

THE CHURCH IN ASIA IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM**A Guidebook to the
Apostolic Exhortation
THE CHURCH IN ASIA
ECCLESIA IN ASIA**

OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE
BISHOPS, PRIESTS AND DEACONS, MEN AND WOMEN
IN THE CONSECRATED LIFE, AND ALL THE LAY
FAITHFUL, ON JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOUR AND
HIS MISSION OF LOVE AND SERVICE IN ASIA:
"...THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE,
AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY" (Jn 10:10)

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FOREWORD

A New Evangelisation for the New Millennium is only possible through a Renewed Church. The Second Vatican Council's sole purpose was to bring renewal to the Church as part of our preparations for the Great Jubilee and the New Millennium. The purpose of this publication is to bring to all in the Church in a simple a way as possible, the profound insights of the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II based on the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops. We believe that this document is an essential part of the Magisterium's attempts to make our faith in Jesus Christ the foundation of a renewal that will touch the lives of the people in Asia.

The Guidebook attempts to focus on the need for a deeper understanding of the essentials of our Faith. We thus have the task of communicating this to the People of God. We have therefore highlighted the principles that should govern our lives, and to examine our lives in this light, so that we will be able to implement new strategies, programmes and projects.

We are deeply conscious that this summary of a papal document, while attempting to capture the essence and spirit of the message, may appear to be less than perfect in its expressions — owing to our process of extracting, collating, and in some instances, of rewording the original text to facilitate a smoother flow for reading. We would, therefore, propose that this summary be studied hand in hand with the original Exhortation, so as to minimise any possible errors of language and expressions thereof.

We hope that this guidebook to *Ecclesia in Asia* will enable all the People of God to use it in the context of each of our Local Churches and national situations. We have included a set of questions for each of the Chapters to be used for further study and reflection. The Synod and *Ecclesia in Asia* has raised many vital issues and posed important questions to the People of God in Asia. We need to take these seriously if we are to move with courage and zeal into the new millennium.

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Suggestions for Use of the Guidebook

1. This guidebook has three sections. The first gives an overview of *Ecclesia in Asia*, the second, a summary of the Apostolic Exhortation, and the third, a series of questions for further study.
2. Section One will enable the reader to have an overview of the main ideas that are articulated in the Apostolic Exhortation. It also attempts to show the intimate link and flow that the chapters communicate.
3. Section Two consists of the summary of the Apostolic Exhortation, which is divided into three parts. The first is the Reality of Asia Today (Chapter One). Part Two deals with the reflections on our Faith (Chapters Two—Five), and Part Three with the Responses of the People of God (Chapters Six and Seven)
4. Section Three contains questions for each of the Chapters, including the Introduction and Conclusion. These questions are grouped under three separate headings: namely, Theological Clarifications and Deepening, Review of Life, and Application

to Life. The purpose of these questions is to enable us both to deepen our understanding of Ecclesia in Asia, and also to search for answers that will guide us to a more effective implementation of the essentials of this document in our lives as Church in Asia.

We therefore propose that this publication be used as a study-guide by all the People of God, either as individuals or in groups.

An Overview of the Church in Asia

The Church in Asia is proud that Jesus Christ the Saviour, was born in Asia, and that the Church went forth from here to make disciples of all nations. In the Third Millennium a great harvest awaits this vast and vital continent. The challenges of a new evangelisation are great, and is indeed a priority. The Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops was a moment of dialogue and an opportunity for conversion, and thus the basis for a new commitment to mission.

1. A New Evangelisation is possible if we have a critical awareness of the diverse and complex religious, cultural, economic, social and political realities of Asia; and this goes hand in hand with our self-understanding as Church. We thus need to recall our history. Our journeying together will bring a new spring-time, and serve as the path to a new horizon for a realisation of the fullness of the Gospel.
2. The Church's unique contribution to Asia is Jesus, the one and only Saviour. The authentic human life of Jesus, full of compassion and self-giving, opens the way to an intimate communion with the Trinity. Through Jesus we offer reconciliation and fullness of life to the world. All this is in keeping with the Father's universal plan of salvation.
3. The Holy Spirit, the Creator, is a vital part of the mystery of Jesus and the plan of salvation. It is this Spirit that is always present in the world and its peoples, their religions and their cultures. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the supreme work of the Spirit. It is this same Spirit that moved Jesus to mission and the establishment of the Church. The Church in Asia can only continue this mission in obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We should thus pray, "Come Holy Spirit..."

4. Just as Jesus commanded his Apostles to preach the Good News of the Gospel, we too need to make the primacy of proclamation an integral part of our evangelising mission in the context of Asia. This is to be done with respect, and taking into consideration the situation of our peoples. The presentation of Jesus as the only Saviour needs to follow a pedagogy that requires a new sensitivity to the process of inculturation. Proclamation is based on contemplative action rooted in prayer and through authentic witness.
5. The Church in the world is the visible plan of God's love for humanity, the sign and instrument of salvation. It is the sacrament of inner union of the human person with God. Our mission is thus related to the strengthening of communion among ourselves. A new evangelisation calls for a dialogue with other Christians and people of other faiths for the transformation of the world.
6. We are thus challenged to build a civilisation of love founded on peace, justice, solidarity and freedom. To promote the dignity of persons and a preferential love of the poor are essential aspects in order to nurture the Gospel of Life and active involvement in the areas of health care, education, peacemaking, globalisation, international debt, and protection of the environment.
7. We need to offer the witness of our lives through our holiness of life and a service to life in our works of mercy and justice. This is only possible with the greater involvement of pastors, consecrated men and women, and lay men and women. We also need to focus on the family and youth. We need to harness the potentials of social communication for a new evangelisation. The martyrs of Asia offer us strength and courage to continue the mission of Jesus in Asia.

Our journey as Church has been the result of the unique contribution of all the People of God. We can thus continue with hope to share Jesus to the people of Asia thirsting for living waters. We can assure them of life in Jesus, and to have it more abundantly. We dedicate these endeavours to Mary our own Mother and the Mother of Christ.

ECCLESIA IN ASIA

INTRODUCTION: PRIORITY

- Revitalisation of Jesus's mission

CHAPTER I THE ASIAN CONTEXT

- Diverse cultures
- Socio-economic
- Political

CHAPTER II JESUS CHRIST: A GIFT TO ASIA

- Gospel of Jesus
- Uniqueness and universality of Jesus' message

CHAPTER III HOLY SPIRIT: LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE

- Incarnation of the Word
- Mission of the Church

CHAPTER IV JESUS THE SAVIOUR: PROCLAIMING THE GIFT

- Inculturation
- Christian life

CHAPTER V COMMUNION AND DIALOGUE FOR MISSION

- Dialogue
 - Ecumenical
 - Interreligious
- Communion and solidarity
- Immersion

CHAPTER VI THE SERVICE OF HUMAN PROMOTION

- Social Doctrine of the Church
- Living Gospel of Jesus
- Challenges of the modern world

CHAPTER VII WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL

- Church Ministry
- Renewal

Summary of the Church in Asia

INTRODUCTION

The Marvel of God's Plan in Asia

1. The Church in Asia sings the praises of the God of salvation, for he sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ the Saviour, who took flesh as an Asian. From this land, through the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church went forth to make disciples of all nations. Together with the Church throughout the world, the Church in Asia will cross the threshold of the Third Christian Millennium. We marvel at the way God has acted in our history, and appreciate the fact that in the first millennium the Cross was planted on the soil of Europe, and in the second on that of the Americas and Africa. We pray that in the Third Christian Millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in this vast and vital continent of Asia.

Background to the Special Assembly

2. The main challenge in the Third Millennium of Christianity is that of a New Evangelisation. The series of synods was an important part of the Church's preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops was the encounter of Christianity with ancient local cultures and religions. This is a great challenge for evangelisation, and is an providential opportunity to reflect further on this mystery, and to give a renewed commitment to the mission of making Jesus Christ better known to all. The Synod's theme was: Jesus Christ the Saviour and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia: "That they may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10) The Church in Asia needs to be able to proclaim with renewed vigour: "Behold the Saviour of the World is born to us," born in Asia!

The Celebration of the Special Assembly

3. The Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops took place from 18 April to 14 May 1998 in the Vatican. Gathered around the Successor of Peter, as the People of God, and sharing in the gift of hierarchical communion. This Synod gave concrete voice and expression to the Church in Asia. It was indeed a moment of special grace! Earlier meetings of Asian Bishops had contributed to preparing the Synod and making possible an atmosphere of intense ecclesial and fraternal communion. The past plenary assemblies and seminars sponsored by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and its offices fostered personal as well as ministerial bonds among them. These and other regional assemblies of Asia's Bishops served providentially as remote preparation for the Synod Assembly.

The actual celebration of the Synod itself confirmed the importance of dialogue as a characteristic mode of the Church's life in Asia. A sincere and honest sharing of experiences, ideas and proposals proved to be the way to a genuine meeting of spirits, a communion of minds and hearts, which, in love, respects and transcends differences. Particularly moving was the encounter of the new Churches with the ancient Churches, which trace their origins to the Apostles. The encounter in dialogue of the Bishops and the Successor of Peter, entrusted with the task of strengthening his brothers, was truly a confirmation in faith and mission. The process of the Synod was filled with accounts of deep faith, self-sacrificing love, unwavering hope, long-suffer-

ing commitment, enduring courage and merciful forgiveness, reassuring all of Jesus' words: "I am with you always." The Synod was a moment of grace. It was an encounter with the Saviour, and an experience in fraternal dialogue of life, communion and mission.

Sharing the Fruits of the Special Assembly

4. Through this Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, I wish to share with the Church in Asia, and throughout the world, the fruits of the Special Assembly. This document seeks to convey the wealth of that great spiritual event of communion and episcopal collegiality. It reminded us of the first Christian community in Asia. It was also an occasion to recognise the ancient religious traditions and civilisations, the profound philosophies and the wisdom, which have made Asia what it is today. The peoples of Asia are themselves the continent's true wealth and hope for the future. Our worship showed their diversity and convergence, especially when symbols, songs, dances and colours came together in harmonious accord around the one Table of the Lord in the opening and closing Eucharistic Liturgies.

This was not a celebration motivated by pride in human achievements, but one conscious of what the Almighty has done for the Church in Asia. Recalling the humble beginnings of the Church was also a call to conversion, so that the Church in Asia might become an ardent affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour. We have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God. We had to ask many painful questions about the suffering, violence, discrimination and poverty that still confronts the majority of Asian peoples. The Synod invited all Christ's disciples in Asia to a new commitment to mission, and to bear witness to the character, spiritual fire and zeal, which will assuredly make Asia the land of a bountiful harvest in the coming Millennium.

Part One The Reality of Asia Today

CHAPTER I THE ASIAN CONTEXT

Asia, the Birthplace of Jesus and of the Church

5. The whole Church commemorates in the Great Jubilee of the

Year 2000 the Incarnation of the Son of God: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

The Church, therefore, in order to live and fulfil her mission, seeks a critical awareness of the diverse and complex realities of Asia. This is essential if the People of God on the continent are to respond to God's will for them in the new evangelisation. The Church's mission of love and service in Asia thus calls for her self-understanding as a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, and the social, political, religious, cultural and economic realities of Asia. The diverse situation, therefore, needs our attention.

Religious and Cultural Realities

6. Asia is the earth's largest continent, with nearly two-thirds of the world's population; and China and India make up almost half the total population of the globe. It is a continent with its peoples who are "heirs to ancient cultures, religions and traditions." It is not the size of the population that amazes us, but the intricate mosaic of its many cultures, languages, beliefs and traditions.

Asia is also the cradle of the world's major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism; and the birthplace of many other spiritual traditions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism and Shintoism, as well as the traditional or tribal religions. The Church has the deepest respect for these traditions, and seeks to engage in sincere dialogue with their followers. The religious values they teach await their fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

The people of Asia take pride in their religious and cultural values, such as love of silence and contemplation, simplicity, harmony, detachment, non-violence, the spirit of hard work, discipline, frugal living, the thirst for learning and philosophical enquiry. They hold dear the values of respect for life, compassion for all beings, closeness to nature, filial piety towards parents, elders and ancestors, and a highly developed sense of community. The family is a vital source of strength that nurtures a powerful sense of solidarity, spirit of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. In spite of bitter tensions and violent conflicts, there is a capacity for accommodation, and a natural openness to the mutual enrichment of peoples in the midst of a plurality of religions and cultures. Moreover, despite the influ-

ence of modernisation and secularisation, Asian religions show a great vitality and a capacity for renewal. Many, especially the young, experience a deep thirst for spiritual values, and thus indicate an innate spiritual insight and moral wisdom in the Asian soul; and it is the core around which a growing sense of "being Asian" is built. This "being Asian" is best discovered and affirmed not in confrontation and opposition, but in the spirit of complementarity and harmony. In this framework of complementarity and harmony, the Church can communicate the Gospel, being faithful both to her own tradition and to the Asian soul.

