian Rite, Mozarabic Rite, Rite of the Dominicans, Rite of the Camalites etc.

1969 Order of Mass

This came after the Second Vatican Council. We must note that Vatican II was both pastoral and ecumenical in nature unlike Trent that had to react or affirm the dogmas and teachings of the Church in response to the reformers. When the council met, their first priority was the Liturgy and in fact it was the first document to be voted for. Why? The 400 years of use of the 1570 Missal brought about boredom: For 400 years the Church celebrated Mass in Latin regardless where one was from or whether one understood or not. For 400 years also, the Church used one Eucharistic prayer – Eucharistic Prayer 1.

When the Mass was revised at Vatican II, it was done with the participation of the people in mind and the document constantly makes references to Active, conscious and Full Participation of all according to your status in the Church. As a result, the council recommended the translation of the mass into the vernaculars.

1970 GIRM and Roman Missal

Although the New Missal appeared publicly in 1969, the completed revised version came out in 1970.

1975 Second Edition of the Roman Missal

On the 15 August 1973, Pope Paul VI issued two documents: (i) *Ministeria Quaedam* - which revised the former “minor orders” and (ii) *Ad Pascendum* - which addressed norms for diaconate. The result of these two documents saw the suppression of the major order of subdeacon and the expansion of the duties of the acolyte. As a result, with a decree dated 27th March 1975, the second Edition of the Roman Missal was promulgated with modifications brought about as a result of Pope Paul VI's documents.

2000-2002 GIRM and the Third Edition of the Roman Missal

1983 saw the promulgation of the new code of Canon Law. This new code touched on the liturgy especially topics on the Mass. In short, in the space of 25 years many developments have taken place and therefore there was need for the third edition of the Roman Missal

In effect this new translation gives us an update of the Roman missal to fit in the new Edition of the GIRM

The next question many will ask is: what is new in this new translation of the Mass? A critical look at the present translation as against the new translation one can conclude that the current translation is more in favour of the English language than being faithful to the original Latin text from which it was translated. This new translation endeavours then to give an accurate translation of the Latin text.

Below are examples:

1. “Et cum spiritu tuo” which is currently translated as “And also with you”.
In the French, Italian, Spanish, German it is translated correctly.
The new translation has translated it correctly “And with your spirit”.
Why?

The International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) translators had the problem of harmonising the “soul” and “spirit” theory.

Here it underscores the significant role of Christ in the Liturgical celebration who is present in the community and the priest. When the priest says: “The Lord be with you”, it is not himself but Christ whom he represent that he gives to the people and the people respond “and with your spirit”

2. During the Confiteor, the Latin *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* is translated accurately as “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault” and not just “through my

own fault”

3. In the Creed, Credo is translated in the present translation as “We believe”; the accurate translation is “I believe”.

4. In Orate Fratres (Pray brothers and sisters or pray brethren), the *meum ac vestrum sacrificium* is presently translated as ... “that our sacrifice”. The new translation translates correctly as “my sacrifice and yours”

Why?

The present translation blurs the role of the celebrant and worshippers that is why the new translation takes it up again as “my sacrifice and yours”

5. The introductory dialogue of the Preface *Dignum et justum est* is translated in the present edition as “it is right to give you thanks and praise” but the new translation translates correctly “*Dignum et justum est*” – It is right and just .

In short this new translation is faithful to the original Latin text

This new translation is also faithful to Scripture. We must note here that many of the prayers of the Mass have scriptural background. One notable one that empties the response of its scriptural echoes read thus: Lord I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall be healed. The new translation refers us to Luke 7:6-7 from which the words come under my roof come from. This quotation is the Gospel account of Our Lord's curing of the Centurion's dying slave. The centurion says: I am not worthy to have you come under my roof...

What happens when the priest elevates the sacred host: when he says: “Behold the Lamb of God...”. Heaven is made open and Jesus comes down and like the centurion we all say: “Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed”.

This new translation is theological based. A more vivid example comes out clearly in the greetings the priest gives. When the priest says: “The Lord be with you” which is only said by deacons, priests and bishops, he does so in “*persona Christi*”. This presents the rich theological understanding of the Church - namely the presence of Christ in:

- . The priest
- . The worshiping community
- . In the word proclaimed
- . In the Eucharistic species

In other words, it underscores the role of the priest who, by ordination, receives the Holy Spirit to perform his priestly duties; and he does so in the name of Christ, the High Priest.

To sum up, this new translation is very rich. In the sense that it is faithful to the original Latin text, it scripturally based and has a strong theological foundation. It is not a new Mass but a new translation of the Mass. I therefore, encourage all, especially my brother priests to familiarise themselves with this translation and help our lay faithful appreciate it so as to enhance active, conscious and full participation of all as advocated by the Council Fathers of Vatican II. Let us all now look forward with keen anticipation to a new translation of the Mass that faithfully conveys the truths of our faith and inspires a sense of the sacred: “Lex orandi, lex credenti”.

