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(I)

DECREES

AND

PASTORAL LETTER

DECREE OF CONVOCAATION OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

After due consultations with the Council of Priests and other bodies at the diocesan level, I hereby decree that a Diocesan Synod is to be held and is to begin in the year 2000 (cf. cann. 461:1; 462:1).

The diocesan synod is an expression of the Church as the People of God, members of the faithful who are in communion with one another and who share, in a manner proper to each of them, in the threefold priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. Such a synod is an important instrument for the governing and renewal of a diocese, being “an assembly of selected priests and other members of Christ’s faithful of a particular Church which, for the good of the whole diocesan community, assists the diocesan bishop...” (cann. 460)

Motivated by the need to review the past and to meet the challenges of the Third Millennium, I have judged it opportune to convoke a Diocesan Synod. Thirty years have elapsed since my predecessor, the late Bishop Francis Hsu, convoked the *Diocesan Convention* (1969-71) – the first in the history of the Church of Hong Kong – to review the work of our diocese and bring it in line with the Second Vatican Council. I, for my part, had endeavoured to promote a Renewal Movement for priests and laity during the 1970s and the 1980s, basing it on the documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. Then, during the past ten years (1989-1999), we have been carrying out the various recommendations for pastoral care and evangelization as set forth in my Pastoral Exhortation “*March into the Bright Decade*” (Pentecost, 1989). Now, the moment has come to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the second five-year period (mid 1995-mid 2000). Yet, it is not sufficient for us to just look back at

the past. We are on the threshold of the Third Millennium. It is therefore incumbent on us, in communion with the universal Church, to undergo self-renewal and to plan for the coming new era, to see in what way we can most effectively and fruitfully carry on our mission of spreading and bearing witness to the Good News of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in Hong Kong, paying particular attention to the recommendations of the recent Synod of Bishops for Asia.

The forthcoming Diocesan Synod, therefore, will be both a review of the past and a planning for the future. It will proceed according to the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* (cann. 462-468) and the “*Instruction on Diocesan Synods*” (promulgated jointly by the Congregation of Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on 19 March 1997). In accordance with the “*Instruction*”, I hereby appoint a Preparatory Committee for the Diocesan Synod, whose role is spelt out in Part III, B of the “*Instruction*” and whose members are as follows, effective 15 October 1999:

Rev. Dominic CHAN, VG, Chairman
Rev. Francesco CONTE, PIME
Rev. Savio HON, SDB
Rev. Francis LAU
Rev. Thomas LAW
Rev. Francis TSE
Sr. Bernadette WOO, SPB
Ms. Pauline CHENG
Mr. Anthony NG

The Preparatory Committee will be assisted by an Executive Secretary, Miss Mary SEUNG.

The details of the various stages of the Diocesan Synod, the procedures for electing the participants, the channels for communicating with the faithful, individually or as a group, to submit recommendations, etc., will be announced in due course through the Diocesan Weeklies and by other appropriate means.

I earnestly invite all members of the faithful, clergy, religious and lay people, to give your full support to this significant event of our diocese, and by your prayers, collective insights and active participation, contribute towards making it a success.

Given at the Bishop's Office,

Feast of St. Teresa of the Infant Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, 1999.



+ JOHN B. CARD. WU
Bishop of Hong Kong

REV. LAWRENCE LEE
Chancellor

胡振中樞機
香港主教



CARDINAL JOHN B. WU
BISHOP OF HONG KONG

Given at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Hong Kong, on the thirtieth day of December, Feast of the Holy Family, in the year of Our Lord, 2001.

DECREE FOR THE CLOSING OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

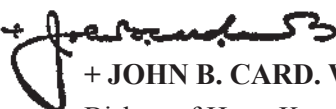
On 1 October 1999 I convoked a Diocesan Synod. Seven major areas were chosen for discussion, namely, the formation of the laity and lay ministry, youth ministry, social concerns, evangelization (Ad Gentes), marriage and family life, education and culture, and the vocation and ongoing formation of diocesan priests.


Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, lay people, religious and the clergy, representing the People of God in Hong Kong, took an active part in the Synodal sessions with an open-minded attitude, discernment and collective insights. Having reviewed the past, reflected on the present situation of our Diocese, and with a view to meeting the future pastoral needs of the Diocese in the social setting of Hong Kong, the Synodal members painstakingly drafted recommendations which were then passed as Synodal resolutions.

With heartfelt gratitude and profound appreciation I accept the above resolutions, which are presented to me today as the fruit of months of hard work. I shall take them into due consideration in drawing up a new ten-year pastoral plan for the Diocese to be announced in the first half of the coming year.

All related matters having been dealt with, I, as the Bishop of Hong Kong, solemnly declare that on this day the Diocesan Synod is hereby officially concluded.

May the Lord continue to bless and protect us.


+ JOHN B. CARD. WU
Bishop of Hong Kong


REV. DOMINIC CHAN, V.G.
Moderator, Coordinating Committee
of the Diocesan Synod

DECREE

PROMULGATION OF THE SYNODAL DELIBERATIONS AND PASTORAL PRIORITIES

The Hong Kong Diocesan Synod was held from 4 March 2000 to 30 December 2001. During the Synodal sessions, the Plenary Assembly passed seven deliberations, dealing with Faith Formation of the Laity and Lay Ministry, Youth Pastoral Care, Social Concern, Evangelization (Ad Gentes), Marriage and Family Pastoral Care, Education and Culture, and the Vocation and Continuing Formation of Diocesan Priests. The Plenary Assembly also passed 177 concrete proposals. By virtue of the jurisdiction that Canon Law grants to diocesan Bishops, I hereby promulgate the foregoing deliberations and proposals as the Synodal Document, and mandate that they be “Pastoral Guidelines” for our Diocese in the coming 10 years.

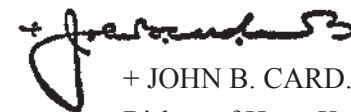
During the Synod, I appointed independently an Ad Hoc Committee for the Evaluation of Pastoral Ministry to Foreigners. This Committee presented to me a set of proposed “Guidelines for Pastoral Ministry to Non-Chinese Speaking People”. I hereby approve and promulgate them together with the above-mentioned Synodal Document.

Further, the Plenary Assembly selected, by voting, ten pastoral priorities out of the 177 concrete proposals, focusing on: Faith Formation (Proposals 4, 6, 15 and 84), Pastoral Care of Young People in Parishes and Schools (Proposals 32 and 148), Marriage and Family Pastoral Care (Proposals 116 and 133), Year of

Evangelization (Proposal 111) and the Establishment of a Catholic University (Proposal 164). I hereby set these ten priorities apart as the main objectives of our Diocese for the coming 10 years.

I will issue a Pastoral Letter on the implementation of the Synodal proposals and priorities.

Given at the Bishop’s Office,
Nativity of Our Lady, 2002.



+ JOHN B. CARD. WU
Bishop of Hong Kong



REV. LAWRENCE LEE
Chancellor

“Love life, the gift of God!”

Pastoral Letter of His Eminence Cardinal John Baptist Wu to the People of God in Hong Kong

Presenting the fruit of the Hong Kong Diocesan Synod

(4 March 2000 – 30 December 2001)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

(1) Historical Background

Looking back on the last thirty years of our Diocese’s history, we sense the continual care of the Holy Spirit. Thirty years ago, Bishop Francis Hsu summoned the first Diocesan Synod (called the Diocesan Convention). This created an opportunity for the whole Diocese to be united in a serious study of the deliberations of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and having in view the concrete local situation, to decide the right direction for the pastoral work and evangelization effort of the Diocese.

Since I took up the office of Bishop of this Diocese in 1975, it has been my constant concern to promote the renewal of the clergy and the formation of the faithful, making use of the reflections of the different pastoral themes of the Federation of Asian Bishop’s Conferences. In 1989, after thorough consultation and research, I issued a pastoral letter on the day of Pentecost, calling everyone in the Diocese to cultivate the spirit of reconciliation and to build

small communities of faith, in order to “March into the Bright Decade”. After five years the Diocese made an evaluation of the progress of the programme and issued an interim report.

At the beginning of the New Millennium, under the valiant leadership of the Holy Father, the faithful the world over enthusiastically accepted the new challenge. We, the Church in Hong Kong, were no exception. On 1 October 1999, after having consulted with the Priests’ Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council and Board of Diocesan Consultors, I convoked a Diocesan Synod and appointed a Preparatory Committee. The Instruction promulgated by the Holy See in 1997 regarding the celebration of a Diocesan Synod gave the basic orientation to the preparatory work. The Committee worked efficiently and prepared a “Directory” for the Synod. Finally on 4 March 2000, the Diocesan Synod, which lasted one year and ten months, formally opened.

(2) Privileged Situation

We must thank the Lord for the celebration of the Diocesan Synod, because “all that is good, everything that is perfect, is given us from above” (Jas 1:17). Hong Kong returned to the sovereignty of the Motherland, and we are proud to be Chinese and Catholics, but among so many dioceses in China only we, in the Diocese of Hong Kong, are privileged to enjoy full communion with the Universal Church, and with our leader the Pope, and only we are able to hold such an Assembly with full freedom of speech, of gathering and of activity. Is this not a very special grace from God?

The means of transportation in our Diocese are so efficient that we can easily gather in one place from all corners of the city. This is also a fortunate situation not easily found elsewhere.

(3) Aim of the Synod

We have a well-organised and efficient structure of governance in our Diocese. We are in a position to face problems which occur as they arise: e.g., the need to amalgamate parishes, to promote social concern groups in the parishes etc. This Diocesan Synod was not convened to solve any particular problem. Rather, its aim has been to reach consensus, at the beginning of the new millennium, on pastoral priorities and, in the process, to foster internal cohesion in our community, thus making more visible the reality of the Mystical Body of Christ.

(4) Methodology

With this aim in view, we devised a methodology and a way of proceeding. Once the body of members of the Synod had been formed, according to a composition proposed by the Preparatory Committee, and approved by my authority, the members, either ex officio or elected, were to assume the whole responsibility for the Synodal work, moving, so to speak, from the bottom to the top. They were given a choice as to what topics to discuss, and in which drafting group to participate. The Preparatory Committee was then to present the format for the drafts each group had to prepare. The content of the drafts, however, was to be left entirely to the members of each group to create, collectively. The work was not to be delegated to one or a few experts.

Two open forums gave an opportunity to all the faithful to discuss the drafts and make suggestions. In that way, we would have a second draft and a third draft. Only the last draft would become the *Instrumentum laboris*, i.e. the materials on which the Plenary Assembly would work. Our conviction is: the Spirit of God

bestows his gifts on the whole of the People of God.

Of course, it is my duty to lead the Diocese. According to Church Law all the deliberations of the Synod are of a consultative nature only, but it is precisely with the light coming from all the Synod members, and from all the faithful, that I most confidently come to give a direction to the pastoral and evangelization work of our Diocese.

(5) Fruits of the Synod – Communion of Spirits

Our conviction has been confirmed and our expectations more than realised. Our Synod witnessed the truth of St Paul's words: "The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose...a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all those parts, though many, make one body... one spirit was given to us all to drink." (1 Cor 12:7; 12-13). Two hundred brothers and sisters in Christ, with very different backgrounds, representing various categories, prayed together, listened to each other, reflected and planned. A beautiful scene out of the primitive Church unfolded before our eyes.

I want to express my most sincere thanks to many people: to the members of the Preparatory Committee, whose low profile but very efficient work gave the Synod a good start; to the Coordinating Committee, made up of members of the Presidency and the chairpersons of the drafting groups, who along the way provided wise and timely clarifications and made adjustments to procedural matters; to all the members of the Synod, who so generously gave their time and energy. I could perceive that every one listened to "what the Spirit is saying to the Church". (Rev. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22)

I was delighted to see realized in our Synodal members the spirit that Blessed Pope John XXIII hoped to find in the Bishops of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: “Serenity of heart, brotherly harmony, moderation in proposing, dignity in discussing and wisdom in deliberating”.

As I present to the people of God the conclusions of the Synod, I can most confidently declare: this is what “has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves”. (Acts 15:28). All this was made possible, I am sure, by the prayers of all the faithful, especially by our Brothers and Sisters in the contemplative communities. To them goes our deepest gratitude. Faithful to the ecumenical spirit we invited ten representatives from other Christian Communities to witness our Synodal work. Their presence and encouraging messages were an extra blessing of God to us.

(6) Fruits of the Synod – Pastoral Guidelines

The Preparatory Committee listed 13 topics. The Synod members were to choose the ones they wished to discuss. These topics were taken from different sources (Note 1). The Synod members showed preference for 7 of the 13 topics and I accepted them as the Synod’s agenda (Note 2). Then, again, respecting the personal preferences of each one (their first choice or, at least, second choice) I constituted the seven drafting groups. The hard work of the groups produced the 7 drafts which were discussed, voted upon and approved by the Plenary Assembly as Synodal Deliberations.

Each Draft was made of three parts: “Reflection on the Situation”, “Basic Principles” and “Concrete Recommendations”.

Obviously the most important are the “recommendations”. A total of 177 recommendations were voted upon, one by one, and approved by the Synod Assembly. But the “Reflection on the Situation” and the “Basic Principles” must not be overlooked. The former helped to identify the problems and the latter supplied the foundations for our deliberations.

With a Decree dated today, I have officially promulgated the Synodal deliberations contained in the 7 drafts with the 177 Concrete Recommendations, and declared that they be our “Diocesan Pastoral Guidelines” for the coming decade.

Parallel to the Synod, thanks to the pastoral concern of the Major Superiors of Religious Men, an “Ad Hoc Committee for Evaluation of Pastoral Care for Foreigners” compiled a draft “Guidelines for the pastoral work for non-Chinese speaking people”. I have integrated these into the Synod conclusions and declared them also to be “Diocesan Pastoral Guidelines”.

Are there not too many deliberations and guidelines? Some may question: who among the brothers and sisters in the Church will be able to absorb all this material thoroughly? Actually, everybody should have a general knowledge of all the deliberations. In that way, each person and each group or community can select what is most pertinent to their status and role, study those materials more deeply and put them into practice.

(7) Priorities

To achieve a more visible internal cohesion, Synod members were invited to indicate 10 priorities out of 177 deliberations. Numbers 4, 6, 15, 32, 84, 111, 116, 133, 148, and 164 were chosen. I deeply admire the wisdom of the Synod members: these ten are

really the most important of all the deliberations. I recognise them as the top priorities for pastoral guidelines.

In analysing these ten points with the Board of Consultors, we noticed a difference between them: two may be qualified as transitory (A), and eight as of a more permanent nature (B).

(A) Deliberations of transitory nature:

a) Year of Evangelization (No. 111)

Its fruit, surely, will last a long time, but the celebration proper of the year is limited in time. I think its preparatory committee should be convened by our Central Council of Laity and the planning and coordination work should start as soon as possible.

b) Setting up of a Catholic University (No. 164)

This is a huge enterprise needing everybody's attention, and the encouragement, support and supervision of the Diocesan authority. An "Ad Hoc Committee" will bring forward the project.

(B) The eight others of a more permanent nature may be grouped into three categories:

a) Marriage and Family (No. 116 and No. 133)

No. 116 points to the goal: "conscientisation of the faithful". The current mentality in society regarding marriage and family is so far removed from what God expects, that without a well-developed formation programme, the faithful will easily fall victims of the prevailing worldly mentality.

No. 133 states that the Diocese set up a "Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family" to coordinate and harmonise those groups and institutions which already exist and operate in the Diocese. A detailed list of things to be done is also suggested. This is the only permanent Commission that the Diocesan Synod requested to set up. We are reluctant to multiply commissions, but this one seems absolutely necessary. The list of the commission members is about to be announced.

b) Parish Youth Pastoral Worker and School Pastoral Worker (No. 32 and No. 148, cf. also No. 46)

These two deliberations demand some full-time worker for youth pastoral work, but the wider meaning is obvious: the need to stress the importance of this work. I am very pleased to see that the Diocesan Youth Commission and the Catholic Education Office are already actively engaged in initiatives aimed at the realisation of these deliberations.

c) Faith Formation

No. 15 mentions the need to reinforce formation activities, and proposes the establishment of formation teams in parishes for the planning and coordination of formation activities.