Economic and Social Realities

7. The nature of economic development is diverse. Some nations are highly developed, with their effective economic policies, while others live in abject poverty. Some of these poor nations are among the poorest nations on earth. In the process of development, materialism and secularism are also gaining ground, especially in urban areas. These ideologies, which undermine traditional, social and religious values, threaten Asia's cultures with incalculable damage. These changes have both positive and negative aspects. There is also the accompanying phenomenon of urbanisation, often associated with the rise of organised crime, terrorism, prostitution, and the exploitation of the weaker sectors of society. There is also the migration of peoples due to poverty, war and ethnic conflicts, the denial of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also experience the adverse effects of industrialisation. These seriously affect family life and values. The construction of nuclear power plants have little regard for the safety of people and the integrity of the environment. Tourism has often a devastating influence and effect upon both the moral and physical landscape of many Asian countries. The negative impact of tourism is seen in the increase in prostitution of young women, and even of children.

Faced with population growth, we need to be aware of false solutions that threaten the dignity and inviolability of life. We recall the Church's contribution to the defence and promotion of life through health care, social development and education to benefit peoples, especially the poor; and noted the contributions of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. New forms of behaviour are emerging as a result of overexposure to the mass media and the kinds of literature, music, and films that are undermining the

Asian cultural traditions. These are often controlled and used by those with questionable political, economic and ideological interests. As a result, the negative aspects of the media and entertainment industries are threatening traditional values, and in particular the sacredness of marriage and the stability of the family. The effect of images of violence, hedonism, unbridled individualism and materialism "is striking at the heart of Asian cultures, at the religious character of the people, families and whole societies." This is a situation, which poses a great challenge to the Church and to the proclamation of her message.

The persistent reality of poverty and exploitation is rooted in a history where people have been kept economically, culturally and politically on the margins of society. Although there is the awakening of women's consciousness to their dignity and rights, the poverty and exploitation of women remain a serious problem throughout Asia. Millions of indigenous or tribal people throughout Asia are also living in social, cultural and political isolation.

The extensive economic growth of many Asian societies has witnessed the emergence of a new generation of skilled workers, scientists and technicians that is growing, and thus augurs well for Asia's development. The most recent and far-reaching financial crisis suffered by a number of Asian countries had serious consequences on the lives of the Asian peoples but it also shows what the Asian peoples can do for themselves with a view to their own development.

Political Realities

8. The Church always needs to have an exact understanding of the political situation in the different countries. The political panorama is highly complex, displaying an array of ideologies ranging from democratic forms of government to theocratic ones, together with military dictatorships and atheistic ideologies. Some countries recognise an official state religion that allows little or no religious freedom to minorities and the followers of other religions, while others reduce minorities to second-class citizens with little safeguard for their fundamental human rights. In some places Christians are not allowed to practise their faith freely and proclaim Jesus Christ to others. They are persecuted and denied their rightful place in society.

With progress, there is also the widespread corruption existing

at various levels of both government and society. People are helpless to defend themselves against corrupt politicians, members of the judiciary, administrators and bureaucrats. With the growing awareness and people's capacity to change unjust structures, people demand greater social justice, participation in government and economic life, for equal opportunities in education, and for a just share in the resources of the nation. People are becoming increasingly conscious of their human dignity and rights, and more determined to safeguard them. Long dormant ethnic, social and cultural minority groups are seeking ways to become agents of their own social advancement. The Spirit of God helps and sustains people's efforts to transform society, so that the human yearning for a more abundant life may be satisfied, as God wills.

The Church in Asia: Past and Present

9. The history of the Church in Asia is as old as the Church herself; for it was in Asia that the Apostles preached the word and founded Churches. The fascinating and complex history, that began from Jerusalem, is the Church that spread to Antioch, to Rome and beyond. It reached Ethiopia in the South, Scythia in the North and India in the East. The missionary works spread from the East Syrian community in the third and fourth centuries, the ascetic communities of Syria, Armenia, the Arab kingdoms, and even China. Later the Good News was announced to the Mongols and the Turks.

The apostolic labours of Saint Francis Xavier and various religious congregations dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to this task. New attempts were made to inculturate the Good News, although they proved in no way sufficient. Despite her centuries-long presence and her many apostolic endeavours, the Church in many places was still considered as foreign to Asia, and indeed was often associated in people's minds with the colonial powers.

This was the situation on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, and we have seen since then the more recent growth of the ecclesial community among many different peoples in various parts of the continent. This was in the Siberian region and the Central Asian countries which have recently gained their independence, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

In diversity there has been unity in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, through Christian witness, works of charity and human solidarity. Although there is some peace and freedom, others find themselves in situations of violence and conflict, or feel threatened by other groups, for religious or other reasons. In the vastly diversified cultural world of Asia, the Church faces multiple philosophical, theological and pastoral challenges. The Church in Asia finds herself among peoples who display an intense yearning for God, and we should focus attention on this yearning and encourage the Church in Asia to proclaim with vigour in word and deed that Jesus Christ is the Saviour.

The Spirit of God, works through the Church and through the apostolic and charismatic movements. They bring new life and vigour to the formation of lay men and women, families and the young. Associations and ecclesial movements devoted to the promotion of human dignity and justice make accessible and tangible the universality of the evangelical message. In spite of the difficulties there is always the belief that peace and reconciliation are possible. The Saints and Martyrs of Asia, are a source of "spiritual richness and a great means of evangelisation." They speak silently but most powerfully of the importance of holiness of life and readiness to offer one's life for the Gospel. They are the teachers and the protectors, the glory of the Church in Asia in her work of evangelisation. This vision of a new and promising horizon I see being fulfilled in Asia, where Jesus was born, and where Christianity began.

Part Two **Reflections on our Faith**

CHAPTER II **JESUS THE SAVIOUR:** **A GIFT TO ASIA**

The Gift of Faith

10. The challenges posed by the complex realities of Asia point to the fact that the proclamation of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the one and only Saviour for all peoples, cannot be kept to ourselves. The Church wants to offer the new life she has found in Jesus Christ to all the peoples of Asia. The challenges today move us to transmit the faith and to share Jesus as the greatest gift which the Church can offer to Asia. This is a solemn duty of all who have received the gift of faith. We consider this a

privilege, and thus becomes a joyful obligation of bearing witness to the faith and to the Christian life as a service to our brothers and sisters. We have thus the responsibility to grasp through study, prayer and reflection the timeless truth of Jesus in order to bring its power and vitality to bear on the present and future challenges of evangelisation in Asia.

Jesus Christ, the God-Man Who Saves

11. Jesus lived an authentically human life, born of a Virgin Mother in humble surroundings at Bethlehem. He was as helpless as any other infant, and even suffered the fate of a refugee fleeing the wrath of a ruthless leader. He was subject to human parents, in whom he trusted and whom he lovingly obeyed. Constantly at prayer, he was in intimate relationship with God, whom he addressed as Abba, "Father," to the dismay of his listeners.

He was close to the poor, the forgotten and the lowly, and considered them blessed. He ate with sinners, assuring them of forgiveness if they repented. Touching the unclean and allowing them to touch him, he let them know the nearness of God. He wept for a dead friend; he restored a dead son to his widowed mother; he welcomed children; and he washed the feet of his disciples. Divine compassion had never been so immediately accessible.

The sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf and the dumb, all experienced healing and forgiveness at his touch. He chose an unusual group of disciples, and mixed with tax collectors, Zealots and women also. A new family was being created under the Father's all-embracing and surprising love. Jesus preached simply, and communicated God's love and his Kingdom; and the people recognised that he spoke with authority.

But he was accused of being a blasphemer, a violator of the sacred Law, a public nuisance to be eliminated. Based on false testimony, he was sentenced to die as a criminal and seemed a failure. He was hastily buried in a borrowed tomb. But on the third day Jesus, risen from the dead, appeared to his disciples, before returning to the Father from whom he had come.

We believe that it was this simple life that ushered into human history the Kingdom of God. Through his words and actions, especially in his suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled the will of his Father to reconcile all humanity to himself.

The Person and Mission of the Son of God

12. The "scandal" of Christianity is the belief that through suffering and death we were saved. The communion and unity of the Trinity open the way for all who believe in him to enter into intimate communion with the Trinity and with one another in the Trinity.

"No one comes to the Father but by me," Jesus says. He is "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6), because, as he himself says, "the Father who dwells in me does his works" (Jn 14:10). Only in the person of Jesus does God's word of salvation appear in all its fullness, ushering in the final age. The mission of the Saviour reached its culmination in the Paschal Mystery. Thus, he handed over to the Father the whole of creation and all humanity, to be accepted finally by him in compassionate love. This is the message, which Christianity offers to the world, and it is a source of incomparable comfort and hope for all believers.

Jesus Christ: the Truth of Humanity

13. Through Jesus, we finally know the truth of God. Jesus' perfect human life was devoted wholly to the love and service of the Father and of humanity. This reveals that the vocation of every human being is to receive love and give love in return. In Jesus we marvel at the inexhaustible capacity of the human heart to love God and other human persons. In Jesus, then, we discover the greatness and dignity of each person in the heart of God, who created man in his own image.

By his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each individual. This is the profound insight that is the ultimate source of hope and strength for the people of Asia in their struggles and uncertainties. When we respond with a living faith to God's offer of love, his presence brings love and peace, transforming the human heart from within.

Thus, the mission of Jesus not only restored communion between God and humanity; it also established a new communion among human beings. In him, a new harmony has emerged, in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek, ... neither slave nor free, ... neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. He is our peace, "who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility." "This is my commandment, that

you love one another as I have loved you." Sent by the God of communion, and being truly God and truly man, Jesus established communion between heaven and earth in his very person. Together with the Church throughout the world, the Church in Asia proclaims the truth of faith: "There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all."

The Uniqueness and Universality of Salvation in Jesus

14. Jesus Christ is now proclaimed as the fulfilment of all creation, of all history, and of all human yearning for fullness of life. In him, authentic values of all religious and cultural traditions, such as mercy and submission to the will of God, compassion and rectitude, non-violence and righteousness, filial piety and harmony with creation find their fullness and realisation. Jesus is the one universal Mediator. Even for those who do not explicitly profess faith in him as the Saviour, salvation comes as a grace from Jesus Christ through the communication of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the one Saviour because he accomplished the Father's universal plan of salvation. Jesus is indeed unique, and this uniqueness of Christ gives him an absolute and universal significance, and thus remains history's centre and goal. Contemplating Jesus in his human nature, the peoples of Asia find their deepest questions answered, their hopes fulfilled, their dignity uplifted, and their despair conquered. Jesus is the Good News for the men and women of every time and place in their search for the meaning of existence and for the truth of their own humanity.

CHAPTER III THE HOLY SPIRIT: LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE

The Spirit of God in Creation and History

15. The saving significance of Jesus can be understood only in the context of his revelation of the Trinity's plan of salvation, and there can thus be no false separation between the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit "the Lord, the Giver of Life" is present from the first moment of creation, the Triune God is always present in the world as its life-giving force. It is a hidden power at work in history, guiding it in the ways of

truth and goodness.

He is seen as the wellspring of life for all creatures. Creation is God's free communication of love. The presence of the Spirit in creation generates order, harmony and interdependence in all that exists. Human beings become the dwelling place of the Spirit in a new way. They are raised to the dignity of divine adoption, and thus these fruits of the Spirit are the sign that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. In freedom, this love makes men and women visible instruments of the unseen Spirit's ceaseless activity. It is this new capacity to give and receive love which testifies to the interior presence and power of the Holy Spirit. By this transformation and re-creation in people's hearts and minds, the Spirit influences human societies and cultures. Indeed, the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history. The Spirit of God with marvellous foresight directs the course of the ages and renews the face of the earth.

The Holy Spirit continually sows the seeds of truth among all peoples, their religions, cultures and philosophies, and works individually and collectively, to work against evil and to serve life and everything that is good. The forces of death isolate people, societies and religious communities from one another, and generate the suspicion and rivalry that lead to conflict. The Holy Spirit, by contrast, sustains people in their search for mutual understanding and acceptance. The Spirit of God is the prime agent of the Church's dialogue with all peoples, cultures and religions.