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG WITH THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION?

INTRODUCTION

The theme of my article is the result of a deep and profound reflection on the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) and the role it plays in the Roman Catholic Church. Its close link to the other Sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist, the infrequency of its celebration in our parishes and dioceses and the way most of us live our “Catholic” lives leave one with a question – What has gone wrong with the Sacrament?

For many years the Sacrament of Reconciliation was deeply rooted in the minds and hearts of Catholics in Sierra Leone and its connection to the Sacrament of the Eucharist left an impression, albeit a very profoundly strong one, on Catholics. Catholics believed that they must go to confession almost every Saturday before receiving the Eucharist, no matter the situation in their lives. Sacramental confession was a “sine qua non”, a necessary condition to receive the Eucharist on Sunday, holidays of obligation and other days.

When I was receiving instructions during the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults to become a Catholic, at the same time nursing the idea of becoming a priest, I was taught and was eventually convinced that Confession and the Eucharist were intricately and closely linked with each other. I would never receive the Eucharist on Sunday or any other day without making a “perfect confession” after I had made my first Holy Communion. It was something I looked forward to. I always gauged the time on Saturday and left some one hour before Confession would start at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. I would spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament examining myself and virtually “writing” down my sins. The sense of awe and wonderment for the Eucharist always compelled and still does compel me to be prepared for its reception.

Needless to say, Sr. Mary Norbert Ambooken, a Cluny Sister and all those who prepared me to receive the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (reception into the Church by Fr. Paschal Kearney, First Holy Communion and Confirmation) have left an indelible imprint on me – a steadfast and devoted love for the Eucharist and a sense of respect and awe to celebrate and receive it worthily.

I will look at this article from the following perspectives: 1.The nature of the Sacrament, 2.The

celebration of the Sacrament, 3. The purpose of the Sacrament and 4. Possible remedy to correct “what.s gone wrong with the Sacrament”.

1. THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, Penance or Confession is dealt with in Article 4 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paragraphs 1422 – 1498). It is also found in Book IV of the 1983 Code of Canon Law entitled “The Sanctifying Office of the Church” under Title IV (canons 959 – 997).

Paragraph 1422 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: “Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God.s mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labours for their conversion”.

Canon 959 tells us that: “In the sacrament of penance the faithful who confess their sins to a lawful or legitimate minister, are sorry for those sins and have a purpose of amendment, receive from God, through the absolution given by that minister, forgiveness of sins they have committed after baptism, and at the same time they are reconciled with the Church, which by sinning they wounded”.

The first question that comes to mind is what sins must one confess? To answer this question one must first and foremost know what constitutes sin. Sin according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church is understood against the background of the profound relation of man to God, for only in this relationship is the evil of sin unmasked in its true identity as humanity.s rejection of God and opposition to him, even as it continues to weigh heavy on human life and history¹.

Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him. It damages communion with the church.² Sin is an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law. It is an offense against God. It rises up against God in a disobedience that is contrary to the obedience of Christ.³ Sin is an act contrary to reason. It wounds man.s nature and injures human solidarity.⁴ The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that the root of all sins lies in the human heart and that the kinds and gravity of sins are determined principally by their objects.⁵

KINDS OF SIN

The Church makes a distinction between “venial” and “mortal” sin. All sins, bodily or carnal, sins of thought, word, deed and omission, all fall under the category of venial or mortal sin.

MORTAL SIN

Mortal sin destroys charity in the human heart by a grave violation of God.s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: “Mortal sin is sin whose object is a grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent”.⁶ Thus for a sin to be mortal, the matter must be grave; the sin must be committed with full knowledge and with deliberate consent.

VENIAL SIN

Venial sin on the other hand weakens charity; it manifests a disordered affection for created goods; it impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of virtues and the practice of the moral good; it merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and un-repentent venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. Venial sin does not set us in direct opposition to the will and friendship of God; it does not break the covenant with God. Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently eternal happiness.⁷

2. THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be celebrated in two ways: (a) Individual and integral Confession and absolution of sins. Individual and integral confession (canon 960) is the kind we have weekly in our parishes and during a Penitential Service or communal celebration (at Advent and Lent) with individual confession of sins. (b) General Absolution. General Absolution (canon 961) is only allowed when danger of death threatens, when there exists a grave necessity (for example, a tumultuous number of penitents with few priests during a pilgrimage, during an earthquake, a shipwreck, a plane crash, an inundation or flooding and an area incursion).