No. 6 and No. 4 suggest that two particularly favourable ambiances for faith formation are the catechumenate and the small communities of faith.

No. 84 provides an essential dimension of faith formation, that of the prophetic role of social concern: this actually reconfirms what the Diocese has been particularly promoting in recent years, i.e. the defense of social justice and human rights. I do hope that through the flourishing parish social concern groups, our faithful, following the example of the present-day Pope, may even more widely and more courageously play this prophetic role.

Faith formation is mainly carried out in the parishes, but obviously it needs support from Diocesan formation agencies. Thank God our Diocese is equipped with an enviable abundance and variety of such formation agencies (Note 3). The Synodal deliberation shall certainly give a new impetus to all these.

At the beginning of the year, I appointed a “working committee” to draft a five-year plan for putting into practice the deliberations listed in (B). On 15 April 2002, the Committee presented me with the fruit of their work, including those parts which are very detailed. I will give this plan to all people concerned, in order that they may avail themselves of this instrument freely.

(8) Over-all Vision

Not a few of the delegates had asked me to give a guiding vision to the Synod work. Of course, one possible way of working could have been for the Bishop to give a direction and have the

delegates draw concrete implications from this. We had opted, however, for the method “from the bottom to the top”. We favoured obtaining a general direction from the priority guidelines deliberated by the delegates under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So we reflected on the above three priority topics and tried to find, especially in the Bible, a synthetic idea, which would bind the three topics in a unity. We believe we have found this concept: Life. You may remember that the theme of the Synod of Bishops’ Assembly for Asia given by the Holy Father was precisely the quotation from St. John’s Gospel, “that they may have life and have it abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

In recent years, the Holy Father more than ever has launched the campaign in favour of the Gospel of life against the culture of death.

In Hong Kong also, facing the upsurge of suicides, people who care for the society appeal to everybody to treasure their life. So we can formulate the main message of our Diocesan Synod as: Let us treasure God’s gift: life, an abundant life!

- a) Marriage and Family: life blossoms and bears fruit in love, and new lives are born in the warmth of the family and protected by the love of those who know how to sacrifice themselves.
- b) Youth Pastoral: parish and school come to the aid of the family for the healthy growth of the young lives.
- c) Faith Formation: brings life back to its origin, into the sphere of the divine, to be the salt of the earth and light to the world in this society which seems to have lost its direction.

(9) Execution and Monitoring

The responsibility for putting into practice the Synod deliberations belongs to everybody in the Diocese. The

responsibility for promotion falls on the existing executive and consultative diocesan organisms, plus the new commission for Marriage and Family. In the coming years my contact with these organisations will aim mainly at the execution of the Synod conclusions.

After consultation with the Priests' Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, I shall also appoint a "Monitoring Commission", which will watch the pace of the execution of the Synod conclusions. This commission will include: the three lay members of the Presidency of the Synod, one priest to be nominated by the Priests members of the Synod, one religious woman to be nominated by the religious women who were members of the Synod, one representative of the faithful from the parishes and one from Diocesan organisations or from lay associations nominated from delegates to the Synod from those categories.

The term of office of the said commission will be five years. Each year the commission will publish a summary report, and a full report at the end of the five-year period. I am confident that the members of the commission will work with the same dedication they displayed during the Synod, that they will fulfill their duty objectively and positively.

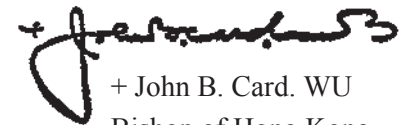
(10) Commitment and Confidence

Dear Brothers and Sisters, looking back we must wholeheartedly thank the Lord, because during the Diocesan Synod He has really "worked great things in us" (cf. Lk 1:49). The Archangel told Tobit, "It is right to keep the secret of a King, yet right to reveal and publish the works of God" (Tob 12:7). The conclusions of the Synod are for us both a grace from God and a

new challenge. A wonderful pastoral plan is before our eyes, now it is time we take up our commitment.

Our first reaction may be fear and hesitation. Is not the Diocese experiencing a dire lack of clergy? Is not Hong Kong society shadowed by pessimism and helplessness because of the economic and political situation? Yes, this is true. From a human perspective we should be afraid of not being up to the task. But, through the Holy Father, Our Lord is telling us: "Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch!" (Lk 5:4) (Novo Millennio Ineunte). Let us obey the Lord's command, and put our trust in Him. "Apart from Christ we can do nothing" (Jn 15:5); the power of the Holy Spirit is our strength.

The Patroness of our Diocese, Mary, Our Mother, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the "New Star of Evangelization", will protect us and lead us, so that like the servants who waited at the wedding of Cana, we may do whatever Her Son tells us to do. Let us run enthusiastically toward the goal set before us, in order to reap abundant fruit from our Diocesan Synod, so that our Diocese may be more dynamically missionary and hasten the coming of the Kingdom of justice, love, peace and hope in Hong Kong, in our Motherland, and in the whole world.



+ John B. Card. WU
Bishop of Hong Kong

Nativity of Our Lady, 2002

- Note 1:
- (1) The Acts of the “Diocesan Convention” (1970-1971);
 - (2) The pastoral letter “March into the Bright Decade” and the interim report on it;
 - (3) Kung Kao Po’s survey on the 10 top priorities (23 May 1999 issue);
 - (4) Ideas collected during the day-seminar for Priests and Religions (18 June 1999);
 - (5) The Message to the People of God from the Synod of the Bishops-Assembly for Asia and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Ecclesia in Asia”.

- Note 2:
- (1) “Faith Formation of the Laity and Lay Ministry”.
 - (2) “Youth Pastoral Care” later changed to “Youth and Young Teenage Pastoral Care”.
 - (3) Social Concern.
 - (4) “Evangelization” later changed to “Evangelization (Ad Gentes)”.
 - (5) “Family Pastoral Care” later changed to “Marriage and Family Pastoral Care”.
 - (6) Education and Culture.
 - (7) “The Vocation and the Continuing Formation for the Clergy” later changed to “The Vocation and continuous Formation for the Diocesan Priests”.

- Note 3: Holy Spirit Seminary College offers courses in Philosophy and Theology and in religious studies.
 Courses in various aspects of religion are also offered at the Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute, the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, Caritas Francis Hsu College and the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.
 Courses and seminars are often organised by Diocesan Office for Laity Formation, by the Central Council of Catholic Laity, the Diocesan Youth Commission, and Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Associations.
 In addition there are publications, conferences and seminars initiated by the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and Diocesan Commission for Labour Affairs.
 There are retreats and study sessions organised by lay associations and non-diocesan organisations.

(II)

DOCUMENTS OF THE GROUPS

Group One – Faith Formation of the Laity and Lay Ministry

PROLOGUE

It is a great gift to be able to become children of God, to receive His grace gratuitously, and to follow Christ. At the same time, it is equally important to be able to continuously experience His merciful love and providence, to thank and praise Him and to grow in faith unceasingly. Here lies the basis of formation of the laity. However, for us who are children of God, the greatest tragedy is to feel unfamiliar with the centre of our faith: God. As a consequence, we cannot be recognized as Christians, and our faith has become irrelevant for our daily lives, so much so that there is no difference between us and the non-baptized. In reality, each one of us who is baptized in Christ is called to sanctity, that is to say, God has invited us His adopted children to become like Him. Therefore, the foundation of sanctity is the integration of faith and daily living. This is the most important step for us Christians towards maturity. Christ invites us and calls us to walk on the path of sanctity in this world.

1. REFLECTION ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

1.1 At the Personal Level

- a. The outstanding characteristic of the faithful is their being in the world, i.e. living in the secular world, fulfilling the will of God and His plan, and relentlessly striving for the sanctification of

themselves and of others. Many faithful continuously strive to live up to their faith, to fulfil their Christian duties by participating in the Eucharistic celebration on Sundays and obtaining nourishment through the liturgy, by fulfilling their duties as good citizens, and by carrying out their roles in the family and in their workplaces.

- b. Although most faithful have fulfilled their duties in all circumstances of their lives, due to great temptations, challenges and attacks of various forms coming from daily lives and the present world, it is not sufficient to counter these attacks simply by fulfilling their duties and to reach sanctity in daily lives and to carry out the mission of Christians.
- c. For most Christians who receive formation, the major goal is personal growth in faith, and not so much the idea of forming a Christian community or carrying out their Christian mission. Most formation courses also seem to emphasize the knowledge of faith but less weight is put on the integration of faith and Christian living or the mission of building up Christian communities. On the other hand, many faithful are not interested in the formation of one's spiritual life.
- d. There are three hundred and eighty thousand Catholics (including Chinese and foreigners) in Hong Kong, but only about seventy odd thousand of Chinese Catholics participate in Sunday masses. This figure has remained the same for many years

without increasing or diminishing. In reality, there are more than a thousand baptisms of adults and infants each year, which means that quite a number of faithful, due to various reasons, after being baptized for a period of time, gradually drop out, stay away from the Church and forget their Christian identity, although keeping their faith in their hearts (note 1).

- e. Some of the faithful after baptism have no idea about life-long formation in faith, so that their contact with the Church and faith depend totally on the fulfillment of duty of Sunday Mass. They do not participate in the community life of the Church, rendering their faith irrelevant to their daily life experience.
- f. Some Christians tend to follow individual clergy when carrying out their ministry in the Church and do not have a clear vision of their mission and meaning of service. Thus, whenever there is a change of clerical pastors, it results in a lack of coordination and disillusion.
- g. Some Christians organize themselves according to their interests and professions, and render their contribution to the Church, e.g. through drama, dance, music composition etc. They render services to the Church according to their specializations, and take part in some public events of evangelization or diocesan conferences.
- h. Some Christians set up associations or companies duly registered with the Government, in order to

draw on more resources and strength for the service of the Church. They hire employees, rent their own centres, and provide services for their Christian members and other faithful. This demonstrates a growing awareness in some Christians who seek recognition and an area of service within and outside the Church, in order to live up to the ideal and mission of faith.

- i. There is an increasing number of Christians who after retirement, work even more energetically in the Church. Without the burden of a job, with ample time at their own disposal, and enriched by their administrative work nature and life experience, their services to the Church are given due recognition and growing in importance.
- j. A small number of Christians who have accepted greater challenges, have left their jobs and gone to foreign countries as missionaries.

1.2 At the Parish Level

- a. Other than fulfilling the ministry of kingship, priesthood and prophet in their living environment, the faithful participate even more actively in different ministries of Church life, e.g. the ministry in the liturgy. At present, in every parish, there are quite a number of the faithful taking part in various liturgical ministries, enabling the smooth carrying out of the liturgy, actualizing co-responsibility and the spirit of communion between laity and clergy. On the other hand, some Christians are very much

committed to other areas of Church life, rendering it lively and energetic.

- b. Individual communities provide periodic training activities or courses for their members or other faithful, and may partly open their courses for other interested Christians.
- c. Joining the Church through baptism means joining a community. However, since the parish community is often too big, it cannot effectively carry out the role of community support and sharing. Cardinal Wu has mentioned in his pastoral letter “March into the Bright Decade” in 1989, the function of small Christian communities, hoping that these could be widely spread at all levels in the diocese. After their baptism, the faithful should join a suitable small community, so as to maintain and develop their faith. In an atmosphere of mutual support, through the sharing of the Word, members of these communities grow and mature. The similar background of the members could be a greater help for the forming of these communities, e.g. Christian family communities and Christian neighbourhood communities etc. But most faithful are not aware of the importance of small Christian communities in the formation of faith, and as a consequence, there is still a big gap between actual commitment and participation in these communities and what was advocated in the pastoral letter. Christian faith that lacks community support is often watered down and homogenized by secular values, resulting in the

departure from the Church. On the other hand, small Christian communities face all sorts of difficulties, e.g. lacking the force of consolidation, lay leadership, materials for meetings, appropriate support, and support from the clergy etc., and tend to end up in a stalemate.

- d. By taking part in the sacraments, we can encounter God. Therefore liturgy becomes the climax and spring of living faith. In the liturgy, we can offer our successes and failures, joys and sorrows on the altar of Christ, asking for His acceptance and receiving consolation. But quite often, the liturgy becomes mere ritual. Most faithful participate in it only because of duty, without understanding its meaning or the relationship between the liturgy and their lives. In addition, in the liturgy of the Word during Eucharistic celebration, some priests are unable to point out the deep link between the Word and daily living, so that the lives of the faithful receive no nourishment, lacking the strength and support to reach maturity.
- e. The ministry of the faithful in the Church is mostly task-orientated, offering one's time to serve the Church. However, this conveys an impression that joining a Christian association is to complete a task. Gradually, after a few years of commitment in parish work, the faithful feel tired, lacking the energy to deepen their faith.
- f. Although there is a division of labor among different ministries in the Church, there is a lack of

cooperation, exchange, sharing and communion. Some tend to concentrate only on their own tasks, and overlook the need of coordination and communion with other ministries.

- g. Parish priests and parish pastoral councils usually have a very close working relationship, but parish council members too easily turn their ministry into tasks, relying solely on their personal enthusiasm, and lacking community coordination, support and reflection on faith and its experience. Thus after a few years, they show signs of fatigue and helplessness. Sometimes parish priests may not do what they can to establish a close cooperative relationship with parish councils.
- h. With regard to courses and activities on Christian formation, the deployment of resources in this area is often proportionately less than recreational activities, such as the feast day of the parish's patron saint or parish picnic. At the same time, the nature of parish associations tends towards carrying out of tasks and services. In this way, the faithful cannot get their spiritual formation and nourishment through the parish activities, and therefore, are unable to integrate their reflections on life and respond effectively to the various challenges of daily life.

1.3 At the Diocesan Level

- a. At present, there are various courses, activities and seminars for formation, which aim at integrating

faith and daily living, and are helpful for the experience and maturation of faith. On the other hand, in various small communities of faith, members are able to support and sanctify one another through the sharing of the Word and experience.

- b. Every year, numerous graduates of the Holy Spirit Seminary College (Institute of Theology and Philosophy and Institute of Religious Sciences) and also of the Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute become human resource assets for the Diocese.
- c. In the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, catechetical teaching courses are offered every year, and up until now there are already a few thousand people who have finished these courses, and are serving as voluntary catechists and Sunday school teachers in parishes.
- d. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission has also provided a systematic formation programme for lectors, ministers of the Eucharist and choir members etc.
- e. The Central Council of Catholic Laity also accepts invitations from parishes to provide training for parish staff or members of associations. At the same time, in its council meetings, sharing on special themes takes place every two months in order to provide appropriate formation for parish council members attending the meeting. Recently it has run training courses on 'Christian house-steward' with parish council members

and leaders of associations as their intended clientele.