The Holy Spirit and the Incarnation of the Word

16. The Incarnation of the Son of God by the Holy Spirit creates a new unity with the human person, with the whole of creation, and with all of history. Conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the Spirit's power, Jesus of Nazareth was filled with the Holy Spirit; who descended upon him at his baptism; and who led him into the wilderness to be strengthened before his public ministry. He began his prophetic ministry, and with the Spirit's anointing begins the preaching of good news to the poor, freedom to captives and a time acceptable to the Lord. By the power of the Spirit, Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons as a sign that the Kingdom of God had come. After rising from the dead, he imparted to the disciples the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's presence: a new life is evident between the sending of the Son from the Father and the sending of the Spirit from the Father. Jesus the Son is the "seeds of the Word" sown by the Spirit to prepare the whole of creation, history, and for the human person's full maturity in Christ. We cannot separate the activity of the Holy Spirit from that of Jesus the Saviour. Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions, serves as a preparation for the Gospel and can only be understood in reference to Christ. The universal presence of the Holy Spirit, therefore, cannot serve as an excuse for a failure to proclaim Jesus Christ explicitly as the one and only Saviour. The presence and action of the Spirit, both before the Incarnation and in the climactic moment of Pentecost, point always to Jesus and to the salvation he brings. So too, the Holy Spirit's universal presence can never be separated from his activity within the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ

17. The Holy Spirit preserves unflinchingly the bond of communion between Jesus and his Church. Dwelling in her as in a temple, the Spirit guides and empowers the Church to continue Jesus' mission, that they might bear witness to him. The fullness of communion with the Father is in us through the Church. The Spirit makes the Church grow in communion as one body made up of many different parts. The Spirit gathers into unity all kinds of people, making the Church a sign of the communion of all humanity under the headship of Christ. The Spirit shapes the Church as a community of witnesses, and thus is the prime agent of evangelisation. The same Spirit has been given to the Church by the Father and the Son at Pentecost to bring to completion Jesus' mission of love and service in Asia.

The Father's plan for the salvation of humanity is thus through the proclamation of the Gospel and loving service of the human family. The Church is the seed of the Kingdom of God, and she looks eagerly for its final coming. Her identity and mission are inseparable from the Kingdom of God which Jesus announced and inaugurated. The Church is not an end unto herself; she exists to serve Christ and the salvation of the world.

The Holy Spirit and the Church's Mission in Asia

18. The Spirit guided the patriarchs and prophets in Asia, and still more powerfully in the time of Jesus Christ and the early Church.

It is the same Spirit that moves now to the witness of their faith among the peoples, cultures and religions of the continent.

The Church is convinced that deep within the peoples, cultures and religions of Asia there is a thirst for "living water" which Jesus the Saviour alone can fully satisfy. The Church looks to the Holy Spirit to continue to prepare the peoples of Asia for the saving dialogue with the Saviour of all. Led by the Spirit in her mission of service and love, the Church can offer the living water which springs up to eternal life. This requires us to be obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Committed to being a genuine sign and instrument of the Spirit's action in the complex realities of Asia, the Church must discern, in all the diverse circumstances of the continent, the Spirit's call to witness to Jesus the Saviour in new and effective ways. Salvation is always a gift, never the result of human effort. Given freely, we therefore need to ceaselessly cry out, "Come, Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love!" The Church in Asia shares his zeal that this fire be rekindled now, as she crosses the threshold of the new millennium.

CHAPTER IV JESUS THE SAVIOUR: PROCLAIMING THE GIFT

The Primacy of Proclamation

19. We now recollect the words of Jesus, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"; and "I am with you always, to the close of the age." With the presence and power of his Spirit, after two thousand years, she continues to go out to meet the peoples of the world in order to share with them the Good News of Jesus Christ. She is a community aflame with missionary zeal to make Jesus known, loved and followed.

There can be no true evangelisation without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord. There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, are not proclaimed. This is what down the centuries Christians have done against great odds, and have clung to this spiritual heritage with heroic perseverance.

There is thus the need for a renewed commitment to the proclamation of Jesus Christ on this continent of Asia. The great question now facing the Church in Asia is how to share with our Asian brothers and sisters what we treasure as the gift containing all gifts, namely, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Proclaiming Jesus Christ in Asia

20. The task of proclamation is through the working of the Spirit, in individuals and peoples. It is about how we are to be set free from sin and death. This insistence on proclamation is prompted not by sectarian impulse, nor the spirit of proselytism, nor any sense of superiority. But in obedience to Christ's command. Every person has the right to hear the Good News of God. To bear witness to Jesus Christ is the supreme service which the Church can offer to the peoples of Asia. The profound longing for the Absolute unveils the truths and values which will ensure their integral human development.

Being deeply aware of the complexities of Asia, the Church proclaims the Good News in truth, and with loving respect and esteem for her listeners. Proclamation which respects the rights of consciences does not violate freedom, since faith always demands a free response on the part of the individual. Proclamation is an invitation, and thus respects the quest for answers to the deepest questions of his life, and respects the action of the Spirit in the human person. We recognise the Spirit's action in Asian societies, cultures and religions, through which the Father prepares the hearts of Asian peoples for the fullness of life in Christ.

We also note the difficulties in proclaiming Jesus as the only Saviour, in light of the beliefs of Asia's great religions, deeply intertwined with cultural values and specific world views. Jesus is often perceived as foreign to Asia. This calls for faithfulness to the Church's theological doctrine and to the Asian orientations. This is a paramount challenge.

The presentation of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour needs to follow a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery. The presentation of Jesus Christ could come as the fulfilment of the yearnings expressed in the mythologies and folklore of the Asian peoples. Narrative methods akin to Asian cultural forms are to be preferred and can thus be most effectively made by narrating his story, as the

Gospels do. The Church must be open to the new and surprising ways in which the face of Jesus might be presented in Asia.

The subsequent catechesis should follow "an evocative pedagogy, using stories, parables and symbols so characteristic of Asian methodology in teaching." The ministry of Jesus himself shows clearly the value of personal contact, which requires the evangeliser to take the situation of the listener to heart, so as to offer a proclamation adapted to the listener's level of maturity, and in an appropriate form and language. We are called to evangelise in a way that appeals to the sensibilities of Asian peoples, and intelligible to Asian minds and cultures, and at the same time faithful to Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Among them were "Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the Poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient One." In the midst of so much suffering among Asian peoples, he might best be proclaimed as the Saviour "who can provide meaning to those undergoing unexplainable pain and suffering."

The faith, which the Church offers as a gift to her Asian sons and daughters, has to be in keeping with their cultural patterns and ways of thinking. The penetrating insight into peoples and their cultures of some early missionaries needs to be emulated at the present time.

The Challenge of Inculturation

21. Through culture the human person comes face to face with the Gospel. Culture shapes persons, and as persons and societies change, culture too changes with them. Thus, evangelisation and inculturation are naturally and intimately related to each other. The building of the Kingdom of God comes to people who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing elements from human cultures.

In encountering the world's different cultures, the Church transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within. It also takes from the various cultures the positive elements already found in them. Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission." This process of encountering cultures is thus the special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural situations of Asia, where

Christianity is still too often seen as foreign.

We recall that the Holy Spirit is the prime agent of the inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia. The desire to overcome evil today with the Spirit's presence ensures that the dialogue unfolds in truth, honesty, humility and respect. In offering to others the Good News of the Redemption, the Church strives to understand their culture. She seeks to know the minds and hearts of her hearers, their values and customs, their problems and difficulties, their hopes and dreams. The people of Asia will wish to make the Christian faith their own, if they are able to be embraced by Jesus, and to allow the power of the Spirit to enter the innermost core of their lives.

Just as pastors guide this dialogue with discernment, experts in sacred and secular disciplines have important roles to play in the process of inculturation. But the process must involve the entire People of God, since the life of the Church as a whole must show forth the faith which is being proclaimed and appropriated. Certain areas for particular attention include theological reflection, liturgy, the formation of priests and religious, catechesis and spirituality.

Key Areas of Inculturation

22. Theologians need to develop an inculturated theology, especially in the area of Christology. This has to be carried out with courage, in faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Church's Tradition, in sincere adherence to the Magisterium and with an awareness of pastoral realities. There has to be an authentic sense of faithfulness to the core of our faith, and this is possible by inculturating our faith in the context of Asia. All these have to be in keeping with the Gospel and in communion with the faith of the universal Church, in full compliance with the Church's Tradition and with a view to strengthening people's faith. The test of true inculturation is whether people become more committed to their Christian faith because they perceive it more clearly with the eyes of their own culture.

The liturgy is the source and summit of all Christian life and mission. It is a decisive means of evangelisation, especially in Asia, where the followers of different religions are so drawn to worship, religious festivals and popular devotions. The liturgy needs to ensure that it becomes an ever greater source of nourishment for their peoples through a wise and effective use of

elements drawn from the local cultures. We need to be aware of the emerging secularist and consumer cultures which are affecting the Asian sense of worship and prayer. The specific needs of the poor, migrants, refugees, youth and women must not be overlooked in any genuine liturgical inculturation in Asia.

The Bishops' Conferences need to work more closely with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the search for effective ways of fostering appropriate forms of worship in the Asian context. Such co-operation is essential because the sacred liturgy expresses and celebrates the one faith professed by all and, being the heritage of the whole Church, cannot be determined by local Churches in isolation from the universal Church.

The Biblical word is important in passing on the message of salvation to the peoples of Asia, and in preserving and communicating religious experience. An effective Biblical apostolate needs to be developed in order to ensure that the sacred text may be more widely diffused, and more intensively and prayerfully used as the basis for all missionary proclamation, catechesis, preaching and styles of spirituality. Translations of the Bible into local languages need to be encouraged and supported, and Biblical formation is essential for the task of proclamation. Pastorally-oriented courses on the Bible, applying its teachings to the complex realities of Asian life, ought to be incorporated into formation programmes for the clergy, for consecrated persons and for the laity. The Sacred Scriptures should also be made known among the followers of other religions; the word of God has an inherent power to touch the hearts of people.

The formation of evangelisers, that often followed the styles, methods and programmes imported from the West, needs to be adapted to the formation of evangelisers in the cultural contexts of Asia. It is essential that the professors and staff of seminaries deepen their understanding of the elements of spirituality and prayer akin to the Asian soul, and to involve themselves more deeply in the Asian peoples' search for a fuller life. We need to focus also on the formation of men and women of the consecrated life, making it clear that the spirituality and lifestyle of consecrated persons need to be sensitive to the religious and cultural heritage of the people among whom they live and whom they serve. The inculturation of the Gospel involves the entire People of God; the role of the laity is of paramount importance. We need to infuse the "mind of Christ" into the mentality, cus-

toms, laws and structures of the secular world in which they live.

Christian Life as Proclamation

23. The more a Christian community experiences God flowing from a living faith, the more credibly it will be able to proclaim God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ. This results from faithfully listening to the Word of God, from prayer and contemplation, from celebrating the mystery of Jesus in the sacraments, above all in the Eucharist, and from giving example of true communion of life and integrity of love. Mission is contemplative action and active contemplation. Without a deep experience of God in prayer and contemplation missionaries will have little influence in the spiritual lives of others or in the work and apostolates. In Asia, home to great religions where individuals and entire peoples are thirsting for the divine, the Church is called to be a praying Church, deeply spiritual, even as she engages in immediate human and social concerns. All Christians need a true missionary spirituality of prayer and contemplation.

Prayer, fasting and various forms of asceticism are held in high regard and respected. Renunciation, detachment, humility, simplicity and silence are considered great values by the followers of all religions. The work of justice, charity and compassion is interrelated with a genuine life of prayer and contemplation, and indeed it is this same spirituality that will be the wellspring of all our evangelising work. Inspired by the love of the Father for his children, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ, proclamation is a mission needing holy men and women who will make the Saviour known and loved through their lives. Burning with the fire of the love of Christ and with zeal to make him known more widely, loved more deeply, and followed more closely, Christians who speak of Christ must embody in their lives the message that they proclaim.

The Church realises that the silent witness of life still remains the only way of proclaiming God's Kingdom in many places in Asia, where explicit proclamation is forbidden and religious freedom is denied or systematically restricted. While calling upon and urging governments to recognise religious freedom as a fundamental human right, we are also called to carry the Cross.