Let us look at some elements that constitute the celebration of the sacrament: a) sorrow for and confession of sins, b) a lawful or legitimate minister, c) a purpose of amendment, d) absolution, e) forgiveness of sins committed after baptism, f) reconciliation with the Church.

a) Sorrow for and Confession of sins. The above distinction between mortal and venial sin makes it clear that all mortal sins must be confessed in the sacrament of Reconciliation before the worthy and graceful reception of the Eucharist. One does not necessarily have to confess venial sins before receiving the Eucharist, though, if one is conscious of any, it is advisable to confess it in order to avoid temporal punishment and to advance in charity.

Before one makes a genuine and sincere confession, one must be aware of the presence of sin, a hurt or an offence (word or action) to a person or against God and then express true sorrow for the offence committed. This sorrow is sometimes called contrition or compunction of heart. It must be a sincere regret for the hurt and a desire to repair it, making amends and a resolve to avoid the hurt in the future. When one offends God or man there must be true sorrow of and contrition for sin committed and this disposition of the sinner moves him to make a genuine confession of sins.

b) A Lawful and legitimate Minister. The minister here is a Roman Catholic priest validly and lawfully ordained who has or has been given a special permission (or faculty) to hear confessions. Through his ministry and absolution the sins of the penitent are pardoned by God. The legitimate priest is a minister of divine justice and mercy; an action he performs that is judicial and medicinal.⁸

c) A purpose of amendment. The penitent who confesses his/her sin, must before, during and after the celebration of the Sacrament make a firm purpose of not repeating the sins confessed or the hurts

done to God or to another. This calls for divine and social justice on the part of the penitent. Divine, in so far as he/she does not want to hurt God and rupture relationship with the God who calls all to perfection. Social, in so far as for peace and stability to strive in a community or society, there must be a cessation of deliberate and wilful annoyance and the orchestration of hurts and injury to others. In other words, the penitent must avoid any situation of recidivism that is, committing the same sins all the time, sometimes, with impunity.

d) Absolution. The act of praying and asking God to forgive the sinner, with a formula or set of words that the legitimately ordained priest performs is referred to as absolution. It is done through the sacred power (*sacra potestas*) granted to the priest at ordination and the permission (*faculty*) to hear confession.

e) Forgiveness of sins committed. Sins committed after baptism or after one's last confession are forgiven after an expression of true sorrow for them, confession of the sins, absolution given by the priest and the Penance that the penitent is required to do after the celebration of the sacrament. The Penance could be a set of prayers, a charitable act, an act of restitution or returning of a thing unlawfully taken or stolen from another or the repair of one's good name damaged by defamation of another's character. Only after the Penance is done is one's sins considered forgiven. This does not in any way mean that God's forgiveness of sins depends on the Priest's (Confessor's) requirement or asking of the penitent to do Penance. In one's conscience and in justice, a harm or hurt done to another must be repaired. The repair of that harm or hurt, the repair of another's good name and restitution of something stolen or unlawfully kept, indicates in justice, a true sorrow and contrition of heart.

f) Reconciliation with the Church. Sin has different components. It is not only the one who is offended or sinned against is hurt or harmed (God or neighbour). Whenever a Catholic commits a grave offense or mortal sin, he/she wounds the Church he/she belongs to. The one who sins is also hurt because he/she impairs relationship with God and neighbour, loses God's grace, depending on the gravity of the offense, and drives away the Spirit of God in him/her. Reconciliation therefore comes about with true sorrow, penance and contrition and the satisfaction that all the component parts offended are appeased: God, the Church, the offended, the offender, and sometimes one's community and the society.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRAMENT

The purpose of the Sacrament can be appreciated against the background of the seriousness of sin. We read and see in the Scriptures and other religious literatures and know from personal experience that sin ruptures our relationship with God, the Church, the community and others. "The sins of men have been the cause of the death of Jesus Christ. Every sin bears an intimate and mysterious relationship to the Passion of Jesus. We will recognise the evil of sin only if we know how to relate it to the mystery of the Redemption. Only then will we really be able to purify the soul and to grow in contrition for our sins and transgression"⁹. The sins of men and women were the cause of the

brutal death of Jesus on Mount Calvary.

In any human relationship, in every community and society there is a conventional and accepted code of conduct, something to do when things do not go right. Those who are aware and conscious of any impairment in relationship should endeavour to make amends and repair any harm done. An apology is the socially acceptable, unwritten norm that helps to heal relationships.

In the Sacrament of Penance sorrow is expressed, contrition for sin is demonstrated, absolution from and the forgiveness of sin is assured and certified by the priest and reconciliation with God, the Church and man is renewed and consolidated. What is lost, as at the Garden of Eden – the forfeiture of grace and friendship with God, is once more restored through the forgiveness of sin. We all need the sacrament, because “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. The restoration of peace, joy and happiness is what the soul and the whole person experiences after a good and sincere confession. True, integral and personal sacramental confession brings healing and peace to man and fosters placidity and harmony in the community.