- f. There is a lack of balance in the strategy of the pastoral work of the diocese. Most of the resources are invested in those one fourth of Christians who are comparatively active and who go to church frequently, while the other three quarters of those "lukewarm" Christians who after being baptized as infants or at school but have now disappeared, or who as adults left the Church after baptism, are actually ignored by the diocese. There is a lack of strategy and system to actively search for and follow up on these faithful.
- g. With regard to the distribution of resources, it seems that the diocese has overlooked those who can provide direct formation for the laity by hiring more full or part time laymen.
- h. With regard to pastoral work, it seems that there is no immediate, mid- term or long term policy, direction or follow-up plans for the formation of the laity on the part of the diocese. As a consequence, resources are not well utilized. Even though there are pastoral goals like the one mentioned in the pastoral letter "March into the Bright Decade", such as: the building up of small Christian communities, and the ones mentioned in the mid-term review of the pastoral letter, such as: evangelization, developing the kingdom of God, there is an impression that all these efforts provide only meagre results at the moment and that they

rely on various pastors and faithful who have identified themselves with these goals. Therefore, it is difficult for them to take root in ordinary lives and to foster the maturation of faith of Christians.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES

2.1 God is Love: God the Father, Creator

One of the special characteristics of religion is to reply to humanity's search for the ultimate and the ultimate meaning of human life. Those who believe in Christ, deeply believe that out of His love, God has created the visible world. God is immanent in all; and in His transcendence, He embraces and envelops all things at the same time. If alienated from the earth, humans cannot wholeheartedly sing Psalm 96:1: "Sing Yahweh a new song! Sing to Yahweh, all the earth! Sing to Yahweh, bless his name." The human understanding and expression of faith in and worship of God are also reliant on all creation. Humans are part and parcel of the earth community. They have a communal destiny with the earth, in a common movement of ebb and flow.

The formation of the laity includes formation of and emphasis on a consciousness and understanding of the "earth community", keeping in mind that humans and other creatures together form a pluralistic community. This diversity in community will manifest more fully the mystery of the Trinitarian God, humans and all creation praising God in unison (Ps. 148, 19, 96, etc.): "All the earth sing to God in praise!"

The Trinitarian God has placed the divine nature of plurality in unity into His creation. Looking at it from this viewpoint will help us to be more aware that the gospel is to be brought to all of creation, ultimately arriving at the state of a new heaven and new earth: "Go to the whole world; proclaim the good news to all creation." (Mk. 16:15)

2.2 God is Love: God the Son, Redeemer

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life." (Jn. 3:16)

The basic journey of Christ in the world was to come from the Father and to return to the Father, giving up his last breath on the cross: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. With these worlds he breathed his last." (Lk. 23:46) His whole life was to offer up himself and his life in accordance with the plan of God for the sake of redeeming humankind on the path towards a new heaven and new earth. He came to give life, life to the full (Jn. 10:10).

Jesus has thus brought a breakthrough and become the new Adam. His life was not to be closed in on himself but to offer up himself. Catholics need to learn to tread the same path of returning to the Father the "breath of life" (Gen. 2:7) that He had given them, offering up their own lives with Christ for the sake of building up and participating in the Kingdom of God. The formation of the faith of the laity is to build an intimate personal life relationship with Christ.

2.3 God is Love: God the Holy Spirit, Sanctifier

The vitality of life and growth in faith comes from the fountain and dynamism within our depths. The gospel reading of the Eucharistic celebration at the opening of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Synod made precisely this point:

“On the last day and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood there and cried out: ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me!’ As scripture says, From his breast shall flow fountains of living water. He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive.” (Jn. 7:37-39)

The formation of the faith of the laity is to help the faithful to come in touch with and to experience the living fountain within themselves and to allow this living fountain to lead them along in their lives, bringing into lively play the love and wisdom latent in the depths of their souls.

2.4 The Trinity’s nature of diversity and oneness

In His oneness, God is not solitary or confined to uniformity. By nature, God is a pluralistic whole and a relationship of diversity. God is not a solitary whole but a community, an integral community and life filled with an interactive energy of love. This basic nature of God has been placed within all that God has created, within humans and within the whole of creation. Each created

thing is not a thing standing in isolation. Created things have a mutual and intimate connection in interactive relationship and evolving growth. The relationship among humans reflects the nature of the Trinitarian God.

Maintaining relationship is also a natural need of human beings. When a relationship is broken, there is a need to repair and rebuild it so that mutual respect is a characteristic of the community. Respect for the uniqueness, the interior potential and human dignity of each person, would lead to the community emphasizing plurality and diversity, allowing for the unfolding of a fuller richness, all the more resembling the communitarian essence of the Trinitarian God.

2.5 Discovering the needs of 21st century human life and the required answers and methods through an insight into the Trinitarian God

Faith formation is to help the laity to come to understand that the interior fullness of the life of the Trinitarian God is the foundation of our very essence, how God becomes manifest in the world, and how God is connected with the method and basis of the operational process of life. From within this prospective, we will be able to discover the human needs of the 21st century and the required answers and methods.

The Church and educators need to have a discerning eye relevant to the times and learn to perceive the pastoral needs of Catholics of the present era.

2.6 Faith is the experience of responding to the call of God

The journey of faith of personalities in the Bible has been a continual response to the call of God. Mary's typical response was: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me." (Lk. 1:38)

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus said: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine." (Lk. 22:42) Through baptism we are freed from sin, reborn as children of God, become members of the Body of Christ, share its mission. Therefore, we are the Church (note 2). God is the source and fullness of abundant life, and Christ Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Only by establishing a deep and permanent relationship with Him, are we able to face in peace all the challenges and difficulties of the world, to affirm Christian values in the midst of value confusion through love and service in our daily lives, to sanctify ourselves and others, and fulfill the Christian mandate of becoming salt and light. (note 3)

2.7 Faith is a journey; formation is life-long and unending

Starting from the catechumenate up to receiving and participating in the adult initiation sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, the faithful cross over the 'threshold' and are welcomed into the community of Christians and begin to live a new Christian life. This, however, is not the conclusion of the

journey of faith. On the contrary, the faithful need to learn from the faith journey and growth of Biblical personalities and to continually witness to what they believe in. Faith formation, therefore, is a life-long and unending process, continually deepening and sharing in the life of the Trinitarian God. It is learning how to become holy in life.

2.8 Formation towards the balance and integration of the body, mind and spirit

To help the laity in their personal growth, we need to have them learn how to integrate the activities of body, mind and spirit and to build or rebuild their relationship with themselves, God, other people and the earth.

Caring for the body through a balance diet would ensure health and an immune system that is working well. This is a serious problem and need that the people of Hong Kong must deal with. We must also teach the laity to give thanks at meals and link this up with the sacrament of Eucharistic thanksgiving.

Many people in Hong Kong also experience great tension and emotional difficulties. Learning to know, accept and offer up our positive and negative emotions would thus be of great importance. It would result in emotions not being so easily repressed and can also lead to learning to experience emotions as an interior force. This force can be put to very good use.

Present-day education is inclined towards giving too much attention to the health of the body and

emotions. The spiritual side, however, is easily left out. The body and emotions have a direct relationship with the spiritual side. They can also be a means of coming into contact with God and the depths of our souls. This is also a basic constituent of Catholic formation. Emptiness in heart and spirit is a basic cause of many personal and social problems in Hong Kong. Getting to understand how to resolve this emptiness of heart and spirit, and enrich and fill the heart and soul with abundant vitality, would be a good remedy for resolving many problems.

One method is to learn to build up a good relationship with ourselves, with others, with God and with the earth. By nature, humans cannot be isolated from other things. Humans need to build up good relationships, discover their own identities and position, and have confidence in living, learning and growing together.

2.9 The Holy Spirit bestows diverse charisms and ministries for the building of the Church

Ministry is not merely accomplishing tasks. It is also a deepening and continuing of faith formation. The Holy Spirit bestows on the faithful of the Church diverse charisms that the Church community may manifest God's plurality and diversity. The lay ministry is based on these charisms so that the laity may commit themselves more to the life of the Church and be co-responsible for the Church's benefit and evangelizing mission.

The laity, therefore, should maintain and continually deepen their desire for self-formation and so

further perform the duty of their lay ministry. Their resolve and perseverance throughout would be of much more importance than results. God appreciates what we are willing to do more than what we can accomplish. The different ministries in Church life, including those of the liturgy and other ministries, are the extension and climax of the Christian experience of faith expressed in daily life. Otherwise, ministry would become tasks only, which emphasizes results, ignoring the human experience of God, a response towards God and growth in faith. All ministries come from the Holy Spirit. He gives different charisms to all, both clergy and laity. Whether great or small, all are meant for the building up of the Church, and for its good. Everyone should find out his/her own specific charism, in order to enrich one another, build up the Church and bring the kingdom of God into the world.

2.10 The basic triple ministry of Catholics

Through baptism all Christians share and partake in Christ's triple ministry, and receive the mandate and responsibility to serve from such participation (note 4).

2.10.1 Priestly Ministry of the laity

The priestly ministry of the laity is based on Christ vivifying them with the Holy Spirit and its intimate association with "the supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus" and "His life and His mission." "All their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and

family life, their daily labor, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, even the hardships of life, if patiently borne, all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. During the celebration of the Eucharist, these sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father along with the Lord's body." (Constitution on the Church #34)

The laity need to learn to intercede in prayer for others and the world, placing them in the hands of God in worship, taking on the role of mediator with Christ. In the tense livelihood of Hong Kong, there is habitual blaming and relatively less offering of encouragement. Many people lack self-confidence. Educating the laity to perform their lay priestly ministry by frequently blessing others would serve to bring Christ's peace and joy to others, bolster the latter's confidence, and help them turn towards the positive more than the negative and so "consecrate the world itself to God." (Church #34)

2.10.2 Prophetic Ministry of the laity

The laity need to learn to discern the new challenges and signs of the times (such as pluralism, materialism, information explosion, and globalization, etc.). They would need to point out, encourage or warn against, with courage and wisdom, the positive or negative

consequences that would result from the present behaviour, lifestyle and system of the Church and the world. This is to learn to live out the lay prophetic role to proclaim "the Kingdom of the Father" and to point towards the prefigured "new heaven and new earth" (Church #35), proclaiming Christ's good news, building and moving towards a heavenly kingdom of justice, peace, truth and freedom.

2.10.3 Kingship Ministry of the laity

The kingship ministry of the laity is to live out Christian self-confidence and dignity, be willing to be of effective service for the positive development of the Church and, together with the Church, for that of the world. This is to participate in the royal mission of Christ. Through his death and resurrection, Christ has broken through the bondage of death and sin that all may gain liberation. In such a liberation and redemption, "all things are subjected to (Christ) until he subjects himself and all created things to the Father, so that God may be all in all." (Church #6)

Catholics need to learn to "recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God.... so that the world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may the more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace." (Church #36)

Through their competence, endeavour, skills and culture, the laity perform their kingship ministry by producing created goods that are beneficial to humans and nature and are to be suitably and equally distributed among all men and women, promoting the integral and balanced development of humankind. The service involved in the kingship ministry cannot make use of exploitative and unequal measures but is to heal the damage and wounds caused by unequal and unhealthy “institutions and conditions of the world” so that “they may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value.” (Church #36)

3. CONCRETE PROPOSALS

To become a Christian essentially means to taking on the task of sharing the treasure of the kingdom of God with others, of fulfilling the mission of magnifying the glory of God, and of carrying out the ministry of sharing one’s own experience of life in faith. As a premise for fulfilling the ministry of the laity, the faithful need to have a deep understanding of the content of faith and the experience of the life and the joy that faith brings to daily living. This means that a Christian should become a person whose life is meaningful, has fathomed spiritual depths, possesses a sense of accomplishment, has a broad interest, and enjoys a level of persistent happiness. Therefore, when we talk about the ministry of

the laity, we should not look at it as a job, separate from faith. We deeply believe that when a Christian advances in faith, naturally his/her ministry will emerge and develop.

3.1 At the Personal Level

a. Bible Reading

*1

The habit of reading the bible daily enables a Christian to achieve maturation of faith, and sanctification of one’s life. By means of information technology and the media, e.g. telephone, website and printed materials, the faithful can deepen his/her knowledge of the Word and strengthen the bond between the Word and one’s daily life. It is necessary to encourage the faithful to learn ‘Lectio Divina’. By repeatedly pondering on the Word, fixing one’s gaze upon the face of Christ, and by entering into the wisdom of God, we allow the Word to touch our soul, to gradually form and change our entire life. Besides this, the faithful should give importance to bible sharing in a small Christian community and to the mission of proclaiming the Word.

b. Prayer

*2

Emphasis should be given to the link between prayers before meals and the eucharistic celebration through which we offer, together with Christ to the Father, our daily work, joys, suffering and prayers, so that they may become the food of our lives, our spirit and they may circulate within the cosmic Christ. In our prayers, we should also have concern for our physical

* The 42 proposals chosen in the first round

health and diet, environmental protection and nutrition, and give importance to the relationship between the fifth, the seventh and the tenth commandment. This means to link up matter with the spirit, the body with soul in our prayers. When our spirit gets hurt, we can seek for appropriate spiritual healing, and allow the Holy Spirit to heal us. The faithful should take time everyday to meditate and reflect, to engage in bible reading and prayers. Periodically, a longer period of time should be reserved for personal retreats, preferably under the advice of a spiritual director, in order to reflect on the extent to which one's life is conducted according to the will of God, and to be able to answer the call of God. The faithful should look for a spirituality that suits oneself, and fosters the attainment of sanctity, and union with God. Prayer life with the community, especially an active participation in the liturgy should not be neglected.

- 3 **c. Learning to Meditate and Contemplate**
- The faithful should learn how to meditate or contemplate, so as to get in touch with one's own spiritual world, to understand oneself and to experience God and His "goodness", and to allow the "goodness", wisdom and potentials God has placed in our hearts to develop. Preferably such meditation should be practiced constantly and turned into a habit. Consequently, we shall have a deeper experience and understanding of the benefit that comes from mediation and contemplation, and can achieve closer relationship and greater union with God.

- d. Take part in small communities of Faith** ** 4

Community life can more effectively assist the faithful to grow constantly in faith. Therefore, the faithful, especially the newly baptized Christians should be encouraged to choose a small community of faith that suits one's needs. Through the witness of the community, they can live up to their faith and embrace its mission of evangelization.

- e. Explore the different identities of a Christian** 5

The spirit proposed by the pastoral letter: "March into the Bright Decade" is to be continuously upheld. It emphasizes our three identities: citizens of Hong Kong, Chinese citizens and Catholics, and encourages us to know more about Chinese people, Chinese culture and the relationship between Chinese citizens and the Church in China. It also emphasizes the need to explore the wider dimension and meaning of the world and universe, to make use of new sciences and discoveries of the twenty first century (new theories of cosmology, evolution, biology, quantum physics, astronomy, ecology etc.) to deepen our faith, and to develop dialogue with the learned so as to achieve mutual enrichment.

3.2 At the Parish level

- a. Catechumenate community** **6

The Diocesan catechetical commission should periodically conduct an overall review of the syllabus,

content and format of the catechumenate and establish a system of assessing catechists. Parish priests should have concern for the quality of the parish catechumenate. In the process of catechesis, emphasis should be given to the active and vivid faith perspectives of the catechumens, avoidance of any one-way communication and teaching (e.g. seminar on specific topics). With regard to content, it should not be merely a transference of knowledge, but should be communicated through a form of group sharing, where emphasis is given to the integration of the Word and daily living, and such group serving as a preliminary form of small faith community, the basic components of which are liturgical prayer, the Word, service, and faith put into practice as well as giving testimony. Catechumens should be helped to acquire a sense of mission and evangelization, experiences of prayer and the habit of reading the Word (e.g. they should be taught about *Lectio Divina*). They should be encouraged to read books (including the Bible, Kung Kao Po and spiritual books), to take part in activities of Christian formation organized by different groups, to acquire a habit of participating in the liturgical life of the parish, especially in the liturgy of Lent and the Holy Week. The relationship and communication between the parish and the catechumenate should be strengthened, e.g. members of the pastoral team or pastoral council should visit the catechumenate periodically, and share the recent development of the parish, invite catechumens to take part in parish activities and to conduct home visits to the catechumens

etc. Parish priests are encouraged to be visiting speakers in the catechumenate, as to have more contact with the catechumens.

b. Catechumenate sponsors

7

Besides godparents, parishes should openly recruit catechumenate sponsors. As part of the catechumenate, the sponsors on the one hand can cooperate with catechists, hence lessening their work load; on the other hand, it could be an occasion of catechism review for the sponsors, so that in future these will become potential catechists, and can assist in the follow up of small communities of faith formed by the newly baptized.

c. Godparents

8

It is necessary to look into and strengthen the role and ministry of godparents. For adults, after being officially accepted as catechumens (one and a half years before their baptism), the parish should encourage suitable parishioners to be godparents. Formation meetings should be then held for them. They should be encouraged not to become godparents of too many catechumens. After baptism, godparents should maintain close contacts with their godchildren, and become companions in their life of faith.

d. Encourage the newly baptized to join communities

*9

In the process of catechesis, catechumens should be helped to be aware of and experience small communities of faith, and catechists should encourage them to take part in small Christian communities of the parish after

baptism, to meet regularly, to share in the Word, and live up to one's faith in daily life and face its challenges. They should also let the newly baptized faithful form new small communities of faith, and to continue their experience they enjoyed during the period of catechumenate, so as to mature in faith. Catechists or tutors should follow up on these small Christian communities for a period of time, so that they can continue to grow in faith. For example they should provide support groups and formation resources in the Church for these small Christian communities. Also ongoing regular visits by the catechists can be of help.