The complexity of the proclamation of Jesus Christ in Asia points to the legitimate variety of approaches to the proclamation of

Jesus, provided that the faith itself is respected in all its integrity in the process of appropriating and sharing it. Evangelisation today is a reality that is both rich and dynamic. It has various aspects and elements: witness, dialogue, proclamation, catechesis, conversion, baptism, insertion into the ecclesial community, the implantation of the Church, inculturation and integral human promotion. In introducing Christ to a person, we cannot compromise the integrity of the faith and the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ, as presented by the Church in every time and place.

CHAPTER V COMMUNION AND DIALOGUE FOR MISSION

Communion and Mission Go Hand in Hand

24. The Church, instituted by Christ Jesus progresses on her pilgrimage amid this world's persecutions and God's consolations. God desires that the whole human race may become one People of God. The Church is in the world the visible plan of God's love for humanity, the sacrament of salvation. The Church is not a social organisation or an agency of human welfare. Despite having sinful men and women in her midst, the Church must be seen as the privileged place of encounter between God and man, in which God chooses to reveal the mystery of his inner life and carry out his plan of salvation for the world.

The mystery of God's loving design is made present and active in the community; and at the heart of the mystery of the Church is the bond of communion which unites Christ the Bridegroom to all the baptised. Through this living and life-giving communion Christians are united to the Son in the Spirit's bond of love. Christians are united to the Father, and from this communion flows the communion which Christians share with one another through Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Church is to be the sacrament of the inner union of the human person with God, and, because people's communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the unity of the human race.

It is an essential demand of life in Christ that communion with Jesus, which gives rise to the communion of Christians among themselves, is the indispensable condition for bearing fruit; for and communion with others, which is the gift of Christ and his

Spirit. Communion and mission are inseparably connected. They interpenetrate and mutually imply each other.

This theology of communion describes the Church as the pilgrim People of God to whom all peoples are in some way related. There is a mysterious link between the Church and the followers of other Asian religions. In the midst of so many different peoples, cultures and religions, the life of the Church as communion assumes greater importance. The Church's service of unity in Asia is indeed vital, as there are so many tensions, divisions and conflicts, caused by ethnic, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and religious differences. The local Churches in Asia, in communion with the Successor of Peter, need to foster greater communion of mind and heart through close co-operation among themselves and with other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities, and with the followers of other religions. Our commitment to the renewal of the Church in Asia and to the task of improving both ecumenical relations and interreligious dialogue, and of building unity, working for reconciliation, forging bonds of solidarity, eradicating prejudices and engendering trust among peoples are all essential to the Church's evangelising mission on the continent. All this demands of the Catholic community a sincere examination of conscience, the courage to seek reconciliation and a renewed commitment to dialogue. At the threshold of the Third Millennium the Church has to strive earnestly to serve the cause of unity in all its dimensions. Communion and mission go hand in hand.

Communion within the Church

25. The Synod was an opportunity to share the joys and hopes, the difficulties and anxieties of the bishops, and an intense and deeply-felt exercise of their own ministry. Within the perspective of ecclesial communion, the universal authority of the Successor of Peter shines forth more clearly, not primarily as a juridical power over the local Churches. We recognise the services of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and of the Holy See's diplomatic service, that are rendered to the local Churches in the spirit of communion and collegiality. An essential feature of this service is the respect and sensitivity which these close co-workers of the Successor of Peter show towards the legitimate diversity of the local Churches and towards the variety of cultures and peoples with which they are in contact.

Each particular Church must be grounded in the witness of

ecclesial communion which constitutes its very nature as Church. The diocese is a communion of communities gathered around the Shepherd, where clergy, consecrated persons and the laity are engaged in a "dialogue of life and heart" sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is primarily in the diocese that the vision of a communion of communities can be actualised in the midst of the complex social, political, religious, cultural and economic realities of Asia. Ecclesial communion implies a "participatory Church," a Church, that is, in which all live their proper vocation and perform their proper role. In order to build up the "communion for mission" and the "mission of communion," every member's unique charism needs to be acknowledged, developed and effectively utilised. There is a need to foster greater involvement of the laity and consecrated men and women in pastoral planning and decision-making, through such participatory structures as pastoral councils and parish assemblies.

In every diocese, the parish remains the ordinary place where the faithful gather to grow in faith, to live the mystery of ecclesial communion, and to take part in the Church's mission. Pastors are urged to devise new and effective ways of shepherding the faithful, so that everyone, especially the poor, will feel truly a part of the parish and of God's people as a whole. Pastoral planning with the lay faithful should be a normal feature of all parishes. Young people in particular as those for whom "the parish should provide greater opportunity for fellowship and communion... by means of organised youth apostolates and youth clubs." No one should be excluded a priori from sharing fully in the life and mission of the parish because of their social, economic, political, cultural or educational background. Just as each follower of Christ has a gift to offer the community, so the community should show a willingness to receive and benefit from the gift of each one.

The basic ecclesial communities are an effective way of promoting communion and participation in parishes and dioceses. They are a genuine force for evangelisation. These small groups help the faithful to live as believing, praying and loving communities, like the early Christians, attempting to live the Gospel in a spirit of fraternal love and service. The presence of these small communities does not do away with the established institutions and structures, which remain necessary for the Church to fulfil her mission.

In keeping with the role of renewal movements in building com-

munion, in providing opportunities for a more intimate experience of God it is the responsibility of pastors to guide, accompany and encourage these groups. This will enable them to be well integrated into the life and mission of the parish and diocese. They should offer their support to the local Church, and not present themselves as alternatives to diocesan structures and parish life. Communion grows stronger when the local leaders of these movements work together with the pastors for the good of all.

Solidarity among the Churches

26. This inner communion contributes to solidarity among the particular Churches themselves. Local needs are legitimate and indispensable, but particular Churches must remain open to one another and collaborate with one another, so that in their diversity they may preserve and clearly manifest the bond of communion with the universal Church. Communion calls for mutual understanding and a co-ordinated approach to mission, without prejudice to the autonomy and rights of the Churches according to their respective theological, liturgical and spiritual traditions. History, however, shows how divisions have often wounded the communion of the Churches in Asia. Down the centuries, relations between particular Churches of different ecclesiastical jurisdictions, liturgical traditions and missionary styles sometimes occasion even today unfortunate divisions, often connected with ritual, linguistic, ethnic, caste and ideological differences. Some wounds have been partially healed, but there is not yet full healing. Recognising that wherever communion is weakened the Church's witness and missionary work suffer, we therefore need to strengthen relations between the particular Churches and promote a more equitable distribution of priests, more effective financial solidarity, cultural and theological exchanges, and increased opportunities for partnership among dioceses.

Regional and continental associations of bishops, notably the Council of Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East, and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, have helped to foster union among the local Churches and have provided venues for co-operation in resolving pastoral problems. Similarly, there are many centres of theology, spirituality and pastoral activity across Asia which foster communion and practical co-operation. It must be the concern of all to see these promising initiatives develop further for the good of both the Church and society in Asia.

The Catholic Eastern Churches

27. The situation of the Catholic Eastern Churches, principally of the Middle East and India, merits special attention. We need to recognise the legitimate customs and the legitimate freedom of these Churches in disciplinary and liturgical matters, as stipulated by the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. We also need to overcome the fears and misunderstandings which appear at times between the Catholic Eastern Churches and the Latin Church, and among those Churches themselves. This is especially with regard to the pastoral care of their people and of those outside their own territories. This must be handled in a spirit of truth and respect, since no good can come except from love.

Churches that are directly involved in ecumenical dialogue with their sister Orthodox Churches need to pursue this path. They have also had valuable experiences in interreligious dialogue, especially with Islam. This can be helpful to other Churches in Asia and elsewhere. It is clear that the Catholic Eastern Churches possess a great wealth of tradition and experience, which can greatly benefit the whole Church.

Sharing Hopes and Sufferings

28. There is the need for effective communion and co-operation with the local Churches present in the ex-Soviet territories of Asia. The whole Church has to lend moral, spiritual and material support, and much needed ordained and non-ordained personnel to help these communities. In many parts of Asia, our brothers and sisters continue to live their faith in the midst of restrictions or even the total denial of freedom. For these suffering members of the Church, we need to show special concern and solicitude. Governments and the leaders of nations have to adopt and implement policies that guarantee religious freedom for all their citizens. We draw the attention of all to the Catholic Church in mainland China and pray that they will be completely free to practise their faith in full communion with the See of Peter and the universal Church.

A Mission of Dialogue

29. The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 has been the beginning of a new evangelisation. A new era of proclamation of the Gospel is essential, not only because a major part of the human family

still does not acknowledge Christ, but also because the Church and the world find themselves particularly challenged for religious belief and the moral truths which spring from it. There is a tendency almost everywhere to build progress and prosperity without reference to God, and to reduce the religious dimension of the human person to the private sphere. Society, separated from the most basic truth about man, namely his relationship to the Creator and to the redemption brought about by Christ in the Holy Spirit, can only stray farther and farther from the true sources of life, love and happiness. This violent century which is fast coming to a close bears terrifying witness to what can happen when truth and goodness are abandoned in favour of the lust for power and self-aggrandisement. The new evangelisation, as a call to conversion, grace and wisdom, is the only genuine hope for a better world and a brighter future. The question is not whether the Church has something essential to say to the men and women of our time, but how she can say it clearly and convincingly!

The question of the relationship between the Church and the modern world was one of the most important concerns of our time. The Church wants to pursue that relationship in a spirit of dialogue. The desire for dialogue, however, is not simply a strategy for peaceful coexistence among peoples; it is an essential part of the Church's mission that can only be accomplished in the way in Jesus Christ. He became human with us, shared our human life, and spoke a human language to communicate his saving message. The dialogue which the Church proposes is grounded in the logic of the Incarnation, and today in a felt desire for unselfish solidarity with the men and women of Asia who seek the truth in love.

As the sacrament of the unity of the whole of humanity, the Church ventures forth to meet the peoples of the world, conscious of being a "little flock" within the vast throng of humanity. We need to be conscious of our being leaven in the dough of the world. Our efforts to engage in dialogue extend beyond the Christian world to the followers of every other religious tradition, acknowledging the religious yearnings found in every human heart. Ecumenical dialogue and interreligious dialogue constitute a veritable vocation for the Church.

Ecumenical Dialogue

30. Ecumenical dialogue is a challenge and a call to conversion for

the whole Church, for unity. Communion needs to be restored among those who in faith have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord. The call to a visible unity among Christians is necessary if the world is to believe that the Father has sent him. In Asia, precisely where the number of Christians is proportionately small, division makes missionary work still more difficult. The scandal of a divided Christianity is a great obstacle for evangelisation in Asia. Division among Christians is seen as a counter-witness to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Catholic Church in Asia feels especially impelled to work for unity with other Christians. In order to be authentic and bear fruit, ecumenism requires certain fundamental dispositions on the part of the Catholic faithful; and a charity that shows itself in goodness and a lively desire to co-operate. It also calls for fidelity towards the Catholic Church, without, however, ignoring or denying the shortcomings manifested by some of her members. Thirdly, we need a spirit of discernment in order to appreciate all that is good and worthy of praise. Finally, a sincere desire for purification and renewal is also needed.

While recognising there are prejudices inherited from the past, as well as judgements rooted in profound convictions, which involve conscience, we note the improved relations among some Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities in Asia. We must hope and pray that ultimately there will be an end to the divisions of the millennium that is now coming to a close.

We need to join in a process of prayer and consultation in order to explore the possibilities of new ecumenical structures and associations to promote Christian unity. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity can be celebrated more fruitfully; bishops are encouraged to set up and oversee ecumenical centres of prayer and dialogue; and adequate formation for ecumenical dialogue needs to be included in the curriculum of seminaries, houses of formation and educational institutions.

Interreligious Dialogue

31. The advent of a new millennium offers a great opportunity for interreligious dialogue and co-operation with the followers of other religions. From the Christian point of view, interreligious dialogue is more than a way of fostering mutual knowledge and enrichment; it is a part of the Church's evangelising mission, an expression of the mission *ad gentes*. Christians bring to interreligious dialogue the firm belief that the fullness of salvation comes from Christ alone; and the Church community to which

they belong is the ordinary means of salvation. The Church, however, gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam and our other Asian religions, as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all people. This does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without failing Jesus Christ who is the way and the truth and the life. In the process of dialogue, there must be no abandonment of principles or a false irenicism, but instead, a faithful witness is to be given and received for mutual advancement on the road of religious inquiry and experience. There has to be at the same time the elimination of prejudice, intolerance and misunderstandings. It is, therefore, important for the Church in Asia to provide suitable models of interreligious dialogue. Evangelisation in dialogue, and dialogue for evangelisation, require a suitable training of those involved.