4. POSSIBLE REMEDY TO WHAT’S GONE WRONG WITH THE SACRAMENT

I ask myself one question, one which I believe many other Catholics are asking: “What’s gone wrong with the Sacrament of Reconciliation?” The phenomenon of empty confessionals and the painful absence of the celebration of the Sacrament in the bulletins and announcements in our parishes and dioceses is a cause for concern. Unquestionably, at least once a year in the Archdiocese of Freetown, we congregate at St. Paul’s Major Seminary at Regent for our annual Lenten Pilgrimage where there is, impressively, an outpouring of Priest confessors and Penitents (parishioners) confessing their sins. Is confession of sins once a year enough? I believe there is a great starvation of the soul, if not a gradual spiritual death owing to the laissez faire attitude some have toward sin and its effects on the soul. What is the cause of all of this? The first I believe is a growing loss of a sense for the sacred. Another is a growing sense of relativism and rationalization. There is another – the “spiritual and religious life” of some of us priests. A fourth reason could be the marital status of some of our Catholics.

There is a growing loss of a sense of the sacred. Our parishes and churches (with the presence of the Blessed Sacrament) are becoming places of social meetings and functions and rendezvous. We chat and engage in mundane conversations in church without the slightest respect for the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We receive and make telephone calls in church (with the proliferation of mobile phones), we eat in church, gossip in the church, engage in fights over positions in the church. Our time for Mass awaits its end when we congregate outside to listen to very loud, profane, and sometimes sexually provocative pieces of music while drinking till late in the day – on Sunday.

Relativism and rationalization is a cause for concern that wrecks the sacrament. Some Catholics tend to see sin from a personal point of view, not as the Church teaches. We must call sin what it is – sin.

Even venial sin is sin. John Paul II says of venial sin: “As regards venial sin, although it does not cause the death of the soul, the person who commits it can cease to go forward or can stray from the way that leads to the knowledge and love of God. Thus it ought never to be considered as something trivial, or regarded as a sin of little importance”.¹⁰

Sometimes we hear people rationalizing: “The Confiteor, i.e. the “I confess” at the start of Mass and the Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God are prayers for the forgiveness of sin”. These prayers do not forgive or take away sins committed, especially mortal sins. Mortal sins, the Church says, must be confessed in kind or species and times (what type and how many times) in the Sacrament of Confession.

Some of us priests do not help and convince our Faithful of the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation by the way we live our lives. We are sometimes slack and negligible in our language, in our social and priestly life and in our dealings with our parishioners. Our examples can help buttress and enunciate our precepts when we live convincingly, when a life of integrity, of prayer, of respect for the sacraments we celebrate, respect of one priest for the other captivate and motivate our parishioners and when we draw a line of demarcation that does not alienate, but demonstrate the ontological difference between the Ministerial priesthood and the Priesthood of the Baptised (General Priesthood).

Some Catholics do not go to confession at all because of their marital status. They unfortunately live in unions that are not sacramental. Some are divorced and remarried outside the Catholic Church and this makes their marriage irregular. Others are either traditionally or civilly married. These conditions (traditional and civil marriages), the Church teaches, are not sacramental and the “couples” are advised by the Church to exclude themselves from the Eucharist. These unfortunate marriage conditions of some of our Catholics are not irreparable. They can be repaired. The Archbishop, our Parish Priests and the Chancellor can be contacted to remedy these conditions. Those affected are encouraged to take the initiative to see them.

There is always an overwhelming joy and hope in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The biblical story of the Prodigal Son in St. Luke's Gospel Ch. 15: 11 – 32 illustrates this joy and hope. In a Papal address Pope John Paul II spoke of this joy: “It is the joy of God's pardon, conferred through his priests, when one who has had the misfortune to offend his infinite love repentantly returns to the arms of the Father”.¹¹ There is a great hope of sharing one day in the beatific vision, (the presence of God) a hope that comes from the joy of frequent celebration the sacrament of Penance.

In Confession the Lord returns to us what we had culpably lost through sin – grace and the dignity of children of God. He has established this sacrament of his mercy so that we can always return to the family home. And our return always ends in joyful festivity.¹² There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke Ch. 15: 10). That sinner could be me, it could be you, it could be any of us.