10

e. Infant Baptism

Parishes should pay home visits to families asking for infant baptism, in order to understand the condition of these families, the religious practices of parents, and make use of such occasions to contact those who do not go often to church. All the more, parishes should provide faith formation meetings for parents, while parents on the other hand have the obligation to attend such meetings. After systematic ordering of relevant data of the families and filing them, parishes can take the initiative to visit such families a few years later to understand their situation and to invite children to attend Sunday Schools.

* 11

f. Sunday School

Diocesan Catechetical Commission should conduct overall review on the syllabus, content and format of Sunday Schools, and strengthen its lifelines and level of

interest. More religious songs, games and teaching kits etc. suitable for children should be composed and arranged. Sunday school for pre-school age children (from 3 to 6) as a target group should be considered. With regard to teachers, faithful with professional knowledge (such as primary school, kindergarten or child care centre teachers) should be recruited as persons responsible for Sunday Schools, in order to lead and support other teachers. Sunday Schools should periodically and openly recruit lay people as teachers. Parish priests should meet Sunday School teachers in order to have an update overview of the situation. The Diocese should hold regular activities to increase the teaching skills of teachers, and to promote a sharing and exchange of teaching experiences and depth of faith.

g. Family Life

12

In order to help Christians see the importance of family life, parishes should promote family activities, and foster communication and understanding among family members. Establishment of small communities of faith with families as basic units should be encouraged in parishes. Both the Diocese and parishes should strongly promote the spiritual formation of the family, e.g. family bible reading, family prayer, family reconciliation etc. Parishes can make use of existing resources in the society and within the Church, e.g. invite Hong Kong Caritas or C.M.A.C. to organize courses and activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the self (including one's emotions and character etc.) and growth

integration, and focusing on helping the faithful to lay the foundations for a healthy personality, enabling the actual experience of real human nature, in order to become a healthy and integral person, and to allow integration with the experience of faith.

*13

h. Utilizing Sunday to strengthen Christian formation

Sunday Mass, being the one Church liturgy with the highest participation, can be appropriately utilized for strengthen Christian formation. Elements of faith formation can be introduced, without affecting the integrity of the liturgy, e.g. after Holy Communion or before the Eucharistic celebration begins, a few minutes of formation could be provided for the faithful. The content can be either a further catechesis in a brief and condensed manner, or an explanation of the different elements of the liturgy, or the meaning of the day's readings. On the other hand, on some special Sundays, we can let the faithful share their testimony of the Word in a formal manner, e.g. families could do so on the Feast of the Holy Family, teachers on the Education Sunday, workers on the Labor Sunday etc. It may be better if those giving testimonies are parishioners, and they should be well prepared. They should have reflected well on the readings of the day, and then they can offer their life experiences as relevant illustrations. It is advisable that the priest would give a brief conclusion after the sharing. Besides this can be an occasion of formation and reflection on faith and Christian living for those who give their testimony.

i. Sacrament of Reconciliation

14

It is necessary to choose one parish in each deanery to provide occasions for the faithful to receive the sacrament of reconciliation, on every Saturday for fixed hours.

j. Reinforce formation activities

**15

It is necessary to reinforce the efforts towards faith formation in the parishes. Such activities should be supported by relevant Diocesan institutes and communities. The pastoral council of each parish should establish one formation team responsible for the planning and coordination of formation activities or courses in the parish, or for inviting relevant Diocesan units or different organizations to offer courses for laity formation. Formation teams within the same deanery can form a support network, to promote periodic sharing, renewal, and learning, and to co-sponsor within the deanery appropriate activities or courses of formation.

Parishes should organize regular catechesis renewal courses for the faithful. Appropriate speakers can be invited, e.g. pastoral team members, parishioners who have graduated from the Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Sciences of the Holy Spirit Seminary College or Biblical Institute, catechists of the parish or staff members of formation institute of the Diocese, so as to enable the faithful to review systematically the relationship between daily life and the bible, liturgy, morals and catechism.

k. Formation on the Spirit of Mission

In different phases of formation process, more emphasis should be given to Christian mission, and the ways to develop the spirit of mission and to serve the Church through various ministries. Parishes should encourage more laity to pursue self-formation and life-long formation, e.g. by sponsoring some faithful for further training, and offering opportunities to these parishioners to develop what they have learned after completion of their training. The deanery can on its own group together those within its area who have completed their training and offer them adequate freedom and support (both materially and spiritually), so that they can plan for further activities or courses of faith formation.

l. Increase contacts with Christians “who have little sense of belonging to the parish”

It is necessary to increase the awareness of all the faithful to actively contact Christians “who have little sense of belonging to the parish”. The staff of the parish should be all the more aware of their attitude towards the faithful. The Diocese should hold training courses for all secretaries of parishes, reinforce training in their reception manners and attitudes, and increase the sense of service within the Church. The parish should try to understand the recent conditions and needs of the faithful on occasions of child baptism, weddings or funerals, and invite them to take part again in the life of the Church. The parish should actively assist those who have newly moved in or seldom appear in the church,

welcome them to take part in parish life, e.g. joining associations or small communities of faith, encourage their children to join Sunday School etc. On the other hand, pastoral ministers of the parish should actively liaise with Catholic schools in the district, make use of good opportunities to contact Catholic parents, and to hold formation activities for or introduce parish life to them.

m. Develop Small Christian Communities

Parishes should provide training for or pay visits to different small Christian communities, and encourage mutual visits among such groups. Through mutual contact and support, they may experience concretely the spirit of one family in the Church. Pastoral ministers of the parish should dedicatedly encourage more laity with a charism for leadership to come forward, and actively invite and encourage them to receive relevant formation. Institutions of formation should provide more materials for small Christian community meetings, and organize appropriate training activities, as well as lend support when crises appear in such communities.

n. Parish pastoral council team building

Formation institutions of the Diocese should design special training courses or activities for officers of parish pastoral council. Through lively activities, games, role plays etc., with special focus on team building, interpersonal communication, such courses should enable participants to build up relationships of cooperation, enhance problem solving ability, foster team spirit, and

improve techniques of empowerment and negotiation etc. They will be helpful for the planning of a future pastoral direction and concrete manageable projects of the entire parish, as well as guiding the council members to live according to their Christian mission and communitarian spirit. Parish priests should participate in such courses. This will be beneficial for mutual cooperation and communion in the council. It will be especially good in promoting a relationship of cooperation, communion, love and forgiveness between the faithful and the clergy. At the same time, it is necessary to re-adopt a pastoral team system in parishes (composed of priests, pastoral sisters and pastoral assistants), so that the clergy and the laity become co-responsible for the pastoral work of the parish.

20

o. Increase exchanges between parishes

Besides promoting the sharing among officers of parish pastoral councils in their plenary sessions, the Central Council of Catholic Laity should increase sharing and communication between parishes, and deepen the spirit of communion and cooperation within the Church through mutual learning and support. The Council of Laity could consider establishing parish chat stations on its website, inviting all officers in each parish to share, through words and pictures, the present situation of their parishes and their experiences of running programs.

3.3 At the Diocesan Level

a. Promote Catechism of the Catholic Church

21

It is necessary to encourage the laity to deepen their knowledge of the catechism of the Catholic Church. At the same time, the content of the Catechism can also be divided into a series of simple formation courses. Through sharing, activities, questions, games and cases etc., the relationship between doctrines and daily lives can be illustrated. Diocesan institutes or groups can provide materials aimed at introducing in a simple way the relationship between the doctrines and daily living. Such materials can be sent to and printed by the parishes for their faithful. It is necessary to organize continued formation courses for the newly baptized, and oblige them to take part during the mystagogical period. These courses should provide continued faith formation systematically and briefly for the newly baptized, and offer channels for faith formation for oneself later. Diocesan institutes or groups working in the field of formation can utilize information technology to render the content of the catechism more vivid and interactive, and to provide ways of self formation for the laity by producing self study CDs or placing such materials on web-sites.

b. Promote the social teachings of the Catholic Church

22

Relevant institutions and communities should let the laity know this unique treasure of the Catholic Church in a new way and facilitate the integration of social teachings with their living environment. Social

concern groups of the parishes through different ways, e.g. websites, CDs, training courses, workshops, quiz, simple pamphlets etc., and at different levels of the Church (schools, parishes, Caritas etc.) can help the faithful in this regard to know more and to live accordingly, so as to facilitate them to respond to and reflect on their working environment, and to face the attacks and challenges of the social culture. Catechists should encourage catechumens to reflect on the problems of daily living based on the principles of the Church's social teaching. This can be conducted in the form of a seminar on specific topics, in order to enable catechumens to investigate deeper into and reflect on the challenges faced by faith and daily living.

23

c. Promote Reading Habit among the Laity

Other than the Catholic Truth Society, the Diocese should encourage and support other printing presses in the Church to publish books of greater variety concerning faith. At different levels, the laity should be helped to acquire a habit of reading religious publications especially the Church Documents, e.g. during the period of catechesis, catechumens would be required to produce reports (either oral or written) of religious books of their own choice and to share them with other catechumens. Institutions and groups of formation and publications should periodically recommend good religious books to the faithful. Every year, ten books can be chosen by the laity for general recommendation. It is necessary to establish reading

groups in the parish, and to invite printing presses to hold book exhibitions or activities to promote new books.

d. Environmental Protection

24

It is recommended that in the areas of lay formation, life of faith and community activities, renewed emphasis should be given to the doctrine of Father as Creator, so as to appreciate, value and bless together with the Father what He has created (Gen. 1:1-2:3), in order to enable the faithful to render obedience to the Father and understand that ecology is an integral part of Catholic faith. In attitude and in practice, it is necessary to extend widely our respect towards life and human dignity to other creatures. In our prayers and liturgy, we have to know how to praise the Lord with the entire creation. Formation masters such as priests, Sisters, catechists, and formation institutions, other formation groups, parishes, schools etc. are urgently requested to include the concern for ecology into their agenda, and to consider adding such courses and training in which the theology and spirituality of ecology are regarded as an essential part, so that full integration can be reached between "heaven, earth, and man". This is to correct what was lacking in the formation of the past which confined itself to the relationship between God and man and the relationships among men. Therefore, we suggest that "heaven, earth, and man" should become the complete and integral measure, the standard and principle of faith formation, the process of its planning

and evaluation. Effective formation includes actual practice in life, thus, we suggest that the laity should participate more in activities of environmental protection, and adopt or support environment concern actions. As an important aspect of formation, parishes should relocate the topic of environmental protection from its marginal and ignoble position to a high priority in their activities and planning agenda. We also suggest the Diocese set up a commission for environmental protection to implement the above mentioned suggestions, and to respond and contribute appropriately to social policies and situations concerning environmental protection.

25 **e. Utilize information technology for catechism revision courses**

Besides the Catechetical Correspondence Course offered by the Central Council of Catholic Laity (including text model and web model), it is hoped that other institutions (Diocesan Audio-Visual center and Diocesan Laity Formation Office etc.) can make use of information technology, to produce multi-media catechism revision courses, by means of self- learning CDs and websites etc., emphasizing interaction and interest. Such courses can even provide teachers who will hold periodic meetings as follow up to the learning process. Furthermore, course content should be centered around the integration of faith and daily lives.

f. Concentrate resources for the promotion of laity formation

26

Under the coordination of one or more Diocesan units (or a newly established one) to set up a faith formation resource internet platform, and bring together the tables of content of various institutes and communities in the Diocese, so as to facilitate the users in finding data about faith. The interactive function of this formation resource platform should be increased, so that users may express their views after using different formation resources (e.g. religious books, songs, films etc.). In this way, we may create an atmosphere of discussion and sharing between one another on the website. Other functions including daily bible emails, electronic faith cards, to listen to (or watch) formation talks or testimony given by the laity, interviews with special guests, recent events both of the universal and local Church, advertising of formation activities, ordering of religious and spiritual books etc., all the above may enhance the interest and demand for faith formation.

g. Increase the cooperation and coordination between Diocesan institutions and Communities

27

The Diocese should strengthen the communication, exchange, cooperation and partnership between Diocesan Commission, Institutions and Communities working for the formation of the laity. It should especially support the work of faith formation of the parishes, and lay down guidelines for cooperation among

groups, e.g. the seven units of the Diocese and communities that constitute the parish social concern support group which is already set up, in order to support the work of formation of the parishes in the area of social concern.

28

h. Expand Laity Formation Foundation

This means another fund raising activity, in order to increase the amount of funds for the Foundation, so that it could assist more laity in self-formation and life-long formation and at the same time to extend its area of coverage. With regard to screening the applications, there should be more flexibility, e.g. including the support of daily life expenses of overseas courses, and requiring all applicants to make a contribution to the Church (e.g. drafting an action plan) after the completion of their courses. Besides supporting the laity in further training, the Foundation can support various organizations or parishes in their effort of running innovative and effective activities of a formative nature, e.g. inviting overseas specialists or groups to conduct activities of formation.

29

i. Mechanism for the Planning and Coordinating of Pastoral Assistants

In order to plan, coordinate and develop the ministry of parish pastoral assistant more effectively, the Diocese should adopt a mechanism as soon as possible, to study and define the work nature of pastoral assistants, their qualifications, the procedures of centralized recruitment, content of pre-service and in-service

training, procedures for handling disputes, centralized deployment etc., and to carry out relevant rules and regulations. Then afterwards, periodic formation meetings are to be held to facilitate sharing and exchange among pastoral assistants. Those working in parishes should meet periodically to promote sharing and mutual support. It is most desirable to have a representative of the Diocese to be their support and coordinator.

j. Utilize the graduates of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and the Biblical Institute as manpower resources of Pastoral Work

30

The Diocese should give importance to, affirm their value and utilize the students and graduates of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and the Biblical Institute and see them as manpower resources for its pastoral work. It should conduct a centralized recruitment exercise of parish pastoral assistants every year from among suitable candidates of these graduates. The Diocese (or a newly set up body) after duly consulting the interested pastoral assistants and parish priests, would send pastoral assistants to work in appropriate and needy parishes. In workable ideal circumstances, the pastoral assistant should join in the pastoral team, and together with priests and sisters sharing the responsibility and cooperating in communion, promote the parish pastoral work, e.g. support small communities of faith, promote faith formation, plan for the work of evangelization etc. The

Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and the Biblical Institute should collaborate with relevant Diocesan bodies to provide for those students or graduates who are interested in becoming full time pastoral assistants appropriate training courses in pastoral work, including theory input and arrange for field practices.

Group Two – Youth and Young Teenage Pastoral Care

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth Ministry – Challenge for the 21st Century

Coming into the 21st century, humanity already lives in an info-tech society of rapid changes. Metropolitan cities are expected to deal with problems and opportunities brought forth with paradigm shifts in economy and communications. Hong Kong, an international city for a long time, is well situated in the centre of Asia, both geographically and in terms of social development. Hence, our pastoral strategy should also reflect the perspective “Think Globally, Act Locally”! It is particularly important for the revision of our policy for youth ministry, that we take into account their formation in an informational culture that is at once interactive, individualistic, and multi-mediated. Obviously, youth are open to growth in all aspects, and, in particular, they grow up in a society of rapid and constant changes. Their companions (family, pastors, educators, social workers) are bound to adopt a policy of wider flexibility in order to cope with a social environment of high acceleration.