Interreligious dialogue, with our firm faith in Christ, calls for a dialogue of life and heart. Its spirit should be the gentle and humble heart of Jesus, never proud, never condescending. Interreligious relations are best developed in a context of openness to other believers, a willingness to listen, and the desire to respect and understand others in their differences. For all this, love of others is indispensable. This should result in collaboration, harmony and mutual enrichment.

We need a directory on interreligious dialogue: where the Church explores new ways of encountering other religions; that includes scholarly exchanges between experts of the various religious traditions, or representatives of those traditions; common action for integral human development; and the defence of human and religious values. We need to revitalise prayer and contemplation in the process of dialogue. Men and women in the consecrated life can contribute very significantly to interreligious dialogue by witnessing to the vitality of the great Christian traditions of asceticism and mysticism.

The experience of the Catholic Church in its dialogue in 1986 at Assisi with the representatives of the other world religions shows that religious men and women, without abandoning their own traditions, can still commit themselves to praying and working for peace and the good of humanity. The Church must continue to strive to preserve and foster at all levels this spirit of encounter and co-operation among religions.

Communion and dialogue are two essential aspects of the Church's mission, and it is by the strengthening of the spirit of

unity and communion at every level of ecclesial life that there can be a new confidence in the unchanging grace and mission which sends her out among the peoples of the world to witness to God's saving love and mercy. Only if the People of God recognise the gift that is theirs in Christ will they be able to communicate that gift to others through proclamation and dialogue.

Part Three Responses of the People of God

CHAPTER VI THE SERVICE OF HUMAN PROMOTION

The Social Doctrine of the Church

32. In the service of the human family, the Church strives to build with them a civilisation of love, founded upon the universal values of peace, justice, solidarity and freedom. The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or and afflicted, have also to become the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts." The Church in Asia, then, with its multitude of poor and oppressed people, is called to live a communion of life which shows itself particularly in loving service to the poor and defenceless.

The Church's Magisterium in the recent past has insisted on the need to promote the authentic and integral development of the human person. This is in response to the real situation today, and has to include both the actions of individuals and the transformation of social, political and economic life. The imbalances and the increasing gap between those who benefit from the world's growing capacity to produce wealth and those who are left at the margin of progress call for a radical change of both mentality and structures in favour of the human person. The great moral challenge calls for the courage of a new solidarity, capable of taking imaginative and effective steps to overcome both dehumanising underdevelopment and the "overdevelopment." The human person is reduced to an economic unit in an ever more oppressive consumer network. The Church does not have technical solutions to offer but "offers the truth about Christ, about herself, and about man, applying this truth to a concrete situation." After all, human development is never merely a tech-

nical or economic question; it is fundamentally a human and moral question.

The social doctrine of the Church, thus, offers a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgement, and directives for action. This is to be understood by all those involved in human promotion. These teachings must be an integral part of the evangelising mission of the Church. We thus need to offer all through our educational activities, and especially in seminaries and houses of formation, a solid training in the social doctrine of the Church. Christian leaders, and especially lay men and women with responsibilities in public life, need to know and understand these teachings to enable them to affect civil society and its structures with the leaven of the Gospel. The social doctrine of the Church will give them guidelines for action in favour of human development, and will free them from false notions of the human person and human activity.

The Dignity of the Human Person

33. Human beings are the prime agents and destination of development, and the Church thus focuses on the integrity of the human person, created in the image of God and endowed with a God-given dignity and inalienable human rights. After fifty years of the solemn proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many people are still subjected to the most degrading forms of exploitation and manipulation by those who are more powerful, and subjected to an ideology, economic power, oppressive political systems, scientific technocracy or the intrusiveness of the mass media. We are well aware of the persistent violations of human rights in many parts of the world, and particularly in Asia, where "teeming millions are suffering from discrimination, exploitation, poverty and marginalisation." There is the need for all God's people in Asia to come to a clear awareness of the inescapable and unrenounceable challenge involved in the defence of human rights and the promotion of justice and peace.

Preferential Love of the Poor

34. In seeking to promote human dignity, the Church shows a preferential love of the poor and the voiceless, following the example of Jesus. This love excludes no one, but simply embodies a priority of service, and thus bears witness. "This love of preference for the poor, calls for our focus on the hungry, the needy,

the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. To ignore them would mean becoming like the 'rich man' who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate. The poor of Asia and of the world will always find their best reason for hope in the Gospel command to love one another as Christ has loved us; and the Church in Asia cannot but strive earnestly to fulfil that command towards the poor, in word and in deed."

Solidarity with the poor becomes more credible if Christians themselves live simply, following the example of Jesus. Simplicity of life, deep faith and unfeigned love for all, especially the poor and the outcast, are luminous signs of the Gospel in action. Asian Catholics have to adopt a lifestyle consonant with the teachings of the Gospel, so that they may better serve the Church's mission, and so that the Church herself may become a Church of the poor and for the poor.

In her love for the poor of Asia, the Church concerns herself especially with migrants, with indigenous and tribal peoples, with women and with children, and with those who suffer discrimination because of their culture, colour, race, caste, economic status, or because of their way of thinking. We need also to be sensitive to those who are victimised on the basis of their conversion to Christianity. We appeal to all nations to recognise the right to freedom of conscience and religion and the other basic human rights.

An unprecedented flow of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and overseas workers, who often find themselves friendless, culturally estranged, linguistically disadvantaged and economically vulnerable, need our support and care in order to preserve their human dignity and their cultural and religious heritage.

In almost every Asian country, there are large aboriginal populations, some of them on the lowest economic rung. The Catholic community needs to intensify pastoral work among these people, attending to their concerns, and to the questions of justice which affect their lives. This implies an attitude of deep respect for their traditional religion and its values; it implies as well the need to help them to help themselves, so that they can work to improve their situation, and become the evangelisers of their own culture and society.

No one can remain indifferent to the suffering of the countless

children in Asia who fall victim to intolerable exploitation and violence, not just as the result of the evil perpetrated by individuals but often as a direct consequence of corrupt social structures. This includes issues related to child labour, paedophilia and the drug culture, as the social evils which affect children most directly. Clearly these ills are compounded by other issues, such as poverty and ill-conceived programmes of national development. The Church must do all she can to overcome such evils, to act on behalf of those most exploited, and to seek to guide the little ones to the love of Jesus, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God.

The situation of women remains a serious problem in Asia. Discrimination and violence against women in the home, in the workplace, and even within the legal system, are common. Illiteracy is most widespread among women, and many are treated simply as commodities in prostitution, tourism and the entertainment industry. In these situations of injustice and discrimination, women should find an ally in the Christian community. The local Churches in Asia should promote human rights activities on behalf of women, with the aim of bringing about a change of attitude through a proper understanding of the role of men and women in the family, in society and in the Church, through greater awareness of the original complementarity between men and women, and through clearer appreciation of the importance of the feminine dimension in all things human. The contributions of women have all too often been undervalued or ignored, and this has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity. The Church in Asia would more visibly and effectively uphold women's dignity and freedom by encouraging their role in the Church's life, including her intellectual life; and by opening to them ever-greater opportunities to be present and active in the Church's mission of love and service.

The Gospel of Life

35. The service of human development begins with the service of life itself, since it is a gift entrusted to us by God. As guardians of life, not its proprietors, we receive it, and never cease to respect and defend it, from its beginning to its natural conclusion. Human life involves God's creative action, and remains forever in a special bond with the Creator, who is life's source and its sole end. There is no true progress, no true civil society, no true human promotion without respect for human life. The life of every person, whether of the child in the womb, or of

someone who is sick, handicapped or elderly, is a gift for all.

Today the demographic question is often used as an argument for the need to introduce abortion and artificial population control programmes. The Church has to resist "the culture of death." People can show their fidelity to God and their commitment to true human promotion by supporting and participating in programmes that defend the life of those who are powerless to defend themselves.

Health Care

36. Following the compassionate Jesus Christ who cured all kinds of disease and illnesses, the Church in Asia is committed to caring for the sick. Like the Good Samaritan, the Church wants to care for the sick and disabled in concrete ways. There are many people deprived of elementary medical care as a result of poverty and marginalisation. We are moved by the extraordinary Christian witness borne by religious and consecrated persons, doctors, nurses and other health-care workers, especially those working with the handicapped, or in the field of terminal care, or contending with the spread of new diseases, such as AIDS. Christian health care workers are called to be generous and self-giving in tending the victims of drug addiction and AIDS, who are often despised and abandoned by society. They are further pressured by public health-care policies, and burdened by ever increasing financial difficulties. It is in this context that we need the exemplary self-giving love and dedicated professionalism that are visible and effective signs of God's unfailing love. These health-care workers must be encouraged and supported in the good that they do. Their continuing commitment and effectiveness are the best ways to ensure that Christian values and ethics enter deeply into the health-care systems of the continent, and transform them from within.

Education

37. The Church's involvement in education is extensive and highly visible, and as such, Catholic schools play an important role in evangelisation, inculturating the faith, teaching the ways of openness and respect, and fostering interreligious understanding. The Church's schools often provide the only educational opportunities for girls, tribal minorities, the rural poor and less-privileged children. We are convinced of the need to extend and develop the apostolate of education in Asia, especially for the

disadvantaged, so that all may be helped to take their rightful place as full citizens in society. This will mean that the system of Catholic education must become still more clearly directed towards human promotion, providing an environment where students receive not only the formal elements of schooling but, more broadly, an integral human formation based upon the teachings of Christ. Catholic schools should continue to be places where the faith can be freely proposed and received. Catholic universities, besides advocating academic excellence, must retain a clear Christian identity in order to be a Christian leaven in Asian societies.

Peacemaking

38. Today, the world is still threatened by forces which generate conflicts and wars, intolerance, and social, cultural, political, and even, religious marginalisation. This is one of the main causes of more violence and a culture of death. In this context the Church is called to be deeply involved in international and interreligious efforts to bring about peace, justice and reconciliation. War is not the way of settling claims or a means of resolving differences. Dialogue is the only just and noble path to agreement and reconciliation. The patient and wise art of peacemaking is especially blessed by God.

Especially troubling is the arms race to acquire weapons of mass destruction, an immoral and wasteful expenditure in national budgets. Vast numbers of landmines in Asia deny people the right to their land for food production, and has maimed or killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people. It is the responsibility of all, especially of those who govern nations, to work more energetically for disarmament. We need to stop the manufacture, sale and use of nuclear, chemical and biological arms, and to urge those who have set landmines to assist in the work of rehabilitation and restoration. We pray to God, who knows the depths of every human conscience, to put sentiments of peace in the hearts of those tempted to follow the ways of violence.

We are aware of the sufferings of the people of Iraq, especially children, who have died because of the lack of medicines and other basic commodities, a lack deriving from the continuing embargo. My solidarity is with the Iraqi people, and I pray that God will enlighten the minds and hearts of all those who bear responsibility for bringing about a just solution to the crisis, in order that an already sorely tried people may be spared further suffering and sorrow.

Globalisation

39. Human promotion is related to the process of economic globalisation. It has many positive effects but has generally worked to the detriment of the poor, pushing poorer countries to the margin of international economic and political relations, and unable to hold their own in a global market economy. A cultural globalisation, made possible by the modern communications media, is quickly drawing Asian societies into a global consumer culture, that is both secularist and materialistic. The result is an eroding of traditional family and social values that have sustained peoples and societies. Thus, the ethical and moral aspects of globalisation must be directly addressed by the leaders of nations and by organisations concerned with human promotion.

We therefore need a globalisation without marginalisation. Particular Churches everywhere, and especially those in the Western countries, need to ensure that the Church's social doctrine has its due impact upon the formulation of ethical and juridical norms for regulating the world's free markets and for the means of social communication. Catholic leaders and professionals should urge governments and financial and trade institutions to recognise and respect such norms.

Foreign Debt

40. The Church cannot ignore the injustices in the world today, especially those related to the heavy burden of international debt of developing nations. These countries are forced to cut down spending on the necessities of life, such as food, health, housing and education, in order to service their debts to international monetary agencies and banks. People are trapped in living conditions which are an affront to human dignity. This issue tests the capacity of peoples, societies and governments to value the human person and the lives of millions of human beings more highly than financial and material gain.

The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is an opportune time, especially of the wealthier nations, to encourage international monetary agencies and banks to do the needful. This calls for renegotiations of debts, with either substantial reduction or outright cancellation, and also for business ventures and investments to assist the economies of the poorer countries. The debtor countries need to develop a sense of national responsibility, remind-

ing them of the importance of sound economic planning, transparency and good management. All forms of corruption, and the misappropriation of public funds by those holding political power, have to be condemned. The citizens of debtor countries have too often been victims of waste and inefficiency at home, before falling victim to the international debt crisis.