Rev. Fr Alphonso A. CAREW
Chancellor, Archdiocese of Freetown

Notes:

1 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 386.*

2 *Ibid, paragraph 1440.*

3 *Ibid, paragraph 1871*

4 *Ibid, paragraph 1872*

5 *Ibid, paragraph 1873*

6 *Ibid, paragraph 1857*

7 *Ibid, paragraph 1863*

8 *Professor Dimitri Salachas, Code of Canon Law, Book IV, The Sanctifying Office of the Church, 1996-1997.*

9 *Francis Fernandez, In Conversation with God, volume 2 page102.*

10 *John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Reconciliatio et Poenitentia, 17 (in In Conversation with God Vol. 2, page 108).*

11 *John Paul II, Address, 24 March 1979 (in In Conversation with God, Vol. 2 page 112.*

12 *Francis Fernandez, In Conversation with God, Vol. 2 page 112.*

UNDERSTANDING OF FORGIVENESS/RECONCILIATION

FORGIVENESS IN AHBRAMIC RELIGIONS

INTRODUCTION

Across all of the grand wisdom traditions runs terms that reflect a desire to heal broken relationships and to find ways that enable us to live together. (Petersen, 2002, p 3). The concept and practice of forgiveness as a way of healing human relationships (fractured by wrong-doing, evil/sin or enmity) at individual or group level and solving human conflicts is an age old practice in numerous religious traditions. The aim is always to facilitate some form of peaceful co-existence between victims and perpetrators. However, the concept and practice varies from religion to religion. Some religious doctrines emphasise the need for humans to find some sort of divine forgiveness for their shortcomings.

JUDAISM

In Judaism, if a person causes harm and then sincerely and honestly apologises to the wronged individual and tries to rectify the wrong, the wronged person is religiously required to grant forgiveness. The Torah states,

It is forbidden to be obdurate and not allow yourself to be appeased. On the contrary, one should be easily pacified and find it difficult to become angry. When asked by an offender for forgiveness one should forgive with a sincere mind and a willing spirit ... forgiveness is natural to the seed of Israel. (Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah 2:10).

If the wrong doer does not apologise, there is no formal obligation to grant forgiveness although to

do so is considered meritorious (Forgiveness – Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, p 4). Forgiveness can only be asked from the victim himself/herself since it is only the victim that can forgive. Maimonides says, „sins between one man and his fellow, such as striking, cursing or stealing can never be forgiven until one pays up his debt and appeases his fellow. Even if he returns the money he owes he must still ask for forgiveness. (Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah 2: 9-10). To the Jews, the process of repentance, „Teshuvah., which includes confession, apology and determination not to re-offend, has greater emphasis than forgiveness itself (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004, p 158-159). The process is primarily concerned with inter-human relationships. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is concerned with sins committed against God.

CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, forgiveness is primarily discussed within the context of God forgiving humankind/people in Jesus Christ. Traditionally forgiveness has been understood as directed towards guilt for sin which destroys or weakens the relationship with God and neighbour. Forgiveness is thus part of the broader process of reconciliation with God, others, the world and oneself.

Christian theology speaks of forgiveness not in terms of rules or spiritual duty, but as a form by which the people of God embody their mission to live together as people who are reconciled to God. Since the Church's very existence is formed by God's forgiveness, it operates as a people of forgiveness, forgiven and forgiving, inextricably tied to peacemaking and justice. (Forgiveness – Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, p 2).

Thus, The devout Christian is required to follow the example of Jesus, who forgave his enemies on the Cross without even waiting for them to ask for forgiveness... It should be given unconditionally to friends and enemies alike independently of the size of the crime or the behaviour of the perpetrator. (Forgiveness – Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, p 2).¹³

A famous illustration of this In Christianity is the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32) who, having spent all his father's money/property extravagantly, realised his mistakes and made the decision to come back and was (to his surprise) whole heartedly accepted back as a son by his father. The father decided to forgive and welcome the son home as soon as he saw the son in the distance; the son did not have to beg for forgiveness or make any promises about his future conduct.

ISLAM

In Islam, great emphasis is on the „quality of mercy, reflective of the merciful nature of God. (Helmick and Petersen, 2002, p 3). Islam teaches that God (Allah) is the most forgiving and is thus the original source of forgiveness. The person to be forgiven has to repent, and depending on the type of wrong that is committed, forgiveness can come either directly from Allah or from the person who has been wronged. Repentance (tawba) is a demanding process consisting of three phases identical to those required by the Jewish Law (EI, 1991, Chapter 10 para 385).

For a person to receive forgiveness from Allah, there are three requirements: confession, commitment not to re-offend and a request for forgiveness. In the case of an offence against another

person or society, there is an additional requirement; namely, to rectify the offence (to a reasonable extent). The rituals of sulha (settlement) and musalaha (reconciliation), usually performed within a communal framework, are meant to end conflict among believers and establish peace through acknowledgement and forgiveness of the injuries between individuals and groups. (Irani, 1999 cited Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004, p 159).