We expected many difficulties in working out such a policy, and the very first we encountered was a precise definition for our target, i.e. a definition for “youth”. Indeed, it has been an inconclusive issue. According to the practising law in Hong Kong SAR, there are obvious discrepancies in defining youth or young persons, e.g. in sections for “Juvenile

Note 1: ‘Who are near, who are far – the reason why I distant myself from the Church’, page36, 1992.

Note 2: Catechism of the Catholic Church 899

Note 3: Catechism of the Catholic Church 898

Note 4: Catechism of the Catholic Church 783

Offences” and “Care and Protection Order for Juvenile”. There have been even more diverse interpretations in executive and judicial level.

In education and social services, there are terms referring to different periods in personal growth, i.e. “children”, “adolescents & youth”, “adults”, and “senior citizens”. Of these, “adolescents and youth” cover a very varied range of referents. In reality, when taken both collectively and individually, adolescents and youth represent a transit-period in personal growth that shares neither a common check-in nor a common checkout point. The Charter For Youth, revised in 2000, states that “for the purpose of the Charter, youth means people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four although, where appropriate, the age range may be adjusted up to five years in either direction to cater for practical needs”. Thus, youth include people between 10 and 29 years of old, but the service provided by Caritas Youth and Community Service is targeted at youth between ten and forty years old while youth between sixteen and twenty-four officially fall into the category of target group of government-aided youth centres which also serve youth between sixteen and thirty.

Therefore, apart from the range of ages, we propose to include other terms of reference in our definition. Hence, we agree that “youth” will refer to “people in between 10 and 40 years of age, in school and at work”. Subsequently they will be dealt within three categories, namely youth in parish, youth in secondary and higher education, and youth at work.

Compared to the legal and social policy of the Hong Kong SAR Government, we have adopted an obvious

prolonged period for youth. We believe it does reflect the reality today, envisaged both from a macro and a micro perspective. From a micro perspective, the psychological period of youth and adolescence has apparently been prolonged. Most children enter into adolescence prematurely, as they enjoy a comparatively earlier ownership of a private “domain”. Kids are fast to express their eagerness for autonomy, and eventually they demand respect; they excel in technology and information, and they know how to use both; in fact, young professionals play vital roles in many sectors of the present informational society. Meanwhile, comparatively speaking the average life of contemporary city dwellers has been prolonged, and, at the same time, youth have a constant holdback for advancement into adulthood. Many people that are over thirties, struggle to remain youthful, at least psychologically. Relatively speaking schooling has also been prolonged, and the average age for initiation into society has increased. Consequently, the period of dependency (at least psychologically) has become longer than before.

As a result, the youth-period has been prolonged, taken both collectively and individually, physically and psychologically, and the youth population worldwide, particularly in the urban areas, has increased. Consequently, resources for youth services have become deficient. We find these phenomena highly significant for our future ministry.

Meanwhile, we have also studied a few negative implications. Youth and adolescents are inclined to demand an early admission into adulthood, and, at the same time, reject interventions from the grown-ups. They expect guidance

while refusing rules and regulations. Thus, other foreign “guides” are employed; these include general and blind pursuit of wealth, power, superstition, technology, fame, fans, and pleasure. Although these guides seem to be foreign and not binding, yet they turn out to be spontaneous enough to affect the whole life of our youth who make (or refuse to make) their lifelong decisions in accordance with this guidance.

The above phenomena can be interpreted from another viewpoint. Youth today reject a distinct and clear-cut boundary in their growing-up, i.e. from childhood to adolescence, to adulthood, and retirement – from dependency to independence, from school to society, from work to retirement; such boundaries have been de-marginalized. Hence, our adolescents are given sufficient time and space for growing up, at the expense of an immediate “leap” into adulthood – a successful prevention of adulthood-phobia. Nevertheless, the prolongation of youth-hood leads to a general loss of confidence in adults. Their parents and superiors appear to be immature, at least as a group of unworthy models. In fact, many adolescents cannot find human warmth, care or communication in family; their parents tend to replace love with tangibles, and they are in no way qualified models for our youngsters. Often our youngsters are left in desperation, indifference, suspicion, rebellion, and despair – they are involved in a series of controversial behaviour. For instance, youth, nowadays, are eager to be integrated into the parish community or the society at large, and they want to be accepted. However, they are equally afraid of commitment and refuse to be engaged.

All in all, our youth are confronted with problems as well as opportunities. Despite being brought up in an entirely materialistic environment, they still thirst for interior richness as they soon find out the inadequacy of material wealth. Despite living in a virtual world of cyber culture, they still look for values – the real value of truth, goodness and beauty. Despite being alienated in human relationship, they still want to love and to be loved. The emergence of cyber culture today has resulted in many unconventional approaches to establishing human relationships. Virtual roles and characters in cyber culture have proved highly enticing to modern youth. The new culture, undoubtedly, has created new challenges as well as opportunities for our ministry.

Based on the descriptions above on modern youth and our corresponding studies, the report below will be divided into three parts, namely, (1) youth ministry in the parish; (2) youth ministry in the school; and (3) youth ministry among young workers. Each part will be introduced with a brief account on the current situation, followed by a descriptive account of the present difficulties for youth workers, and winding up with practical recommendations.

Throughout our studies for a rejuvenated policy for youth ministry, we have tried to provide a global vision and to design local actions accordingly. In addition, we are convinced that we ourselves, together with our next generation, should maintain a genuine spiritual life in which will complement our vision of “Think Globally, Act Locally, and Live Contemplatively!”

2. THE RATIONALE

2.1 What is Youth?

Pope John Paul II discusses youth in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (Chapter 19) and raises the question “What is youth?”. He thinks that youth is not only a period of life that corresponds to a certain number of years, it is also a time given by the Divine Providence to every person, and given to him as a responsibility. During this period he searches, like the young man in the Gospel, for answers to basic questions; he searches not only for the meaning of life but also for a concrete way to go around living his life. This is the most fundamental characteristic of youth.

The Pope points out that, if at every stage of his life man desires to be autonomous and to search for love, during his youth he desires it even more strongly. The desire to be autonomous, however, must not be construed as a licence to do anything at will. In fact, youth do not want that at all – they are willing to be corrected; they wish to be told yes or no. They need guidance, and need it to be at hand.

Apparently, then, the basic concern of youth remains profoundly personal. In life, youth denotes a period when we come face to face with ourselves. It is also a time of communion.

Finally, the Pope emphasizes that youth are searching for God, they are searching for the meaning of life, searching for definite answers: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:25)

2.2 The Dialogue between the Young Man and Jesus

(Mk 10:17-22; Mt 19:16-22; Lk 18:18-23)

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” It was the question raised by the young man when he came to Jesus. In 1985, the Year of International Youth, the Pope began his Pastoral Letter, “To the Youth of the World”, also with the dialogue between the young man and Jesus, addressing the internal desire of youth, and indicating the kind of youth the Church would hope for. In fact, the Pope’s speeches on contemporary youth, particularly those delivered on World Youth Day, followed the same biblical theme.

The Pope pointed out: “The period of youth is the time of a particularly intense discovery of the human ‘I’, and of the properties and capacities connected with it. Before the inner gaze of the developing personality of the young man or woman, there is gradually and successively revealed that specific and in a sense unique and unrepeatable potentiality of a concrete humanity, in which there is as it were inscribed the whole plan of future life. Life presents itself as the carrying-out of that plan: as ‘self-fulfilment’...

“We have already heard what the young man had asked: ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ How must I act so that my life will have meaning and value? We could translate his question into the language of our own times. In this context Christ’s answer means this: only God is the ultimate basis of all values; only he gives the definite meaning to our human existence.”

When Jesus mentioned the commandments, the young man answered: “All these I have observed from my boyhood”. The Pastoral Letter continues: “The commandments form the bases of humanity, determine the moral values for human behaviour, and constitute an internal relationship with man’s call to eternal life, with the establishment of God’s Kingdom both inside and among people.” Thus, the commandments, together with the commandment of love, become the solid foundation in the life of our youth.

“Christ asks you about the state of your moral awareness, and at the same time he questions you about the state of your conscience. This is a key question for each person: it is a fundamental question to our youth, one that concerns his whole life and that must be answered precisely in his youth-hood.”

Having declared his personal fidelity to the commandments, the young man asked: “What should I do next?” It shows that in the moral conscience of a person, and more precisely of a young person who is planning for his/her whole life, there is a hidden aspiration to ‘something more’.

Jesus’ invited the young man to ‘follow me’. It is a vocation, a vocation of life. In prayers and meditation, young people enter into conversation with Christ, trying to read the eternal thought that God the Creator and Father has prepared for them. And from there they plan for life. The Pope reminds the young people that they must rethink – and very profoundly – the meaning of Baptism and Confirmation. For there are contained the

fundamental elements of Christian life and vocation. From there begins the path towards the Eucharist, which contains the fullness of the sacramental gifts granted to Christians. It is also necessary – and it is always true with the Eucharist – to reflect on the Sacrament of Penance, which is of irreplaceable importance for Christian formation. The Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders offer fulfilment to our life and vocation. Each of the sacraments has its definite and specific significance to young people.

2.3 Instructions for Youth Pastoral Works by the Church

2.3.1 Youth Ministry – A Priority

“Young people form a living and active force in the Church, and they are at the centre of interest and love; they are our hope. ... The Church entrusts them to the preferential care of priests, ... this type of pastoral work is a priority for the present and future of the Church. First of all, one should allow oneself to become involved in their exuberance, even at the cost of personal inconvenience. ... They should try to assume their point of views, and be prepared to dedicate a lot of time to them, sharing their interests, becoming their friends, engaging also in their spiritual directions, which can have such an influence for good in the years of adolescence. Priests should bear in mind that the Church has a lot to say to the young, and the young has a lot to say to the Church.

It is also necessary to form groups for young people, boys and girls and mixed, making the most

of school structures, associations and movements, or encouraging the formation of spontaneous groups , and training leaders for young people.

On the diocesan level, there should be an organization to promote pastoral work among youth, with priests trained for this type of work and appointed to assist parish groups and others.” (Pastoral Guides for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples #12)

2.3.2 Youth – Not only an object of Care

“Young people must not only be considered an object of pastoral cares from the Church.” (Christi Fideles Laici #46)

“Christian formation for young people in Asia should recognize that they are not only the object of the Church’s pastoral care but also ‘agents and co-workers in the Church’s mission in various apostolic works of love and service.’ ” (Ecclesia in Asia #47)

2.3.3 Youth – the protagonist in evangelisation

“Young people are, and ought to be, active on behalf of the Church. They are called to take a leading role in evangelisation ...” (Christi Fideles Laici #46)

“Youth should become the first to carry on the apostolate directly to other young person, concentrating their apostolic efforts within their own circle, according to the needs of the social

environment in which they live.” (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People #12)

“Priests should make use of young people in the activities for evangelisation. Once they are evangelised and themselves become pioneers in evangelising non-Christian youth, evangelical mission will flourish.” (Pastoral Guides for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples #12)

3. DIOCESAN YOUTH MINISTRY

Orientations & Recommendations

3.1 Orientations

In accordance with the basic principles and Church documents mentioned above, we believe our youth ministry should be orientated towards:

- a mature personality: in the spirit of the Commandments, specially the Commandments of love;
- a convincing faith: to be knowledgeable in doctrine and catechism, through living out the Word of God, in order to secure success in their search for God;
- self-fulfilment: in response to God’s call in their lifelong vocation;
- a witnessing faith: to care for the society and to promote the Good News;

exemplary leadership: systematically formed and informed in appropriate programs.

3.2 Recommendations

3.2.1 Youth Ministry in a Parish

a. Current Situation & Difficulties

Traditional associations for catholic faithful are more popular in some parishes, whereas groups specifically established for youth are comparatively rare. So, our youth will be easily neglected if they do not find traditional associations appealing. In general, priests patronize youth groups. Very often, a group will flourish and become active if the priest remains free and active; otherwise, it slackens and possibly fades out.

Some Sunday school pupils are left outside any parish group after they receive the sacrament of confirmation. Eventually, they take up a less active role in the parish. In fact, very few parish activities seem appealing to adolescents. Youth usually play down spiritual life, since they prefer social activities rather than the Eucharist and other spiritual or evangelical activities. Besides, they lose confidence in life.

Most parishes are poorly equipped with rooms and space for youth activities. Parishes are deficient in leader training, too. We need

to train youth leaders for various services. At the same time, we are poorly organized in religious training to consolidate the religious life of our youth. We need time and resources badly. In most cases, we need a full-time minister to take care of all youth activities s/he is expected to dedicate entirely for our youth. Further, parents are inclined to regard academic performance as having foremost importance, leaving religious formation to a much lower position. Hence, youth ministry in parish has made very limited progress.

b. Orientations

- i. We need to work towards an all-round formation of our youngsters and to care for their physical, psychological, and spiritual development, including healthy social skills.
- ii. We have to guide our youth to a healthy search for a spiritual life; to live an exemplary Christian life through active participation in prayer, retreat, youth mass, etc. The teaching and learning procedures should involve understanding and reflection, and should be adaptable to their interest and need. We have also to accompany our youngsters to respond to God's call for life, particularly to a life of clerical and/or religious dedication.

- iii. In accordance with the Church's teaching, we are responsible for their formation in social awareness. They should be led to care and to serve the community, to lead a social life of justice and righteousness. They are expected to show empathy with the poor and the neglected, to serve the needy, and, above all, to search for justice and peace. Meanwhile, we should guide them to proclaim the Good News to their peers through words and deeds.

c. Practical Recommendations

- i. We recommend the appointment of an Episcopal Delegate for youth ministry at the Diocese level. S/he will execute the related policy, and will act as the co-ordinator of various youth groups, so as to facilitate pastoral activities effectively and efficiently.
- ii. We recommend the establishment in each parish of a full-time Pastoral Assistant for youth services (PAYS). The post will be responsible for planning and execution of the pastoral works for youth in the parish. The candidate needs to line up a whole team of volunteers to form a "work group for youth pastoral services". The group

should be integrated into the parish structure in order to survive. It is also vital that youth ministry should be closely connected with the parish ministry.

- iii. The work group should mobilize adult parishioners to care and to lead the adolescents, whereas the adolescents in turn will lead the children. The group will take care of the needs of all youth activities in the parish, and will secure for, and administrate, a proper venue for such activities. They will liaison with schools, catholic and non-catholic, in the district, in order to foster pastoral ministry in schools. Meanwhile, they will establish basic groups for youth of different ages, student and worker. *33
- iv. We propose that each parish to set up a "youth corner", providing regular space for various functions including meetings and gatherings. 34
- v. There should be a decent place for study and revision in addition to other youth activities. Young members should be encouraged to participate in building "study cells" where elder brothers and sisters can help the younger ones. This fraternal service in fact is based on reciprocal care and help. The cells, 35

obviously, constitute ideal space for the building up of Christian communities.

- vi. A healthy Catholic family breeds healthy young Catholics. The parish is expected to organise gatherings for Catholic parents for sharing and learning.
- vii. Sunday school and the class for the Sacrament of confirmation play a vital role in youth ministry. The Diocese should decide upon the age for the reception of the sacrament, and emphasize its significance. In fact, this will facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for youth ministry.
- viii. The Diocese should design training programs for Catholic youth on personal growth and enhancing faith.
- ix. Parish should establish an “Action Group for Vocations” to encourage young Catholics to respond to God’s call.
- x. The Diocese should organize leadership-training programs for youth to recruit suitable leaders for youth ministry at all levels.
- xi. Each parish should work out a pastoral plan for youth ministry; it should include reasonable financial support for

the various activities. We recommend that the Diocese establish a youth foundation, whereby all groups can apply for subsidies with a view to supporting various activities in the parish. We also recommend that the Diocese set up various prizes to encourage creative young talent in music, drama, dance, literature, and audio-visuals.