The Environment

41. Economic and technological progress without regard for the ecosystem exposes us to serious environmental damage, with consequent harm to human beings. This is the result of an attitude that perceives the earth as merely an object of immediate use, and consumption purely for profit. We have to return to God as the Creator, and restore reverence for the whole of God's creation. We should not treat nature as do ruthless exploiters, but as intelligent and responsible administrators. A greater responsibility is required of leaders of nations, policy and lawmakers, business people, and all who are directly involved in the management of the earth's resources. Education of all, especially the young, in care for the environment and the safeguarding of resources, is essential. Environmental protection is not a technical question but an ethical issue, that is a moral duty not only for their own good but also for the good of future generations.

Conclusion

In working and sacrificing for human development we need to examine the core insights of biblical and ecclesial tradition. Ancient Israel insisted on the unbreakable bond between worship of God and care for the weak, represented typically in Scripture as "the widow, the stranger and orphan" (cf. Ex 22:21-22; Dt 10:18; 27:19), who were most vulnerable to the threat of injustice. We hear the cry for justice, for the right ordering of human society, without which there can be no true worship of God (cf. Is 1:10-17; Am 5:21-24). God wants "mercy not sacrifice" (Hos 6:6). Jesus made these words his own (cf. Mt 9:13). Saint John Chrysostom says: "Do you wish to honour the body of Christ? Then do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him silken honours in the temple, only then to neglect him when he goes cold and naked outside. He who said; 'This is my body' is the One who also said, 'You saw me hungry and you gave me no food'... What good is it if the Eucharistic Table groans under the weight of golden chalices, when Christ is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger, and then with what remains you may adorn the altar as well!" In the call for human development

and for justice in human affairs, we hear a voice, which is both old and new. It is old because it rises from the depths of our Christian tradition; it is new because it speaks to the immediate situation of countless people in Asia today.

CHAPTER VII WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL

A Witnessing Church

42. The entire Church is missionary, and thus evangelisation is the duty of the whole People of God that is sent forth to preach the Gospel. Evangelisation is always an ecclesial task involving the whole community of faith. The mission is one and indivisible, but there are different responsibilities and different kinds of activity. There is no true proclamation of the Gospel unless Christians also offer the witness of lives in harmony with the message they preach. This first form of witness reveals a new way of living... "Everyone's calling in the Church is to be missionary." Genuine Christian witness is needed especially now, because "people today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories." In Asia, people are more persuaded by holiness of life than by intellectual argument. The experience of faith and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit thus becomes the basis of all missionary work, in towns or villages, in schools or hospitals, among the handicapped, migrants or tribal peoples, or in the pursuit of justice and human rights. Christians can witness to the power of Jesus in and through their lives.

Pastors

43. It is the Holy Spirit who enables the Church to accomplish the mission entrusted to her by Christ. Before sending out his disciples as his witnesses, Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit who worked through them and stirred the hearts of those who heard them. All Catholics must participate in the saving mission of Christ and through a variety of specific functions and charisms in the Church. The principal responsibility for the Church's mission has been entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and their successors, who receive the mandate and authority to teach, govern and sanctify the People of God. They exercise a special ministry of unity. Bishops, therefore, are to fulfil their ministry in union with the Successor of Peter, the guarantor of the truth of their teaching and of their full communion in the Church.

The priests, as shepherds of the flock, preachers of the good news of salvation, and ministers of the sacraments, need a solid and continuing formation, which should provide opportunities for human, spiritual and pastoral renewal, as well as courses of theology, spirituality and the human sciences. People in Asia need to see the clergy not just as charity workers and institutional administrators but as men whose minds and hearts are set on the deep things of the Spirit. Their authority needs to be matched by a clear moral uprightness of those with ministerial responsibilities in the Church. By their life of prayer, zealous service, and exemplary conduct, the clergy witness powerfully to the Gospel in the communities they serve. They live and work together in a spirit of communion and co-operation with the bishops and all the faithful, bearing witness to the love which Jesus declared to be the true mark of his disciples.

The staff and teachers in seminaries and theological faculties should have a thorough training in the sacred sciences and related subjects. There has to be a formation focused on priestly spirituality, the art of spiritual direction, and other aspects of the difficult and delicate task that awaits them in the education of future priests.

The Consecrated Life and Missionary Societies

44. There is an intimate connection between the consecrated life and mission. Consecrated life is a total consecration to the Father through its works. The contemplative religious communities are a special source of strength and inspiration. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that building up the Kingdom of God on earth has its foundation in the Lord, and our labour is not in vain.

The search for God, a life of fraternal communion, and service to others, are the three chief characteristics of the consecrated life, and leads to being witnesses to the universal call to holiness and inspiring examples to Christians and non-Christians alike of self-giving love for everyone, especially the least of their brothers and sisters. Consecrated persons need to bear convincing prophetic witness to the primacy of God and to eternal life in a secularised world. Living in community, they attest to the values of Christian fraternity and to the transforming power of the Good News. They are called to become leaders in the search for God, a search which has always stirred the human heart and which is particularly visible in Asia's many forms of

spirituality and asceticism. In Asia, persons dedicated to the contemplative and ascetical life enjoy great respect, and their witness has an especially persuasive power. Their lives lived in community, in peaceful and silent testimony, can inspire people to work for greater harmony in society. Their poverty and abnegation, of purity and sincerity, of self-sacrifice in obedience, can become an eloquent witness capable of touching all people of good will, leading to a fruitful dialogue with surrounding cultures and religions, and with the poor and the defenceless. This makes the consecrated life a privileged means of effective evangelisation.

The vital role played by religious orders and congregations, missionary institutes and societies of apostolic life, is significant. The invitation today to renew their zeal to proclaim the saving truth of Christ is answered by adopting an appropriate formation and training. This has to be centred in Christ, in keeping with their founding charism, with an emphasis on personal sanctity and witness; and in their spirituality and lifestyle. They also need to be sensitive to the religious values of the people among whom they live and whom they serve. They should integrate themselves into the pastoral plans of the dioceses and the local Churches. They need to foster awareness of the ideal of the religious and consecrated life, and promote such vocations with proper allocation of personnel.

The Church in Asia needs to send forth missionaries, even though she herself needs labourers in the vineyard. And establish missionary societies of apostolic life, characterised by their special commitment to the mission *ad gentes* (non-believers), *ad exteros* (outside their countries), and *ad vitam* (lifelong), that will bear abundant fruit.

The Laity

45. The vocation of lay people sets them firmly in the world to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In their Baptism and Confirmation all lay people are missionaries in the vast and complex worlds of politics, economics, industry, education, the media, science, technology, the arts and sport. We need to appreciate the laity, and encourage them to assume their proper role in the life and mission of the People of God, as witnesses to Christ, wherever they may find themselves.

Pastors are to ensure that the laity are formed as evangelisers, endowed not just with worldly wisdom and efficiency, but with

hearts renewed and strengthened by the truth of Christ. Witnessing to the Gospel includes the unique role of rooting out injustice and oppression. There has to be adequate formation, at the diocesan or national level of lay formation centres.

A participatory Church is one where no one feels excluded or judged. The wider participation also of women in the life and mission of the Church in Asia is central. With special aptitude in passing on the faith, there should be greater opportunities for women to take courses in theology and other fields of study. Men in seminaries and houses of formation need to be trained to regard women as co-workers in the apostolate. Women should be more effectively involved in pastoral programmes, in diocesan and parish pastoral councils, and in diocesan synods. Their abilities and services should be fully appreciated in health care, in education, in teaching the sacraments, in building community and in peacemaking. The presence of women in the Church's mission of love and service contributes greatly to bringing the compassionate Jesus, the healer and reconciler, to Asian people, especially the poor and marginalised.

The Family

46. The family is the normal place where the young grow to personal and social maturity, and through which life is passed on from generation to generation. The family occupies a very important place in Asian cultures. Values like filial respect, love and care for the aged and the sick, love of children and harmony are held in high esteem in all Asian cultures and religious traditions.

The family is also "the domestic Church," where the truth of the Gospel is the rule of life and the gift which the family members bring to the wider community. The Church cares for the family, which is also its most effective agents of evangelisation. Although being called to witness to the Gospel today, the family itself is threatened by an array of forces.

The family should, therefore, be active in parish life, partaking of the sacraments, and being involved in service to others. Parents foster opportunities for prayer, for Bible reading and reflection, for appropriate rituals presided over by the parents, and for healthy recreation. Such a participation will enable all in the family to experience God's love, and to share this love with one another in the family and with others whom they en-

counter. Children have a role in evangelisation, both in their family and in the wider community.

Young People

47. Being particularly sensitive to youth enables us to recognise their responsibility for the future of society and the Church. The People of God journeys with them and encourages them to accept their responsibility to society. The Church offers the truth of the Gospel as a joyful and liberating mystery to be known, lived and shared, with conviction and courage; and needs to offer them suitable pastoral care, to be effective agents of evangelisation. It is the responsibility of dioceses to appoint youth chaplains or directors to promote the spiritual formation and apostolate of young people. Catholic schools and parishes have a vital role in providing all-round formation for them. Various forms of youth groups can enhance new friendships based on the spirit of Jesus among them. These associations and movements can help young people to cope better with social pressures and can foster a more mature growth in the Christian life. Other activities can include various forms of career guidance, vocational training and youth counselling.

The Church does not only care for them but also accepts them as agents and co-workers in the Church's mission of love and service. They bring a new vitality and enthusiasm; their spirit of solidarity and hope can make them peacemakers in a divided world. It is encouraging to see young people involved in fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

Social Communication

48. In an era of globalisation, social communication is the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration. It can mould behaviour as individuals, families, and within society at large. The younger generation is growing up in a world conditioned by the mass media. There is the emergence of a new culture as a result of the new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques, and a new psychology. All these have affected their ways of thinking, resulting in far-reaching changes in Asian societies.

The evangelising mission of the Church is also deeply affected by this phenomenon. It is in this context that the mass media can

assist greatly in the proclamation of the Gospel to every corner of the continent. There is, thus, the need to integrate that message into the 'new culture' created by modern communications. The effective use of the Gospel's power can reach out still further to individuals and entire peoples, and infuse Asian cultures with the values of the Kingdom.

Radio Veritas Asia (the official radio station of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences) can strengthen this excellent instrument of mission, through appropriate language programming, personnel and financial help from episcopal conferences and dioceses in Asia. Catholic publications and news agencies can help to disseminate information, and offer continuing religious education and formation throughout the continent. These can be means to sustaining and nurturing a sense of Catholic identity, and of spreading knowledge of Catholic moral principles.

Evangelisation through social communications can serve human promotion and the spreading of the truth of Christ and the teaching of the Church. With the establishment of communications and media offices, media education, including the critical evaluation of media output, needs to be an increasing part of the formation of the People of God. Catholics need to work with the members of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, and with the followers of other religions, to ensure a place for spiritual and moral values in the media. The drawing up of pastoral plans for communications at all levels (national—diocesan), taking into consideration local situations is an essential part of our strategy.

The Martyrs

49. Ultimately it is martyrdom which reveals to the world the very essence of the Christian message. The word itself, "martyr," means witness to the true value of the Gospel. This is the most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith, for faith can give a human face even to the most violent of deaths, and show its beauty even in the midst of the most atrocious persecutions. Asia has given the Church and the world a great host of these heroes of the faith. May they stand as indomitable witnesses to the truth that Christians are called always and everywhere to proclaim nothing other than the power of the Lord's cross! And may the blood of Asia's martyrs be now as always the seed of new life for the Church in every corner of the continent!

CONCLUSION

Gratitude and Encouragement

50. The task of discerning the Spirit's word to the Churches in Asia at the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops requires the Church's gratitude. We again praise God for the wealth of cultures, languages, traditions and religious sensibilities of this great continent. Blessed be God for the peoples of Asia — so rich in their diversity yet one in their yearning for peace and fullness of life. We thank God for choosing Asia as the earthly dwelling place of his incarnate Son, the Saviour of the world.

My appreciation is due to the bishops of Asia for their deep love of Jesus Christ, the Church and the peoples of Asia; and for their testimony of communion and generous dedication to the task of evangelisation. I am grateful to all those who form the great family of the Church in Asia: the clergy, the men and women religious and other consecrated persons, the missionaries, the laity, families, the young, indigenous peoples, workers, the poor and afflicted. Deep in my heart there is a special place for those in Asia who are persecuted for their faith in Christ. They are the hidden pillars of the Church, to whom Jesus himself speaks words of comfort: "You are blessed in the Kingdom of heaven.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Though still a small minority, yet far from being a timid minority, the Church in Asia has in a humble and courageous way influenced the cultures and societies of Asia. They find strength in the wondrous power of the Holy Spirit, and like the yeast which mixes with the flour in a quiet and hidden way till it is all leavened.