The Abrahamic faiths. perspectives on forgiveness have both convergent and divergent themes. Unsurprisingly, all suggest a role for God, although in Judaism this is quite independent from inter-human forgiveness. All the faiths give a place to confession or truth telling. Many victims find it hard to forgive if the truth is not told and the wrong-doers accept their role in what happened. „At the core of confession and interpersonal apology is the acknowledgement of the victims. historical experience. (Rigby, 2003, p 97). Such acknowledgement is recognised as „decisive in the reconciliation dynamic. (Lederach, 1997, p 26) (and psychological healing) and makes it easier for victims to relinquish their desire for revenge (often difficult even though it is a requirement of faith to do so).

A difficulty related to confession and truth, is that they depend on memory, „the past., which can fade or distort over time. Further, the memories of the victim and perpetrator may differ. Rigby writes that, The past is not something fixed with an independent existence, a once-and-for-all set of events. The past is the remembered past, and as such it is something that is constructed and reproduced in a multitude of ways. In other words, what we refer to as the „past. is our historical memory or representation of a particular period of the past, and our particular memory is just one of a range of alternative memories (or interpretations) that it is possible to hold. (Rigby, 2003, p 95).

Although „forgive and forget. is a common expression, „remember and forgive. would be more realistic „because forgiveness starts with remembering and a moral judgment of wrong, injustice and injury. (Shriver, 1995, p 7). Although in the context of forgiveness it might be expected that the victim.s recollections (memories and resulting truths) have precedence; practically, they may have to be „negotiated. between the victim and perpetrator (Shriver, 1995, p 7). Agreed memory and truth, „the past., can then be put behind them into the subconscious and a common future conceived.

CONCLUSION

The faiths differ as to whether forgiveness can be unilateral; Christianity alone deems forgiveness unconditional and unilateral but sets it within the process of reconciliation. This raises the question, what is reconciliation? Reconciliation can be defined as „coming together again, in restored relationship, after a rift resulting from actual or perceived wrongdoing on the part of one or both parties. (Govier, 2002, p 141). In some cases, forgiveness precedes reconciliation¹⁴ but in other circumstances, partial reconciliation can occur without forgiveness; for example, where enemies come together to achieve a common goal (such as mass child immunisation or to restore an electrical power line) without taking time to reflect on an important element of their enmity, that is to face the wrongs of the past. Such non-violent co-operation represents minimal reconciliation but is a very important step in a situation of conflict involving serious human right abuses.

For example when a husband has been unfaithful, his wife needs to overcome her resentment and fear and be reassured that such an evil will not happen again for trust to be restored and for forgiveness to be granted. Then, their relationship can be renewed and reconciliation takes place.

Since forgiveness is perceived differently by different religions, it is unsurprising that conflicts with an inter-religious dimension can sometimes appear intractable; the Israeli Palestinian conflict with Jewish and Islamic undertones is an example. While religion can be important in solving conflicts, Bole cautions „forgiveness does not belong to religion; it belongs rather to the community (Bole, 2004, p 178).

Rev. Fr Paul YAMBASU

Invitation

Two Six-Day Directed Retreats Pastoral Centre, Kenema Sponsored by the Christian Brothers

Two full six-day Directed Retreats have been arranged as follows by the Christian Brothers at the Pastoral Centre in Kenema. Religious and priests who may wish to join us for the retreats are very welcome to do so. The retreat team consists of five trained spiritual directors as follows: Br. Joe Mosely cfc, Sr. Brigit Mathew pbvm, Br. Michael Godfrey cfc, Br. John Holden cfc, and Sr. Anthonia Ezeibekwe MSHR

1st Retreat: 25 July to August 1, 2011, 2nd Retreat: 4 August to 11 August, 2011

INTRODUCING THE RETREAT TEAM: Three of the retreat directors, Br. Joe Mosely, Sr. Brigit Mathew, and Br. Michael Godfrey, are presently members of the Renewal Team for the African Province of Christian Brothers and are based in Lusaka, Zambia.

Br. Joe, originally from Ireland, has worked in Zambia for some twenty years, and is a former Regional Leader of the Brothers in Zambia. He also served for some years as Director of the Christian Brothers. Spirituality Centre in Lusaka.

Sr. Bridget, originally from India, is a Nano Nagle Presentation Sister who has ministered in Zambia for many years in the area of the formation and personal growth of religious, priests and laity, and has directed retreats and workshops in the area of creation spirituality.

Br. Michael, originally from Australia, had served as both Province Leader of the Melbourne Province of Christian Brothers and as Deputy Congregation Leader of the Christian Brothers in Rome. He has been very much involved with the continuing formation of Christian Brothers and their ministries in Africa.