3.2.2 Youth Ministry in School

A. Secondary Education

a. Current Situation & Difficulties

According to the latest statistics (Catholic Directory 2001), the Catholic population in Hong Kong has amounted to 230,000, not including temporary domestic helpers, i.e. 3.5% of the entire population. The Catholic population in ordinary Catholic secondary schools is about 7%. Some educators have indicated that the number of catholic students in band-5 schools is reducing.

Current pastoral activities in schools include morning prayers, the Eucharist, and feast-day celebrations. The academic program normally includes Religious Studies and Moral Studies; some schools offer Religious

Studies for HKCE. Religious associations, youth groups, and Catholic Society (Kat So) are among the common extra-curricular activities. Human resources include priests, religious brothers and sisters, catholic teachers, and, for a few schools, pastoral assistants. Since the majority of this work force also serves the parish, they constitute an important link between schools and parishes.

Religious associations often attract more non-Catholic rather than Catholic students, and not a few of the former go on to become catechumens and eventually are baptised.

Youth ministry in school has encountered many difficulties. Religious activities are generally unpopular. Many catholic born students are deprived of Catholic family education, and they show no interest in religion. In many Catholic schools, academic achievement and reputation are taken as top priority, at the expense of Christian and spiritual formation; hence pastoral ministry does not get the support it deserves. Class for pastoral-orientated lesson never materializes, and “tight scheduling” has often been the excuse. Some catholic teachers and administrators, including head-teachers, are ill prepared for Christian formation, and they are not used to doing pastoral works. The post of pastoral assistant is usually non-

existent despite the fact that teachers are overloaded with academic duties. Inspiring and interesting resources for Religious Studies are often sought after.

b. Orientations

Youth ministry must regain its prominent status in the vision statement of each Catholic school in order to motivate the entire staff and students to respect and understand God and His Catholic Church. We should lead students to appreciate, acknowledge, and commit themselves to Christian values. In particular, we should offer Christian formation and spirituality to catholic teachers and students, so that they can lead a supernatural life keeping The Commandments, and practising Catholic Virtues. Thus, they will grow and proceed to spread the Good News.

c. Practical Recommendations

- i. To implement the theory and practice of catholic education, administrators in catholic schools should have sufficient knowledge and formation in catholic doctrine. We recommend that relevant qualifications in the field should be duly considered in recruitment and promotion. Preference should be given to qualifications in theology & philosophy, religious studies, biblical

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studies, catechetical, liturgy, etc. from catholic higher education institutes, local and overseas, in addition to the Christian practice of the candidate.

43 ii. School administration should also reinforce such training for new recruits. Besides, the Diocese and the school authorities should organise regular formation programs for head-teachers and catholic teachers.

44 iii. Each catholic school, in addition to regular Religious Studies lessons, should have an extra class for catholic (for Christian formation) and non-catholic students (for spiritual formation). It serves to teach the practice of the faith in daily life, to foster friendship among peers, and to create an amicable and exam-free atmosphere to discuss faith.

45 iv. Schools should assign at least a Religious Day every month, where extra-curricular hours will be reserved for religious activities only. To foster a sense of evangelisation, students will be entrusted with the designing and running of these activities.

46 v. There should be a pastoral assistant for each school to assist in and execute religious activities.

vi. Schools should work with other diocesan groups in training catholic student leaders. 47

vii. The Diocese should offer substantial supports for pastoral works in school. We recommend that the Bishop or his delegate should visit each and every diocesan secondary school at least once a year. The parish should maintain an amicable partnership with the catholic schools in its juridical territory, e.g. parish and related schools share the employment of pastoral assistants, the recruitment of volunteers, and the organisation of faith formation activities. 48

B. Higher Education

a. Current Situation

Hong Kong SAR Government has promised to increase significantly its investment in higher education in the next decade. In the end, a total of 60% of our school-leavers will be offered a place in higher education – the available placements will be double the present ones. Hence, we should be very alert and increase our resources in the related pastoral ministry.

Campus life in a university is distinctly different from that of secondary school, particularly in terms of learning mode and

community life. It certainly applies to the religious field. All the current eight universities are non-catholic, and no catholic element would be got preference either in theory or practice; hence the respective “KatSo” (Catholic society) is on an equal footing with any other extra-curricular activity. Catholic college students have to forget the privileges they once enjoyed in catholic secondary schools, and should be prepared to take initiative for any religious and spiritual activity. And they are expected to be much more dedicated and self-orientated in the work of evangelization.

The current Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students (HKFCS) consists of 12 KatSo members, though a few of them are dormant. Catholic students are free to join the KatSo, just as non-Catholics are also welcome to join. And non-Catholic members are reportedly increasing.

All KatSo activities are self-orientated. Principal activities include cell group, pilgrimage, retreat, prayer group, preaching, orientation camp, and social activities. In addition, HKFCS organizes yearly expeditions to under-privileged areas abroad, participants claim these experiences remarkably significant despite the fact that admissions are highly competitive due to very limited resources.

Executive members and a chaplain serve each KatSo. HKFCS has also employed two social workers to support the members of KatSo and their training programs.

It is fortunate to have a trustworthy group through which students can share and live as Christians, where they can support each other, and grow in the spiritual life. Unfortunately, a good number of active members in the secondary KatSo and in parish do not join KatSo in colleges and universities. Meanwhile, active KatSo members appear to be passive at parish level.

b. Difficulties

Executive members’ service lasts one year, but this service term is too short for serious endeavour. It is sad that less college students are willing to share the executive responsibility. Often, KatSo goes without an executive board.

Pastoral workers offer insufficient support to KatSo, and HKFCS lacks resources to employ more pastoral workers.

The Diocese has been unable to provide full-time clergy to take up the pastoral services for college students. Apart from the two pastoral assistants who work for the HKFCS, college students do not get sufficient support from the Church. Youth need

formation, they also need support. In fact, the Diocese has rarely organized activities specifically for this group of students.

c. Orientations

We need to reassure our hope and sense of responsibility towards our catholic youth in higher education. At the same time, let us cultivate a sense of mission, and a dedication to evangelisation! We have to offer positive resources in training for faith and spirituality, so that Christian values may be integrated students' lives.

d. Practical Recommendations

- i. Members of parishes and secondary KatSo should be encouraged to join KatSo in colleges. Meanwhile, we should emphasize the importance of the parish as the base for lifelong spiritual formation.
- ii. We recommend that Diocese appoint a full-time cleric to take care of the youth ministry for higher education.
- iii. Diocesan organizations should provide various supports and resources to KatSo in tertiary institutions to encourage formation activities. For example, FCS and KatSo should be subsidized; Diocesan organizations including church and seminary are encouraged to offer

rooms and space to KatSo members for various functions; diocesan groups which provide youth services should take the initiative to liaison with KatSo in organizing joint programs, such as a youth expedition to under-privileged districts for college students to consolidate their Christian belief, or, entertaining activities like youth concerts to evangelise non-catholic students and provide catholic university students with a channel to join the mission.

3.2.3 Youth Ministry for Working Youth

A. Current Situation & Difficulties

a. Working Youth's Life

i. At Work

School-leavers have to face a transitional period before they are fully initiated into the society: they need a period for adaptation. Modern job-market is highly competitive and demanding. Pressure from employers is immense, working-hour seems end-less, and the working environment is extremely competitive. Youth are concerned with career, so that career and work become their top priority.

Meanwhile, young workers aspire after knowledge, search for unceasing and lifelong learning, and need spare time for study. So, they have to endure intense stress and concern in between work and study.

Unemployment is another headache. Recent research confirm that the unemployment rate among young workers has remained higher than the overall unemployment rate. The worst appears in the group between 15 and 19 years of age. They are unacquainted with the job-market. And their employment opportunities become slimmer; this is particularly true for the less gifted.

ii. *At Home*

Working youth are too often overloaded and preoccupied with employment, studies, and examinations. Hence, their social and family life is often placed in jeopardy. Very seldom they consult with their family, even when they encounter problems and difficulties.

iii. *Christian Life*

Working youth do not get sufficient support from the parish. They

do not enjoy a sense of belonging. And their Christian life is often overlooked. When they are bound to make options in life and faith, they would feel disturbed and look for the support they rarely find. Working youth find the going difficult both at work, at home, and in the spiritual life. Very frequently they lose faith in everything.

b. Current Youth Ministry in the Diocese

Working youth constitute one of the forgotten groups in the Church. Once these young workers leave school, they are initiated into adulthood as if they were no longer in need of further support from their seniors. They form no group of their own, and they all scatter and hang around; therefore, it is even harder to provide suitable services. This explains why no specific mechanism has been installed in the Church for working youth. There has been a rather weak sense of belonging; at the same time, they feel empty, and stop frequenting Church services.

B. Orientations

Working youth should establish a sense of belonging to the Church; their faith should be fostered so as to achieve spiritual integration. They should lead an exemplary Christian life, sharing the mission of the Church.

C. Practical Recommendations

- i. There should be at least one pastoral worker (clergy, nun, or lay person) for each deanery; s/he should be a full-time partner for young workers, thus establishing an official mechanism to support their cell groups;
- ii. Multi-function rooms should be provided at different suitable places for working youth so that their needs will be met and their voices be heard;
- iii. The current services at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers and the Diocesan Youth Commission Office should be reinforced and promoted, e.g., expanding services, reinforcing public relations, increasing personnel, implementing the ideals of “Ministry” for working youth;
- iv. Graduates at every level (secondary, tertiary) should be notified of related youth activities that lead to a better understanding of work, and how to work with faith, so that they will strengthen their faith once they are initiated into society.
- v. Young workers should be encouraged to form all kinds of cell groups, including basic Christian communities, and various servicing groups. These can be divided according to job nature so that young workers can receive acknowledgement and support from their

work colleagues, as well as share their life and faith;

- vi. In the annual budget and planning, a parish council should include a plan for its working youth, including formation in faith and spiritual life; this will strengthen the faith of young people who join parish volunteer work.

Group Three – Social Concern

PROLOGUE

Soon after Hong Kong experienced the historical changeover of sovereignty in 1997, the Asian financial crisis broke out and Hong Kong was undergoing economic recession. Though the economy is recovering, the gap between wealthy and poor is getting worse. Many people are suffering from a freeze or cut in wage, lay off and unemployment. The living standard of many people has generally deteriorated. In the face of these adverse economic changes, certain groups of people are being treated as scapegoats. They are usually the powerless, such as the new arrivals, migrant workers, recipients of welfare, low-income labour and so on. They are being neglected, discriminated against and exploited. In view of this, the Government has not only inadequately taken care of their needs and further cut the welfare benefits but seems to indirectly reinforce discrimination through its policies.

In the face of social injustices and a general culture of lack of concern and acceptance towards the underprivileged, the Church, as the sign of the Kingdom of God on earth, and also the conscience of society and yeast to generate charity and justice, has the responsibility to bear witness of loving others through proclamation and action. She has the mission of showing preferential option to the poor and upholding human dignity. The Church should stand up for the poor and provide services and pastoral care, organize and empower the weak and the poor, and assist them to integrate into society, to develop their potential and to strengthen them to become the agents of social change. Moreover, the Church should arouse social awareness of the faithful and pastoral workers through various

kinds of formation and promotion of Catholic social teachings. Furthermore, to pinpoint the root of social problems, the Church also has to transform unjust policy and structure through advocacy. In this way, the Church will, on the one hand, shoulder the role of servant through providing direct services and taking care of the needy, and on the other hand, assume the role of prophet through pointing out injustices within society. The Church is the one who provides services and is also an educator, organizer and advocator.

Based on these principles, the Social Concern group has chosen to investigate the problems of the deprived and the poor, especially the marginalised and special needs groups, migrant workers, new arrivals and grassroots labour. At the same time, the group also shows concern for caring for the environment and other life concerns. Nowadays, many people use natural resources carelessly and neglect the complete development of the environment and community. Because of increases in the ageing population, more health care services should be provided to the elderly through community support. Due to the change of sovereignty in 1997, with the subsequent decline in the democracy, the Church should fulfil its civic responsibility by participating in the promotion and monitoring of the democratic system.

Despite the fact that the Church persistently reveals Christian values in every aspect, there is, regrettably, still negligence and mistakes. Inspired by the public apology of Pope Paul II, the Social Concern Group also calls on the Diocese in Hong Kong to give an apology for all this negligence and mistakes. We hope that the Catholic Social Teachings will be better implemented and that we can show the humility of the Church and our willingness to be reconciled and to cooperate with society, so as to build a more humane society.

1. REFLECTION ON THE CONCRETE SITUATION

1.1 Present Situation

1.1.1 The Deprived

a. Poverty and the poor

The gap between the wealthy and the poor is getting greater. In 1999, the medium income was approximately \$9,000. The number of the lowest income families earning \$3,000 per month was 200,000, while another 200,000 belonged to the higher income group of \$80,000. The gap between these two groups is 23 times, while in 1996, it was only 13 times. Between 1997 and 1999, those earning \$3,000 per month reached 100,000, an increase of 75%, while the group with \$30,000 income increased by 15%, totalling 300,000. In the last decade, the low-income workers totalled 67 %, increasing from 210,000 to 360,000.

There is some disagreement on the issue of setting a poverty line. Some Legislative Council and District Board members proposed to set a poverty line (e.g. the poverty line = Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) amount) so that those belonging to this group could be identified in order to receive assistance. Measures like CSSA or retraining can then be taken to help them. However, the Government thought that

the present social security system can already adapt to various needs at different levels.

In Hong Kong, the Church has not openly taken a stand on the issue of the poverty line, but in keeping with the reflection of St. Chrysostom¹ and St. Ambrose², there is a clear demand that the community's resources should be shared among the rich and the poor.

Who are the poor?

From various surveys, “the poor” are seen to be those who have no specific skill, no stable job and income, no pension, low education and poor health. The poor desire equal opportunity, no stigmatisation or discrimination because of age, sex, occupation or family status.

There are around 900,000 people living in material poverty. These include: those on social assistance scheme, (130,000 elderly and 120,000 people with disabilities); single parent women with young children (30,000); newly arrived families (about 300,000); and the working poor (300,000) – those who earn less than HK\$3,000 per month³.

b. Disadvantaged and Special Needs Groups

Disadvantaged is applied to those being neglected by the mainstream society, the politically deprived, the economically

exploited, those who have no chance to express their opinions, those who are suppressed by traditional culture, and lack the opportunity and assistance to participate and integrate into society. They include migrant workers, new arrivals from Mainland China and right of abode seekers, ethnic minorities, single parents and middle aged women, street sleepers, drug addicts, discharged prisoners, sex workers⁴, etc. In addition, the elderly living alone, people with physical and mental disabilities and the mentally ill are those in need of support and care. These people, from various backgrounds, may have difficulty in looking for jobs, and/or may be exploited and discriminated against, or merely be treated as groups in need of sympathy. They lack equal opportunity and suitable social support.

c. Workers

i. Local Workers

In the situation of economic recession, everything is cost-effective; therefore, in the workplace, the team atmosphere, friendliness, spirit of mutual support have all vanished. Those unemployed or having difficulty finding jobs are being discriminated against, which results in a loss of dignity and suffering of high stress. Consequently,

the difference between rich and poor is getting wider.

ii. Migrant Workers

Migrant workers in Hong Kong face many kinds of problems and difficulties⁵ such as: contract violations, forced labour, loss of human dignity, underpayment, lack of privacy and humane treatment, family related problems, lack of faith formation. Many migrant workers find themselves facing loneliness, lacking in friendship, culturally estranged, linguistically disadvantaged and economically vulnerable.

d. New Arrivals

As the Hong Kong political, economic and social systems are completely different from that on the Mainland, newly arrived people will encounter difficulties during the process of integration. This includes housing, employment, family life and marriage. They are often discriminated against. From the educational point of view, since the English standard of most new arrivals is generally low, they are often laughed at by their peers.