The peoples of Asia need Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Asia is thirsting for the living water that Jesus alone can give. Trusting in the Lord the Church in Asia joyfully makes her pilgrim way into the Third Millennium. Her one ambition is to continue his mission of service and love, so that all Asians "may have life and have it abundantly."

Prayer to the Mother of Christ

51. Faced with such a challenging mission, we turn to Mary. Asian Christians have a great love and affection for her, revering her

as their own Mother and the Mother of Christ.

To Mary, model of all disciples and bright Star of Evangelisation, I entrust the Church in Asia at the threshold of the Third Millennium of the Christian era, trusting absolutely that hers is an ear that always listens, hers a heart that always welcomes, and hers a prayer that never fails:

O Holy Mary, Daughter of the Most High God,
Virgin Mother of the Saviour and Mother of us all,
look tenderly upon the Church of your Son
planted on Asian soil.

Be her guide and model
as she continues your Son's mission
of love and service in Asia.
You fully and freely accepted the Father's call
to be the Mother of God;
teach us to empty our hearts
of all that is not of God,
that we too may be filled
with the Holy Spirit from on high.

You pondered the mysteries of God's will
in the silence of your heart;
help us on our journey
to discern the signs of God's powerful hand.
You went quickly to visit Elizabeth
and help in her days of waiting;
obtain for us the same spirit of zeal and service
in our evangelising task.

You sang the praises of the Lord;
lead us in joyful proclamation of faith
in Christ our Saviour.

You had compassion on the needy
and spoke to your Son on their behalf;
teach us never to fear
to speak of the world to Jesus
and of Jesus to the world.

You stood at the foot of the Cross
as your Son breathed his last;
be with us as we seek to be one
in spirit and service with all who suffer.

You prayed with the disciples in the Upper Room;
help us to wait upon the Spirit
and to go wherever he leads us.

Protect the Church from all the powers

that threaten her.
Help her to be a true image
of the Most Holy Trinity.
Pray that through the Church's love and service
all the peoples of Asia may come
to know your Son
Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world,
and so taste the joy of life in all its fullness.
O Mary, Mother of the New Creation
and Mother of Asia,
pray for us, your children, now and always!

*Given at New Delhi, in India, on the sixth day of November in
the year 1999, the twenty-second of my Pontificate.*

Questions for Further Study and Discussion

INTRODUCTION

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

1. What does it mean for the Church in Asia to be fully aware of the marvels of God's plans for Asia? What do you think is the significance of this event?
2. What are the Asian roots of Christianity? Share your own experiences of the Asian face of Jesus that you have encountered in your own culture? What does it mean to celebrate the Asian roots of Christianity?
3. How have the Synod and the Jubilee Year 2000 been an invitation to all Christ's disciples in Asia to a serious commitment to our common mission?
4. What is the meaning and importance of dialogue as a characteristic mode of Church's life in Asia?

B. Review of Our Lives

5. As Christians, after 2000 years, have we affected in any significant way the lives of the people of Asia?
6. Why have attempts to bring the Second Vatican Council's teachings and its call for renewal not become evident in many Churches in Asia today?
7. Are the majority of the People of God aware of the need to have a new sense and urgency of this common mission in the context of Asia today? What have been the main obstacles to this task?

8. The Synod was a call to conversion for the Church in Asia. How has this message been brought to the consciousness of the People of God in Asia?
9. How open have we been to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives as Church? What have been the major obstacles?
10. Why have we as Church failed to have an impact in the lives of people of Asia in a radical way?

C. Application to Life

11. Do we also share the great hopes that the Church has for the people of Asia? What have been some of your experiences?
12. Do you think that the people have an intense yearning for Jesus; and how have we offered Jesus in a way that is acceptable to them?
13. Do we see the importance of the encounter of Christianity with the ancient cultures and religions? What have been some of our difficulties in the past? What are the ways in which you have overcome some of these in the context of your lives?
14. How can we continue to convey the wealth of that great spiritual event of communion and episcopal collegiality that was experienced at the Synod of Bishops? What does this event and this Apostolic Exhortation mean for the ordinary Catholic in Asia today?
15. Why are the majority of Catholics not convinced of the need to get involved in the mission of the Church? What do you think needs to be done? Identify three priorities?

CHAPTER ONE THE ASIAN CONTEXT

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

16. What is the relationship between our faith in Jesus Christ and the need to be more actively involved in the realities and lives of the people in Asia?
17. Vatican II has given the Church a message of hope that the Gospel of Jesus offers to the people of Asia. Asia may be ready for this message. What is the heart of this message, and how can the Church live this message fully? What is the most immediate task at hand?
18. What are the teachings of Christ known by Christians today? What does it mean to be evangelisers today in the context of Asia?

B. Review of our Lives

19. Do we as Church have a critical awareness of the diverse and complex realities of Asia?
20. Have we grown in our appreciation of the religious and cultural realities of Asia? What have been some of your positive experiences?
21. Have you witnessed a deep thirst for spiritual values among the young today? What are some of the characteristics?
22. Are we proud of "Being Asia"? What have been some of your experiences?
23. In reviewing our past, we note the absence of an appropriate adaptation to local cultures and a lack of preparedness to encounter the great religions of Asia. Why have we in the past looked upon the people of other faiths with fear? What do you think needs to be done in the future?
24. How much do Catholics really know about the life of Jesus; and are we serious about the imitation of His life in the modern world of Asia?
25. Has there been a proper catechesis to enable them to be evangelisers? Why? They may know how to practise their faith (fulfil obligations); but are they ready to be evangelisers and communicators of the faith?

C. Application to Life

26. What are your views on some of these issues that are also challenges for the Church in Asia today: process of development; materialism and secularism; urbanisation; migration; tourism; population growth; impact of the mass media; poverty and exploitation; the situation of women; the diverse political scenarios; and corruption at all levels.
27. What are some of the new and creative ways in which we as Church can be more actively involved in these areas of concern?
28. Share from your experience ways in which the Gospel values have been offered as alternatives to present-day poverty and injustices.

CHAPTER TWO JESUS THE SAVIOUR: A GIFT TO ASIA

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

29. What do you understand by "Being Church in Asia"?

30. What do you think is the unique contribution as Church to the people of Asia? What are the concrete signs of its results?
31. How is faith in Jesus related to the readiness of Catholics to offer Him as a gift to Asia?
32. What does it mean for Catholics to respond to God by bearing witness to the faith; and by living this out in genuine love and service? Why do we need to bridge this gap between our belief and how we live?
33. What is our understanding of Christology, Work of the Holy Spirit and a Communion for Mission?

B. Review of Our Lives

34. Do you think that we are ready as Church to offer Jesus, as Lord and Saviour? Do you think we are ready to be transformed by Jesus and His Gospel in every aspect of our lives? What are the main areas of renewal and transformation today for the Church in Asia?
35. Is there a reluctance to make Jesus known and loved, especially if it is too dangerous and difficult to stand up for the values of the Gospel of Jesus in Asia?
36. Do you think that the People of God are convinced of the power of Jesus to bring meaning to the people of Asia? Is it possible that they have not yet experienced Jesus in a personal way, and thus not claimed Jesus as Lord and Saviour? What do you think needs to be done?
37. Have our catechesis and formation led to personal renewal and greater sense of community today? What do you think has been lacking?
38. Has our personal prayer-lives created greater sense of mission in the Catholic Church today? Has it made us more responsible for the life of the Church? What do you think needs to be done?

C. Application to Life

39. How can we make Jesus known and loved in the context of Asia?
40. How can we bring about a more holistic formation of all in the Church in order to ensure renewal of all aspects of our lives?
41. How do you think our liturgical changes have touched our lives as Christians for mission? What changes need to be introduced to make the liturgy more meaningful for the lives of our people?
42. How can we promote greater liturgical renewal in the life of the Church?

CHAPTER THREE
THE HOLY SPIRIT: LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

43. What do we understand by the "newness and richness" of the Christian faith today? Are there models of "newness and richness" that we see within the Church today? What is the value of these in the Church today?
44. In a world of indifference and apathy (in the Church and in the world), what are the reasons offered for Christians as a community for involvement in the world? What is the relevance of the "God-Man who saves"?
45. What is the relationship between a personal and experiential understanding of Christ, and our active involvement in the mission of the Church?
46. How has Jesus brought new perspectives and insights into life today for you?
47. What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit as principal agent of creation; the Incarnation; in the mission of Jesus; in the world; and in other religions and cultures?
48. What is the relationship between the work of the Spirit and the call to the mission of Jesus through our lives?

B. Review of Our Lives

49. The Asian peoples are looking forward to examples in life. Have the faithful in the Church seen such models in their pastors and consecrated persons? Do they also see them as much immersed in the ways of the world as are the laity?
50. Can we communicate Jesus to the world of Asia, when Catholics themselves are not sure of the message of Christ in the context of the modern world? Who is to bring this message through the example of their lives?
51. Is there a gap between Scriptures and teachings of the Church and the actual knowledge of the ordinary Catholic today? What are some of the reasons for this?

C. Application to Life

52. What are some of the fruits of this inner conversion that people want to see in the Church today?
53. "God is not far away... This is the message which Christianity offers to the world; and it is a source of incomparable comfort and hope for all believers." How can people experience Jesus

- more fully, and thus claim Him as Lord and Saviour?
54. What do you think have been the main obstacles in bridging the gap between what we preach and how we live?

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS THE SAVIOUR: PROCLAIMING THE GIFT

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

55. What is your understanding of the "primacy of proclamation"?
56. What is the meaning of being rooted in the experience of God which flows from a living faith? How can this be attained?
57. What is a missionary spirituality of prayer; and how do we develop it?
58. What is the link between prayer and our mission of love and service in the context of Asia?

B. Review of Our Lives

59. Do you think that there is a reluctance for the "explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord" on the part of Catholics in Asia? What does explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord mean to you?
60. Is there a genuine openness to discovering this value in the cultures of our people? What do you think are the main obstacles and difficulties to this dialogue?
61. How can we renew our Biblical apostolate by making the courses more pastorally oriented, and thus enable the faithful to apply them to the complex realities of Asia?
62. Are Catholics today aware of the rich and dynamic nature of evangelisation in the context of Asia? What does it mean?
63. Is there a tendency to compromise the integrity of the faith? What basic issues do you think need to be addressed?

C. Application to Life

64. What is the pedagogy that is needed for the presentation of Jesus to the people of Asia?
65. "The Church must be open to the new and surprising ways in which the face of Jesus might be presented in Asia." What are some of the narrative methods, and the relational, historical and cosmic perspectives?
66. "The ministry of Jesus himself shows clearly the value of personal contact, which requires the evangeliser to take the situation of the listener to heart, so as to offer a proclamation adapted

- to the listener's level of maturity and in an appropriate form and language." What does this mean with reference to the formation of the People of God?
67. How can we ensure that the liturgy becomes an even greater source of nourishment for the faithful? Has our liturgy really touched the lives of our faithful?
 68. What do you think are effective forms of worship in the Asian context?
 69. How can the Bible be used for enhancing our religious experience? How can it be used more effectively and prayerfully among the members of the Church in Asia?
 70. What can we do to make the formation of evangelisers more effective in its style, methods and programmes in keeping with the Asian philosophical and religious traditions?
 71. How do you think our seminary staff can better understand elements of Asian spirituality and prayer forms?
 72. How can the spirituality and life styles of consecrated persons be sensitive to the religious and cultural heritage of people?
 73. How can we deepen the formation of the laity to enhance their role as evangelisers in the world? What are some of the steps and stages of formation that we need to implement?
 74. How do we enable all in the Church to be living witnesses to the message that they wish to proclaim?

CHAPTER FIVE COMMUNION AND DIALOGUE FOR MISSION

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

75. How is the call for communion in the Church related to our mission in the world?
76. How can Jesus and His teachings be the foundations for a new unity among the people of Asia?
77. The diocese is a "communion of communities" engaged in a dialogue of life and heart. What does this mean to you?
78. Do Catholics understand that to dialogue is an essential part of the Church's mission, because it has its origin in the Father's loving dialogue of salvation? Why?
79. What would be the ordinary Catholics views on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue? Has there been any confusion on this issue?
80. What is your understanding of the relationship between "explicit proclamation of Jesus as Saviour" and Interreligious dialogue in the context of Asia?