Br. John, originally from Canada, was Coordinator of the Personal-Spiritual Growth Program for the Christian Brothers in the West African District from 2000-2004, when he was appointed Novice Director for the Christian Brothers. Novitiate in Cape Town, South Africa. He has just recently returned to Sierra Leone to again take up his role with the personal and spiritual growth of the Brothers in the West African District.

Sr. Anthonia is a Missionary Sister of the Holy Rosary, originally from Nigeria, where she had been Vocations Director for her Congregation for eight years before coming to Sierra Leone in 2009, where she presently ministers in the area of spiritual direction and religious formation. Her training is in the area of Pastoral Leadership and Religious Formation and Spirituality. She is presently based in Kenema and a member of the faculty of the Polytechnic College's Religious Education Department.

Both retreats start with 7:00 p.m. supper on the opening day and conclude after 8:00 a.m. breakfast on the closing day. Please plan to arrive at the centre and settle in between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on opening day. The retreat proper will begin at the opening session at 8:30 p.m. Each director will meet briefly with his/her group of directees following this opening session and arrange the times for individual sessions for each day of the retreat.

THINGS TO BRING: Your Bible, Pen, Journal & your towel & umbrella - soap is provided at the Centre.

The Total Cost of the retreat (which includes meals + room) varies depending on type of room as follows:

Non-Self-Contained Room = 577,000 Leones and Self-Contained Room = 682,000 Leones. Payment may be made beforehand by Direct Deposit to the Pastoral Centre Account No. 02-04-1685259 at Kokel Commercial Bank, Kenema, or on opening day by cash or cheque. If you wish to attend either of the retreats, please make your advanced booking asap with Brother John Holden: Cell Phone 033 675 934 or E-Mail: johnterryholden@gmail.com or Christian Brothers, P.O. Box 72, Bo, Sierra Leone. Applications will be booked on a first-come-first serve basis.

BRIEF SKETCH OF CATHOLISM IN SIERRA LEONE

1462

Sierra Leone. Pedro Da Cintra a Portuguese explorer discovered Sierra Leone

1510

Portuguese Religious Crusade Order of Christ. Built a Catholic Church at Kroo Bay, Freetown.

1604 to 1720

Society of Jesus/ Jesuits were in Freetown initially headed by Fr Balthasar Barreira S.J. . Fr Barreira who retired in 1610 and died in 1612 preached to Portuguese and African Traders and Chiefs. Mission lasted from 1604-1720.

1823

Rev. Mother Anne Marie Javouhey foundress of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny arrived in Sierra Leone . Catholic Governor Charles Macarthy brought in Rev. Javouhey to Freetown. . She was in charge of the Connaught hospital and was residing in Leicester.

1858

Bishop Melchior de Marion Bresillac founder of the Society of African Mission (S.M.A.) appointed to work in Sierra Leone . Appointed Bishop of Sierra Leone in 1858 and died in Freetown and was initially buried at the Circular Road Cemetery in Freetown.

1864

Fr John Edward Blanchet C.S.Sp. of Holy Ghost Congregation arrived in Freetown appointed Head of Mission in 1864. . Built Sacred Heart Cathedral, St Edward's Primary School, St Joseph's Convent, Freetown, Immaculate Conception, Murray Town in 1881 and closed in 1900 for lack of support but another St George's Catholic Church was opened in 1997 by Archbishop Joseph Ganda. . St Joseph of Cluny Sisters arrived in 1866. . Opened St Patrick's Mission, Bonthe, in 1890 . Cluny Sisters joined the Mission in 1895. . Fr Blanchet retired in 1892 and died in Senegal in 1896.

1893

Vicar Apostolic Fr James Brown C.S.Sp. . Arrived in Freetown in 1893. . The events of the Colony/ Protectorate Division in 1896 and the Bai Bureh's Hut Tax War of 1898 disrupted the work of the Missionaries in the hinterland. . Establishment of St Anthony's Parish, Brookfields in 1900, St Joseph's Mission, Mobe in 1902; St Columba's Church and Father's house in Moyamba. . Died here and was buried at Kissy Road Cemetery, Freetown in 1903.

1903

Bishop John O.Gorman C.S.Sp. . Bought the new St Anthony.s Church for £450 from King George Cummings, Mende Tribal Headman. . Opened up missions at Serabu, Blama, Gerihun and Pujehun, RC School, Bo; and new Church in Waterloo. . Opened St Edward.s Secondary School in 1922. Died

in 1935 in Switzerland.

1933

Bishop Bartholomew Wilson C.S.Sp. . Arrived in Freetown 1933 and opened up missions at Ngelehun and Njala Komboya in 1935. . Built Bishop's house at Brookfields now part of Stadium Complex. Retired in 1936 and died in 1938 as he was sickly.