1.12 Social Environment

a. Caring for the Environment

Hong Kong has been seriously polluted

in recent decades, but the general public lacks the awareness of caring for the environment. Both the Government and business sectors do not want to spend money and resources on improving the environment. Equitable distribution of environmental resources deserves attention, e.g. Kwai Chung, To Kwa Wan and Kwun Tong are seriously polluted areas, but air-cleaning efforts seem to focus on Central and Causeway Bay.

b. Aging Population and Health Care

Due to the aging population, the proportion of elderly persons in need of health care services is increasing, which leads to an increase in the resources needed. Health care is changing from hospital to community-based support. Those who have recovered from mental illnesses usually face discrimination and non-acceptance from society etc. HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue. It influences a whole range of social, legal, economic, gender, cultural and ethical issues. It is above all a human condition and therefore of concern to the Church and a subject for theological reflection as well as pastoral and justice-oriented action. It is hoped that a more widespread, compassionate and non-judgmental Church response to those living with HIV/AIDS can be achieved.

c. Civic participation (Christians' Participation)

Despite important improvements in the political system over the past decades, the opportunities for civic participation in Hong Kong remain limited. The chief shortcoming lies in the partial democratic reforms, whereby the political power remains dominated by the business elite. The overall level of political participation of Hong Kong people is very low. Since the mid-'80s, however, political activism has increased and voting has become the most important mode of participation. Social participation, which is closely related to political participation, is also at an unsatisfactory level.

1.2 Vision and Mission

The problems mentioned above involve complicated social factors, which include structural and policy problems, lack of empathy and concern from the public and insufficient community support as well as personal factors. The Church tries to address these issues through different groups and in different ways, for example, by the response of Caritas and other social service agencies to the needs of the community and the victims of injustice. Through different commissions and pastoral centres, the Church also provides services and pastoral care to the underprivileged and deprived groups. Moreover, through social concern groups and various educational programs, the Church tries to address social

justice issues by pinpointing the root causes of the problem at policy and structural level, to arouse the social awareness of the faithful and promote the social teachings of the Church. Below are some examples of the Church's response to the reality of our society.

1.2.1 Disadvantaged and Special Needs Groups

The Church provides various services to the disadvantaged and special needs groups in order to encourage them to participate in church activities and integrate into the community, e.g. through the services of the Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to the Disabled and parish services to the prisoners, discharged prisoners and street sleepers.

1.2.2 Workers

a. Local Workers

The Diocese has set up the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs which provides laity formation as well as two centres for workers.

In the past, the Commission has supported workers' claims for Job Security & Labour Law protection concerning safe working conditions, just income and decrease in salaries, the setting of a basic salary, respecting the dignity of workers, redundancy and dismissal situations, rest days and May Day as public holiday, maternity leave and equal occupational opportunities, Labour

Department opening hours at a time fitting in with workers lunch time, as well as reaction to the weaknesses and loopholes in the Mandatory Provident Fund.

The Commission has also given comments about the restructuring of work and the need for a healthy local industrial policy, the need to reduce working hours and to create employment opportunities, respect for the workers in providing time for social participation, unilateral changes concerning work contracts and respect for the right of workers to their social life.

b. Migrant Workers

In response to the growing migrant worker phenomenon, the Diocese of Hong Kong has implemented procedures to respond to this problem by establishing the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos, opening three shelter houses for terminated domestic helpers; establishing the Commission for the Pastoral Care of (Filipino) Migrants; and inviting the CBCP – ECMI (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines – Episcopal Commission on Migrant and Itinerant Peoples) to send two Filipino priests to minister to migrant workers. The Diocese has also issued guidelines and encouraged the opening of church premises for the migrant

workers as well as providing pastoral care service.

1.2.3 New Arrivals

The Diocesan Working Group co-ordinated the services offered to the new arrivals and set a 'New Arrivals Day'. Caritas and Parishes have organised induction and extension programmes for women and for parents. Caritas has also set up hotlines and counselling services. The new arrivals are also mobilized to participate in volunteer services. Due to limited resources, there is still room for improvement in these services.

1.2.4 Caring for the Environment

In October 1998, Cardinal John Baptist Wu Cheng-chung, Bishop of Hong Kong, issued a pastoral letter on the environment in which he advocated a communion between heaven and humankind, including a care for nature and urged the faithful to be concerned about pollution and ecology. In addition, various Church communities and groups have organised ecology activities, promoted a spirituality of ecology and promoted vegetarian meals. The Franciscans have developed Stations of the Cross with an environmental theme and individuals, parish groups and Church schools have joined in organic gardening or green awareness programs. All in all, however, the Diocese does not actively promote care for the environment. Few Church groups have spoken out on environment issues.

1.2.5 Life Concerns and health service

During the last year, the Diocesan Pastoral Care Services has provided around 25,620 beds in public hospitals and more than 90,500 patients/relatives/hospital staff through the dedicated efforts of pastoral care workers and volunteers. Hospital Pastoral Care Units have also cooperated with Parishes to provide support for patients.

1.2.6 Civic Participation (Christian's participation)

The Diocese usually expresses its concern on public affairs, such as the Right of Abode and family reunion issue, through pastoral letters, open statements or guidelines. Recently, members of the Curia also spoke up publicly on issues relating to religious freedom. Concerning the development of parishes' social concern, the Diocese has encouraged parishes to set up social concern groups. In August 1999, the "Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Social Concern Groups" was formally announced. Up to December 2000, about 32 parishes have set up social concern groups and another 20 are planning to do so. In addition, the Diocese has gathered seven church organisations to set up the Diocesan Support Group on Social Concern, to foster the awareness of social justice and social concern, and to assist the parishes to set up social concern groups. Some diocesan commissions and church organisations have also

been actively involved in social affairs and expressed opinions on concrete social problems and social policies, especially on human rights, democratic development and livelihood problems. They have also organised a social conscientization program and promoted the Church's social teachings.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES

We have tried to observe the reality through looking at the signs of the times. After examining the present situation and the response from the Church, we have to reflect from the perspective of our faith and taking the international human rights standard as our reference, to discern further response and plan concrete action.

2.1 Reflection on faith

In reflecting on the 3 years of the public life of Jesus, we see that he is often among the poor, the sick, and the marginalised⁶. Therefore, we as his followers should walk in his footsteps to be present with those who suffer, and to continue his redemptive works with a view to establishing his earthly kingdom.

The Social Concern group, in expressing its concern to carry out its Christian mission, reflected on the misery, distress and sufferings of those who have less⁷, the powerless and those being socially discriminated against. The group expresses the desire to improve the life situations of these people⁸ and aspire to a society that is more humane and more just⁹. Reflection

on the early Church writings¹⁰ increases our understanding of the gaps between the rich and the poor¹¹. In the social teachings of the Church, we are invited to examine the signs of the times¹², the dignity and rights of workers¹³, the relations of workers' union and employers, and the workers' solidarity and societal order¹⁴.

In the pursuit of freedom and truth, the Church is the defender of the human person¹⁵ and promotes the advancement of individuals through education as well as formation of true ideals and the creation of democratic structures of participation and shared responsibility¹⁶.

In reflecting on our redemptive mission "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly"¹⁷ we see that this life involves all aspects and stages of human life if it is to achieve full completion till eternity¹⁸. Therefore, every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart¹⁹. The Church adopts the role of defender of life issues and protector of the environment²⁰ by restoring a sense of reverence for the whole of creation.²¹ Sin makes people accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among us. It gives rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to divine goodness.²²

It is our moral duty to care for the environment²³, not only for our own good but also for the good of future generations. It is worth remembering that in calling on Christians to work and sacrifice themselves in the service of human development, the Church leaders are

drawing upon some of the core insights of biblical and ecclesial tradition.²⁴

2.2 International Human Rights Standard

Apart from the principles of our faith, we adopted some tools and a set of principles from other sources to measure broadly which areas fall above or below the benchmark. This can be found in the basic principles of the World’s Summit on Poverty (1995), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and relevant international human rights covenants, Universal Declaration of Handicapped Persons (1975), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), Charter on Children’s Rights (1989) and the Charter on Youth (1993). References were made to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on general well-being and health environment and International Labour Organization (ILO) on labour law to protect workers rights and unions.

3. CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Poverty

- a. Catholic employers are urged to give reasonable salaries and respect the spirit of the Mandatory Provident Fund, for example by never offering less than 60 days’ contract. A family wage²⁵ should be standard practice in Catholic institutions. Catholic employers are encouraged to share their wealth with low income employees through the provision of staff medical benefits, housing scheme/ allowance, children’s education allowance, or widow’s allowance. 58
- b. The Diocese should create job opportunity schemes for the poor, so that they are exposed to work experience and do not need to rely on CSSA on a long-term basis. It is recommended that Caritas assist in the formation of mutual help groups and offer training in cooking, hairdressing, flower arranging, housekeeping to enable the poor to develop the means of earning a living and overcoming their economic difficulties. 59
- c. The Diocese should strengthen the existing system or set up a new group to follow the poverty issue in depth and to encourage the faithful to work towards the elimination of poverty by providing assistance to the needy in the neighbourhood and in the parish. 60
- d. Diocesan and Religious schools might provide special care other than offer free education to the children of poor families. 61

3.2 Disadvantaged and Special Needs Groups

*62

a. Parish – Support

Parishes should set up a network and list to understand the backgrounds and needs of those impoverished in their area (e.g. the elderly living alone, street sleepers, sex workers and ethnic minorities) in order to offer service and support. Parishes should offer formation to parishioners to enable them to accept the marginalized and those with special needs.

*63

b. Persons with physical handicaps

The Diocese should try to improve the access and related facilities in its parishes, Service Buildings, Retreat Houses, Pastoral Centres and all church organizations for those with disabilities, e.g. construction of slopes, elevators, toilets for people with disabilities, Braille Bibles, hymn books and parish newsletters, earphones for those unable to hear homilies during Mass and sign language interpreters during liturgies. Parishes can reserve seats for the disabled so that it is easier for them to adapt and be looked after. They can also form groups to show concern for persons with physical handicaps and mobilise volunteers to assist them to participate in church activities.

64

c. Persons with mental handicaps

At each deanery level, the Diocese should assist persons with mental handicaps in the area to

form Small Faith Communities, and, if possible, to have a spiritual leader who is a priest, Religious brother or sister. These groups can meet once or twice a month to develop friendship and mutual trust as well as deepen spiritual life. It should also mobilise and train people who are concerned for persons with mental handicaps so that they can be the promoter, pastoral worker (need special training) and leader of these groups.

3.3 Local Workers

a. Formation of workers and employers organisation

65

Parish and deanery are encouraged to organise groups for workers and employers, so that they can have a sharing which would lead to improvement in working conditions. These groups should also organise catechism courses and courses on the social teachings of the Church. Through sharing, both the employers and workers can understand the problems faced today, so that they may be in a better position to understand the workers' dignity and rights, the value of their work and their mission. The Catholic Diocese as an employer has to set a good example of dialogue with employees and to implement the Social Teachings of the Church. Through not only fulfilling the basic labour requirements of the Government, it can improve labour relations and build trust through church workers organizations which should discuss and resolve difficulties with the employees.

b. Strengthening of the Work of the Catholic Labour Commission

To enhance its prophetic role in society, the Church should use its arena to speak out and develop formation. The Labour Commission’s existing research work should be strengthened. It may pay more attention to and analyse the changes in the work situation, provide faith reflection and speak out for labour groups, conduct a comprehensive survey on labour-related policy, present the Church’s position, and, if necessary, join with other social groups to initiate actions to improve living situations. Its work needs better coordination.

c. Priests’ participation

The Diocese needs more priests to participate in the labour movement. To show support, the Church should appoint at least part time priests to assist the workers’ organisations.

d. Formation

At deanery and parish levels, priests, pastoral workers, members of parish formation groups and social concerns groups have to understand the problems faced by workers today in order that they can give more support to them. Seminarians and permanent deacons’ pastoral internship should include some exposure to labour-related positions. The catechumen curriculum should include sections on workers’ rights and Catholic Social Teachings.

3.4 Migrant Workers

- a. At the diocesan and parish level: to advocate for the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on protection of the rights of all migrants and members of their families. Where possible and where it corresponds to church teaching, there should be more involvement in Government sponsored programs/projects related to migrants such as AIDS prevention, environment campaigns, protection of women, racial discrimination in work etc. To network with national, regional and international forum/groups especially the Asian Migrants’ Desk. 69
- b. To institute a Migrants’ Day according to the instruction on ‘The Pastoral Care of People who Migrate’ from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. The Diocese should offer more pastoral services to migrant workers and should encourage parishioners who hire domestic helpers to pay the basic wage and to give them a day off. 70
- c. To conscientize the local Christian communities (priests, religious, parishioners, schools) to respond to the dehumanisation of migrant workers. Parishes should provide not only liturgical services, physical structures and programs but also opportunities for integrating and growing as a truly Christian community. Parishes should also be aware of their social needs, providing appropriate programs, 71

formation and co-ordination, and initiate activities that will improve communication and mutual understanding between the migrant workers and local people.

3.5 New Arrivals

a. Change in Attitude

Each parish to respond to the World Migrants' Day. This day is set aside for Christians to grow in an attitude of understanding and dialogue, to improve human relationships, reduce inter-cultural gaps and discrimination, increase sensitivity to the needs of others and appreciation of multiplicity of cultures; also for Christian groups, families or institutions, to accept new arrivals in a spirit of openness and help them to integrate into society.

b. Pledge Support

The Diocese to join forces to show our hospitality and support to the new arrivals. Each parish or association is invited to pledge to support a number of new arrival families who are in financial difficulty or a number of newly arrived children, the amount possibly decided by the New Arrivals Pastoral Commission.

c. Set up Mutual Help Groups

The parish social concern group and other parish groups to set up social support groups, parents' groups. These groups will meet occasionally for mutual support, self-help, to

alleviate stress in urban living, to learn to cope with parental responsibilities and daily living, and to enhance their understanding and love of family life and human relationships, to bring about peace and unity in an integrated society. Parishes and Caritas can cooperate to set up a social network system in the neighbourhood to render support to the single elderly, and those who are at risk or need special help.

3.6 Caring for the Environment

a. Formation for Spirituality of Ecology

Encourage education on environmental ethics and inculcate the concept that abuse of creation is a sin. These should be included in Sunday schools, catechism courses and religious education curricula. Liturgy may also include the praises of nature, through traditional Chinese celebrations such as appreciation for the beauty of the moon at mid-Autumn Festival. The diocesan audio-visual centre to produce programmes to deepen a spirituality of ecology. Parishes are encouraged to hold a Sunday liturgy on environment on or around June 5 – World Environment Day. Special Liturgy, tree plantings and gardening are suggested. Church organisations should call for peace and an end to violence, so as to prevent wars that will destroy both human beings and nature.

76 **b. Spirituality of ecology and simplicity of life**
Clerics and pastoral workers to remind the Catholics to respect the earth and creation through homilies, penitential rites and retreats. Christians should lead a simple life. Parishes are encouraged to organise more vegetarian spiritual programmes, and to avoid wasting food and resources and to keep parish celebrations simple.

77 **c. Church's collective participation**
Church schools and organizations should urge meal providers not to use Styrofoam and non-recyclable utensils, and to provide healthy food. The Diocese ought to adopt a policy of using recycled paper in all departments. It is recommended that the Diocese set up an organic garden for parishioners to experience green life.