B. Review of Our Lives

81. Is there a need to examine our consciences, and seek reconciliations for a renewed commitment to dialogue? Why?
82. Is there a consciousness on the part of the Local Church of the need to recognise the situations of suffering members of the Church in the region? What have been some our contributions to them?
83. Dialogue is grounded in the logic of Incarnation and hopes to promote a fervent and unselfish solidarity with men and women of Asia who seek the truth in love. How do most Catholics view dialogue? Do you think that our "minority complex" makes us fearful of the world around us? What do you think needs to be done?
84. What are some of the challenges on the part of the Universal Church to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue for the Church in Asia?. How has this challenge been taken up by Catholics? What have been the reasons for our hesitance?
85. Have Catholics been taught this aspect of the Church's mission? What are the some of the reasons for this?

C. Application to Life

86. Have the dioceses and episcopal conferences explored the possibilities for the setting up of new ecumenical structures and associations? What do you think have been the reasons for this reluctance?
87. How do we promote greater unity at all levels in the Church? (universal, regional, national and local)
88. What steps do we need to take to become a participatory church?
89. How can pastors devise new and effective ways of shepherding the flock?
90. How can we develop basic ecclesial communities as the way to promoting communion and participation? Do we believe this is possible; and what needs to be done?
91. How can renewal movements take more effective role in the life of the Local Church?
92. What are some of the ways in which we can be in solidarity with Churches that are in difficult circumstances?
93. Are Catholics aware that divisions among Christians are a source of scandal and counter-witness to the people of Asia? What do you think needs to be urgently done by all in the Church?
94. How can consecrated persons more effectively communicate through their asceticism and mysticism a dialogue with people of other faiths?

95. What should people do to promote greater dialogue to remove prejudices and to engender trust? Do Catholics in Asia see interreligious dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus as contradictory? What have been your experiences in this area?

CHAPTER SIX THE SERVICE OF HUMAN PROMOTION

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

96. What is the relationship between the mission of love and service of Jesus and the task of building today a civilisation of love?
97. How are the universal values of peace, justice, solidarity and freedom related to the preaching of the Gospel?
98. What is your understanding of human promotion as an integral dimension of the mission of the Church? Why is there a lack of this understanding among Catholics today?
99. Are Catholics aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the link this has with the faith that we profess?
100. What does preferential love of the poor mean to us as Church in Asia?
101. What is the relationship between the task of human promotion in the world and our lives as Christians?
102. How is the service of human promotion linked to our life of prayer and the celebration of the Sacraments?

B. Review of Our Lives

103. How has loving service to the poor become part of the communion of life that is required of the Church in Asia? What have been the main obstacles?
104. Have we witnessed in the Church today the courage of a new solidarity for taking imaginative and effective steps to overcome dehumanising underdevelopment and the "overdevelopment" in Asia today?
105. Are Catholics aware of their responsibilities in the world and being concerned about the poor? What has been the task of the pastors and priests in this direction?
106. Do the faithful have a firm grasp of this precious body of teaching, and make it an integral part of their evangelising mission? What have been the main obstacles?
107. Have seminaries and houses of formation given a solid formation in the social doctrines of the Church? Why do you think there has been a reluctance to make this important part of the

faith known to the faithful?

108. Are we aware that all God's people in Asia need to face the challenges of being involved in the defense of human rights and the promotion of justice and peace? What have we done as Church in this direction?
109. Why is there an unwillingness to be in solidarity with the poor on the part of the Church? What is the relationship between being in solidarity with the poor, and living more simply, following the example of Christ?
110. What have been some of our conscious attempts to show our love for the poor, especially with migrants, indigenous peoples, women and children? What do you think have been the reasons for our reluctance?
111. How can the Church more visibly and effectively uphold women's dignity and freedom, and encourage their role in the Church's mission of love and service?
112. How can we create sufficient structures at all levels to look into more organised and effective approaches in our concerns for women?
113. What are some new strategies that can be adopted?

C. Application to Life

114. What are some of the serious concerns of women in Asia, as we work to promote their dignity and protect their rights? What do you think needs to be done?
115. Is there an appreciation of the importance of the feminine dimension in all things human? What are some of the steps that have been taken in this direction?
116. Is there a greater awareness that the service of human development begins with the service to life itself? What do you think can be done to promote the sanctity of life?
117. Share some of your experiences of new ways of promoting and living these in the Third Millennium?
118. What are your insights almost issues related to the following areas of concern: health care, education, peacemaking, globalisation, foreign debt and environment.
119. What do you think needs to be done to make "the joys and the hopes and the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor," part of the life of Catholics today?
120. What can be the specific roles of bishops and priests, consecrated persons, lay women and men and youth in particular, in the areas of human promotion?

CHAPTER SEVEN
WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

121. What is the meaning of being a Witnessing Church?
122. Why do you think that all the People of God are called to be missionaries? How can this truth be brought to all in the Church?
123. What does it mean to make the Christian family and the ecclesial community the most important means of being missionaries?
124. What does it mean, when we say that "Asian peoples are persuaded by the holiness of life"? What would be some examples of this?

B. Review of our Lives

125. How effective have we been as witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus in the context of Asia in the past 2000 years? What have been the major obstacles?
126. Why do you think that the first form of witness is the very life of the missionary? What have been the obstacles to the attainment of this end?

C. Application to Life

127. How can we be more effective missionaries in the context of Asia?
128. Every situation in life is an opportunity to witness to Jesus. What are some examples of this witness that you can recall?
129. What are some of the new and creative ways in which we can witness to the Gospel of Jesus in the context of Asia?
130. How can our lives be in harmony with the message we preach?

Role of Pastors

B. Review of Our Lives

131. Pastors are not just administrators but are concerned with the "deep things of the Spirit" and uprightness. What needs to be done to promote greater renewal of the role and witness of pastors?
132. How can pastors be better prepared as animators of a laity with a missionary zeal?

C. Application to Life

133. How can our pastors be in greater communion with Rome and with one another?
134. What are some of the areas of ongoing formation that are needed for renewal of pastors? How can these be effectively implemented?
135. How can we ensure that there is a proper formation of seminary staff for priestly spiritual formation, the art of spiritual direction, and other aspects of the education of future priests?

Consecrated Life and Missionary Societies

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

136. What is the link between consecrated life and mission, seen as rooted in the consecration to the Father?. How do consecrated persons convey this through their lives?
137. What is the role of monastic communities in the modern world?

B. Review of our Lives

138. The search for God, a life of fraternal communion, and service to others are the three chief characteristics of the consecrated life. Do consecrated persons offer an appealing Christian testimony to the people of Asia today?
139. How is our witnessing to Jesus in Asia reflected in the lives of consecrated persons in Asia today?

C. Application to Life

140. How do we in the context of Asia: improve our search for God, fraternal communion and service to others?
141. How can consecrated persons witness to the primacy of God and holiness in the context of Asia today?
142. What aspects of consecrated life do you think need to be renewed in individuals, in communities, and in their works?
143. How do we integrate consecrated life into the pastoral plans of the dioceses?
144. How can the Local Church promote vocations to the consecrated life?
145. How can we promote missionary societies of apostolic life in the Church today?

The Laity

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

146. What does it mean when we say that lay persons are called in a special way to spread the Gospel in the world?
147. What have been the main obstacles in our theological perspectives and pastoral orientations in the past? What do you think needs to be improved?

B. Review of our Lives

148. All lay people are missionaries, and are thus urged to move into the world of politics, economics, industry and education. To what extent have lay people assumed roles in society in order to root out injustices and oppression?
149. What has been the nature of the formation that they have been given by their pastors to assume this responsibility? What do you think have been done at all levels?
150. How has formation enabled the laity to become evangelisers? What have been the main obstacles? How can we more effectively promote in Asia the role of the laity?
151. Are there sufficient lay formation centres? How should they be initiated and managed?
152. Do men accept women as co-workers in the apostolate? How can this situation be improved?

C. Application to Life

153. What are some of the current works carried out by the laity in the various apostolates? What are some of the areas that need a more visible Catholic involvement?
154. How do we promote greater participation of women in the life of the Church? Have they been encouraged to take relevant courses about the Church?
155. What are some of the ways in which women can play a greater role in the life of the Church?
156. What is the specific contribution of women in the Church's mission of love and service in the context of Asia, especially the poor and marginalised?

The Family

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

157. What do you understand by the expression that in the Church the family is one of the most effective agent of evangelisation in the world of Asia?
158. What is the meaning of the family as the "domestic Church"?

B. Review of our Lives

159. What do you think is the importance of the family in the current social context? How can we create this greater awareness?
160. The family today is under serious threat from an array of forces. How has the Church helped the family?
161. Besides the family values of filial respect, care for the aged and the sick, love of children and harmony, what are the other family values that we need to promote?
162. Is the family today able to make moments of family interaction through prayer, Bible reading and reflection, and healthy recreation as means to enhancing the sense of being family?

C. Application to Life

163. What are the ways in which the family can foster greater involvement in the life of the parish?
164. What do you think is the role of children as evangelisers in the family and in the wider community? How can we promote this vocation in a conscious manner?

Young People

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

165. What is your understanding of the pastoral care of the young?

B. Review of Life

166. Has sufficient importance been given to the vital role of the young people in the life of the Church? What do you think have been the major obstacles?
167. Are young people today aware of their responsibility to the Church and to the world? What do you think are some of the obstacles?
168. Are young people today being offered proper pastoral care to

meet their needs? Have sufficient and properly-formed chaplains been appointed in this ministry?

C. Application to Life

169. Have we sufficiently welcomed the young to be also involved in the pastoral care of other youth? Do they see themselves as agents and co-workers?
170. Have Catholic schools and organised youth apostolates and clubs been given importance in the life of the Church in order to form true disciples and in being missionaries? How can these be strengthened?
171. Do we recognise the importance of youth as peacemakers in a divided world, and to fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue? What have been some of the examples of such new and creative initiatives?

Social Communication

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

172. What is the relationship between social communication and evangelisation?
173. What do you think is the new culture of media? What are some of its characteristics?

B. Review of our Lives

174. Are Catholics aware of the importance of social communication in the era of globalisation? What are some of the obvious impacts of the media on the life of the Church, especially the young?
175. Has there been a proper formation of priests, religious and laity in this area?
176. How can we ensure that spiritual and moral values are promoted in the media today? What can be the specific contributions of the Church?
177. What should be some essential elements of a pastoral plan for communication? What are some of its strengths and weaknesses?

C. Application to Life

178. How do we integrate the Gospel in the new culture of the media world today? What are some of the ways in which you have

- attempted to bring together Asian cultures and the values of the Kingdom in this area?
179. What are some of the urgent needs of social communication that the Church needs to address today in the context of Asia today?
 180. What are some of the programmes and activities of the diocesan and episcopal commissions for social communication? What effects have there been at the local and national levels?

The Martyrs

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

181. What is the role of the martyrs in the promotion of a greater sense of responsibility of the Church, as an eloquent proof of the power of the Lord's cross in the context of Asia today?

CONCLUSION

A. Theological Clarifications and Deepening

182. How do you think the wealth of Asian cultures, languages, traditions and religious diversity offers a path for greater peace in Asia? What do you think are our urgent and immediate tasks?

B. Review of our Lives

183. How do we understand the Lord's words, "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"? Are we as Christians in Asia eager to share the treasures of the Good News in the context of Asia?
184. The Church's presence in Asia is like yeast, which mixes with flour in a quiet and hidden way till it is all leavened. Are we aware of the hidden dimension and potential of the Church in Asia?

C. Application to Life

185. How do you think the Church in Asia can make her pilgrim way into the Third Millennium? What is required of us?
186. What does it mean for you to continue the mission of love and service of Jesus in Asia, so that all Asia may have life and have it abundantly?
187. How can the Church in Asia contribute to a more humanised Asia in the new millennium?

188. How can *Ecclesia in Asia* make a difference to the lives of the People of God in Asia?

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 - a. Church and Social Communication in Asia, by the FABC Office of Social Communication.
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 - c. A Renewed Church in Asia: In Solidarity with Women, by Virginia Saldanha.
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 - e. Continuing Formation for Priesthood in Asia, by Vicente Cajilig.
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- 72 f. Young Adults in a Renewed Church, with Jun Hashimoto and Aloysius Tan.
- g. A Mission of Love to the Family, with Sister Catherine Bernard Haliburn.

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- 93. A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and Service. The Final Statement of the Seventh Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops, 2000.
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