1938

Bishop Ambrose Kelly C.S.Sp. . Born in 1900 and ordained Priest in 1928. Catholics served in 2nd World War and Priests served as Chaplains for the Military. . Received first Sierra Leonean Priest Fr Edward Hamelburg CSSp in 1940 and Serabu-born Seminarian Deacon David Momoh also in the 40s. . First Bishop of the new Diocese of Freetown and Bo. . Witnessed pilgrimage to Rome of West African pilgrims including Mr J.T. Ganda father of Archbishop Ganda in 1951. First published Catholic Newspaper in early 50s. . Opened Catholic Teachers Training College in Bo; Maternity Clinic in Serabu and Fathers. house in Bo. . Holy Rosary Sisters arrived in 1948. Extended Catholic Mission to Makeni and Pendembu and new school at Levuma. . Died in February 1952 and was buried at Kissy Road Cemetery. His body was later exhumed and transferred to the Sacred Heart Cathedral In 1987.

1953

Archbishop Thomas Brosnahan C.S.Sp. . Born in 1905 and arrived in Sierra Leone in 1953. . Opened Christ the King College, Bo in 1953. . Opened Junior Seminary in Bo in 1959. . Ordained first Local Diocesan Priest Joseph Ganda in 1961. . Built Santanno House and Spiritus House in Freetown. . Opened St Martin's Church, Blackhall Road, Freetown in 1965. Episcopal Conference of Bishops opened. . Ordained Fr Alfred Labor publicly in open air mass in May 1968. . Acquired lands in the East of Freetown for future development. . Instrumental in constructing a Convent in Koidu. . Became first Archbishop of Freetown and Bo in 1971. . Opened a Major Seminary in Gbarnga, Liberia in 1971 (now in Regent, Freetown, Sierra Leone). . With Vatican II in operation in 1965, self reliance with the Church was brought into play. Laity in control of Parish Councils and Church Organisations formed e.g. C.Y.O., C.Y.S., Legion of Mary, Knights of St John, etc. . Cultural Harvest Festivals celebrated with pump, fashion and enthusiastic devotion by participants just like Nigeria. . Was inspirational and pragmatic in details. . Organised pilgrimage to Rome in 1975. . Retired from Sierra Leone in 1980 and died in Ireland in 1996.

1980

Archbishop Joseph Ganda . Appointed Archbishop of Freetown and Bo in 1980. . Opened Major Seminary in Regent, Sierra Leone. . Opened a lot of schools and parishes in Sierra Leone. . Organised pilgrimage to Rome and Lourdes in 2003. . Retired in 2007.

2008

Archbishop Edward Tamba Charles . Born 18th April 1956 and was ordained a Priest 4th April 1986. . Appointed Archbishop of Freetown and Bo in 2008.

DIOCESE OF MAKENI

1950

Bishop Augustus Azzolini S.X. . Born in Italy in 1908, arrived in Sierra Leone as Superior of the Xaverian Missionaries in 1950. Ordained Bishop in June 1962 and became Bishop of Makeni. . Established schools, hospitals and healthcare unit in Northern Province of Sierra Leone. . Opened St Augustine.s Teachers College in Makeni in 1964 and the St Francis Xavier Parish in Makeni. . He retired in 1986, died in Italy on 24th July 1992 and was subsequently buried in Makeni, Sierra Leone.

1986

Bishop George Biguzzi S.X. . Born in February 1936 and was ordained Priest in 1960 and consecrated Bishop in 1987. . Caused Africanisation of the Church in Northern Sierra Leone as more and more indigenous Priests are ordained and lay leaders are given more responsibilities in the Church.

DIOCESE OF KENEMA

1971

Bishop Joseph Ganda . Appointed Bishop of Kenema in 1971 with Fr John O.Roridan C.S.Sp. as Vicar General. . Opened up several new parishes.

1984

Bishop John O.Roridan C.S.Sp. . Born in Ireland in 1924. Ordained Priest in 1952. Vicar General of the Diocese of Kenema in 1971. . Appointed Bishop of Kenema in 1984. . Apostolic Administrator of Diocese of Kenema (1980 – 1984). . Opened up several new parishes.

2002

Bishop Patrick Koroma . Ordained Priest in 1977. Appointed Bishop of Kenema in 2002. He championed the rehabilitation of Churches and Schools after the civil war.

DIOCESE OF BO

2011

Bishop Charles Campbell . Appointed on 15th January 2011 and ordained Bishop of Bo on 7th May 2011. . Rev. Fr Simeon Timothy Gbondo was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Bo on 1st June 2011.

*Compiled by: Peter KAMARAY
(St Anthony.s Parish, Freetown; 1st June 2011)*