78 **d. Monitoring Government and district eco-policies**
The Church ought to speak out on environmental matters and advocate an equal distribution of resources. Parishes should monitor district-wide environmental matters and voice opinions as well as urge District Board members and Legislative Council members to promote and monitor the environmental situations in the district.
During elections, Catholics should consider political candidates' platform and attitude to environment issues. Catholics should demand that the Government dialogue with the industries that

pollute the environment and implement a policy of recycling materials like paper and bottles. People's environmental rights should be respected and we should monitor the equal distribution of resources in improving the environment, especially in low-income areas.

3.7 Life Concerns

a. Pastoral Care 79
The Diocese is to increase pastoral care resources and personnel (both full time workers and volunteers), upgrade professional status and personal emoluments of pastoral care workers so that they can be well accepted by other healthcare professionals and join the team for holistic care.

b. Establishment of a medical and healthcare professional body *80
A statutory body of the Diocese comprising lay representatives of various Catholic medical and healthcare professional organisations should be formed to communicate with the curia to make timely and appropriate response on healthcare issues, especially in the field of medical ethics.
The Diocese should respond to specific issues, like healthcare financing and make official statements on issues like euthanasia, abortion, medical reforms, cloning of organs and embryos.
In Catholic Hospitals, there should be briefing/orientation sessions on ethics. More time

and resources should be designated for education in attitudes, values and ethics.

*81

c. Health care services for elderly patients

As healthcare services provided by the Government for elderly are not enough, the Diocese could set up a special task force to investigate this issue and make/implement recommendations. (e.g. consider setting up elderly homes/services.)

The number of elderly homes is increasing so the Diocese could recommend that each Parish increase visits to elderly homes.

Parishes can seek assistance from Caritas, Catholic Doctors' Guild, Catholic Nurses' Guild to nurture attitudes of care and concern for the elderly in the neighbourhood as well as provide support/care to needy singletons and the chronically ill in the vicinity.

82

d. Formation and Services

i. Mental Health

Since there are quite a number of needy in various Parishes, the Diocese/Parishes should organise teams to provide active service. Parishes can help those who have recovered from mental illnesses to build up a spirit of confidence based on Gospel values and which will lead to integrating into the community.

ii. People with AIDS

Parishes should introduce the experience of people with HIV/AIDS and promote the prevention of transmitting the virus in order to avoid discrimination against those infected and to ensure that they receive the support and respect they need. Promote recruitment of volunteers from the parishes for AIDS service agencies.

e. Palliative Care

83

To promote palliative care in Private Catholic Hospitals.

3.8 Civic and Social Participation

- a. The Church leaders, as a prophetic, social conscience and moral force, should speak out on social justice or important social events when appropriate, and provide guidance to the laity. Moreover, Catholics and Church organisations should be encouraged to express opinions related to justice according to the Church's social teachings and employ appropriate strategies to affect public opinions and social policies. **84
- b. Transparency, openness and participation should characterize all levels of the Church, including diocesan, parish, school, community centres and so on. In the everyday running of the Parish Council the parish should aim at co-responsibility and collective leadership, so as to build a participatory 85

Church. The parish finance committee should make detailed and regular reports to the parish council and publicize these reports to the parishioners through the newsletter or notice board.

86 c. The Church or this Diocesan Synod should take appropriate measures to express publicly the wish of electing the Chief Executive and all members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage as soon as possible.

87 d. Diocesan and parish organizations, Church schools and catechumenates should integrate social concern activities into their programmes. Civic education and education on values, especially core values which are cherished by the Church, need to be strengthened in order to deepen religious faith and strengthen commitment to the common good of our city.

In order to deepen their religious faith and strengthen their commitment to the common good of our city, retreats and days of recollection for politicians and officials who are Christians could be promoted.

88 e. Where not yet established, social concern groups should be set up at the parish level and related church institutions should provide support for them. Parish social concern groups should strengthen their cooperation and coordination. Together with diocesan social concern institutions, they are encouraged to hold regular meetings at deanery, district and the whole region level, to

exchange experiences, discuss joint projects (e.g. organise training) and discuss strategies to respond to concrete social issues.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is true to say that in the past, the Diocesan Curia, Church organisations and individual believers have tried to express their social concern in different ways. However, the social consciousness of the Church on the whole was not conspicuous and the understanding of believers towards the social mission of the Church was not comprehensive enough. The whole area of structural change needs to be addressed. This can only come about through attitudinal change, a change of heart evoked through sensitivity and exposure to the needs of the poor. To achieve this, the Church needs to assume the role of conscience in society. In practical terms this calls for a long-term plan and the coordination of various Church institutions, so as to actualise the social mission of the Church systematically and strategically.

References:

- 1 "When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice." (St. John Chrysostom, *New Catechism*, No. 2402)
- 2 "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich." (Saint Ambrose, *Populorum Progressio*, No. 23)
- 3 Poverty Watch, March 2000, Hong Kong Social Security Society.
- 4 Those who are paid for sexual services.
- 5 "Do not mistreat migrants or oppress them, for you were migrants in Egypt." (Exodus 22:20)
- 6 "In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." (Matt 25:40)
- 7 "In seeking to promote human dignity, the Church shows a preferential love for the poor and the voiceless, because the Lord had identified himself with them in a special way." (*Ecclesia in Asia*, No. 34)
- 8 See 2.
- 9 "Are we a Church of the poor, for the poor?" (*Ecclesia in Asia*, No. 34)
- 10 See 1.
- 11 "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words for the Church mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." (*Justice in the World* 1971, p.8)
- 12 *Gaudium et Spes*
- 13 Human dignity must be upheld: Reasonable distribution of work allowing an employee to enjoy family life, faith, and community life. (*Rerum Novarum*)
- 14 To uphold the role of workers' unions and the natural right of men and women to join unions. (*Rerum Novarum*) Unions are a mouthpiece to voice workers' rights, they bring about social order and worker solidarity. (*Laborem Exercens*)
- 15 "Jesus did not only treat and heal the sick, but he was also a tireless promoter of health through his saving presence, teaching and action. Called to continue Jesus' mission, the Church must seek to promote a full and ordered life for everyone. In the context of the promotion of good health and quality of life correctly understood, two duties deserve the

- Christian's special attention. First of all the defence of life. The second duty which Christians cannot shirk concerns the promotion of a health worthy of the human being." (Message for the World Day of the Sick for the year 2000 : Contemplate the face of Christ in the Sick, August 1999)
- 16 "The Church values the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate. Thus she cannot encourage the formation of narrow ruling groups which usurp the power of the State for individual interests or for ideological ends Democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the "subjectivity" of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility." (*Centesimus Annus*, 46)
 - 17 Jn 10:10
 - 18 *Evangelium Vitae* No. 1.
 - 19 *Evangelium Vitae* No. 3.
 - 20 "It is the duty of Christians and of all who look to God as the Creator to protect the environment by restoring a sense of reverence for the whole of God's creation. It is the Creator's will that man should treat nature not as a ruthless exploiter but an intelligent and responsible administrator. The Synod Fathers pleaded in a special way for greater responsibility on the part of the leaders of nations, legislators, business people and all who are directly involved in the management of the earth's resources. They underlined the need to educate people, especially the young, in environmental responsibility, training them in the stewardship over creation which God had entrusted to humanity. The protection of the environment is not only a technical question; it is also and above all an ethical issue. All have a moral duty to care for the environment, not only for their own good but also for the good of future generations." (*Ecclesia in Asia*, No. 41)
 - 21 *Ibid.*
 - 22 *New Catechism* No. 1869
 - 23 "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31) For Francis, the universe reveals the footprints of its Creator. Every thing and everybody comes from the same goodness of the Creator; creation is a manifestation of God's Being. (St. Bonaventure)

24 See 20.
25 Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and providing security for its future. (Laborem Execens, No. 19)

Group Four – Evangelization (*Ad Gentes*)

PROLOGUE

1. The impetus to evangelize stems from the Resurrection experience. The Risen Christ sends forth his disciples to forgive sins, anoint and heal the sick, cast out demons, and make disciples of all nations in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. These, and similar words, express an awareness that the Kingdom of God, this new life in Jesus Christ, must be shared and announced to everybody. Furthermore, the spirit of the gospel of Christ can truly fulfil the ideal of different cultures.
2. The early Christian literature (Acts of the Apostles and Letters) shows that growth in evangelization consciousness came in the face of challenges, difficulties and conflicts. The apostles were “pushed out” of Jerusalem because of persecution and they transformed that experience into an occasion for evangelization. The tense relationship between Jewish and Hellenistic communities became an opportunity for further development.
3. Throughout the history of evangelization, neither poor religious performance nor limitations within the community have ever put an end to the proclamation of the Gospel. With this in mind, we can look at both the present situation and to the future with optimism.
4. It is possible that the proclamation of the Gospel has been carried out with a superiority complex or in a conquering manner. The evangelizer may also have done evangelization

work with arrogance and demeaning others. In fact, evangelization should be carried out as follows:

- (i) Allowing the Holy Spirit guide himself/herself in spreading the good news of Christ.
 - (ii) Listening to the Gospel, accepting it, and responding to it as the voice of the Holy Spirit. It is not we who are converting others, but the Holy Spirit who touches their hearts and makes them change and respond to God's call.
5. This document focuses on the evangelization of non-Christians. It is divided into three parts:
- The first part is a reflection on the present situation in Hong Kong.
 - The second part highlights some simple and basic principles.
 - The third part offers a long-term evangelization plan, outlining a one-year preparation period and an implementation period of over a year, as an initial step.
6. Each part in turn is analyzed on six different levels as follows:
- Evangelization at the individual level;
 - Evangelization at the family level;
 - Evangelization by Catholic groups (including lay-groups and Catholic organizations);
 - Evangelization at the school level;
 - Evangelization at the parish level;
 - Evangelization at the diocesan level.

1. REFLECTION ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

1.1 Evangelization at the individual level

- 1.1.1 Catholics of all walks of life are carrying out their mission of evangelization. Most catechumens join the catechumenate class because they are prompted by lay Catholics, or are influenced by their good example. Nevertheless, we still have to remind one another to avoid counter-witnessing in our life.
- 1.1.2 Many Catholics accept that they have the responsibility and the mission to evangelize. However, in Hong Kong, many people face great work pressure and long working hours, and have to spend time on ongoing education. All this deprives the individuals of the time and energy to carry out evangelization work, although they are willing to. Some Catholics, however, still think that evangelization is the work of the clergy, religious and catechists only.
- 1.1.3 In recent years, evangelization activities are becoming more and more common in parishes, and the parishioners are zealous in bringing non-Catholics to these events.
- 1.1.4 Many Catholics are enthusiastic about attending courses in theology, bible, catechism, spirituality, and leadership training. However, it is still common that parishes lack people for evangelization work. Is this because all these trained people pay attention to pastoral work and the formation of Catholics ad intra, while neglecting the evangelization work of non-believers ad extra?

1.1.5 Prayer, abstinence, and donations are important means to support evangelization work. However, most Catholics are not aware of this.

1.1.6 Some Catholics make good use of their own places to spread the Good News (such as exhibiting scrolls with biblical quotations or other symbols of the Church). Others make good use of their particular profession in society (such as workers, domestic helpers, office staff, professionals, etc.) to act as the yeast of God's good news in society. However, generally speaking, there is still much room for improvement along these lines.

1.1.7 In Hong Kong, Catholics can still freely carry out evangelization without outside pressure and constraints.

1.1.8 Some Catholics are willing to try different means of spreading the gospel, and there are times they would like to receive more support from the Church.

1.1.9 Very few Catholics take the initiative to enter into dialogue with people of different religions, through which to introduce the good news of Christ to others.

1.2 Evangelization at the family level

1.2.1 In recent years, quite a number of catechumens have been motivated to join catechumenate class by Catholic members in their families.

1.2.2 Evangelization among family members is becoming more and more common, especially between spouses.

1.2.3 In the Hong Kong diocese, many laity groups for families focus mainly on communication among family members (between husband and wife, parents and children), and on the education and upbringing of children. Little emphasis is placed on the role of the family as a basis for evangelization.

1.3 Evangelization by Catholic groups (including laity groups and Catholic organizations)

1.3.1 Although there are many laity groups in the diocese, most of them focus on prayer and bible sharing or bible study, and not so much on evangelization work ad extra. All but a few of these groups carry out evangelization work on a regular weekly basis.

1.3.2 Most social services and medical organizations only pay attention to the service they provide to their clients, and are relatively lacking in the awareness and actual work of evangelization.

1.3.3 Among Catholic groups, there are quite a number whose specific ministry is evangelization of non-Catholics. Among them are those who are sent abroad to evangelize. This reflects the universality of the Church.

1.4 Evangelization at the school level

1.4.1 The Catholic school is a favorable place to carry out evangelization work. Most students are non-Catholics. Many people are baptized when they are studying in a Catholic school. Others are baptized

after they leave school due to the influence of the Catholic school.

- 1.4.2 The school pays more attention to imparting knowledge, and not so much on communicating the Catholic faith to non-Catholic students.
- 1.4.3 Teaching duties of teachers in school are heavy, and only a small percentage of the teaching staff is Catholic. It would overburden the Catholic teachers if they had to carry out evangelization work on top of their already heavy workload.
- 1.4.4 Instances of bad examples in Catholic schools have an adverse impact on the Catholic Church and obstruct evangelization work.
- 1.4.5 Generally speaking, schools and parishes lack cooperation as far as promoting evangelization activities is concerned.

1.5 Evangelization at the parish level

- 1.5.1 Parish provides a locus for evangelization. It is the place where most evangelization functions are held. Every year, numerous catechumenate classes are organized in parishes, from which many new Catholics are baptized.
- 1.5.2 In most circumstances, people are introduced to the catechumenate class to learn about the Catholic faith. However, these catechumenate classes have a specific time, place and style. More evangelization methods should be considered so that more people have the chance to learn about the Catholic faith.

- 1.5.3 Many Sunday schools are open to non-Catholic children as well, which provide a good opportunity to spread the Good News.

1.5.4 Under the prevailing parish structure, the priests and pastoral workers in the parish are obliged to spend most of their time and energy in administration and pastoral work, which directly affects evangelization ad extra.

1.5.5 The annual plan of the parish usually focuses on activities for parishioners and liturgical arrangements. Vision and planning for evangelization are usually lacking.

1.5.6 There is often a misunderstanding that the parish is there for Catholics only. In fact, the parish should be for both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. However, some parishes seldom grasp the opportunities to spread the good news of God to non-Catholics in its own area.

1.5.7 Volunteers need the assistance of parish staff on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, enabling the parishes' evangelization work to generate better results.

1.5.8 Many parishes are making good use of wedding ceremonies and funerals to convey the message of God to non-Catholic participants.

1.6 Evangelization at the diocesan level

- 1.6.1 Every year, the diocese holds a large-scale celebration, which enables the Catholic Church to give public witness to its faith and spread the good news in society.

- 1.6.2 The Catholic television and radio programs make good use of the mass media in spreading the good news of God, although the programs are not widely disseminated.
- 1.6.3 Each local church has the mission to evangelize the whole world. Nevertheless, the Hong Kong diocese is relatively inward looking, and the diocese also lacks a vision and comprehensive plan for evangelization.
- 1.6.4 There are many organizations at the diocesan level, but none is specifically responsible for promoting evangelization work.
- 1.6.5 Many foreign missionaries have been carrying out missionary work in Hong Kong for over a century. It is now time that Hong Kong Catholics carry out the ministry of evangelization ad extra.
- 1.6.6 The evangelization work of the mass media bureaus in the diocese is not very obvious, such as the HK Catholic Social Communications Office, Kung Kao Po and Sunday Examiner, Catholic Truth Society, and the Diocesan Audio-Visual Centre, etc.
- 1.6.7 The culture and awareness of evangelization is not strong in Hong Kong. Different media for evangelization are not being widely used.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES

2.1 Evangelization at the individual level

Evangelization is the mission of each and every baptized Catholic. It is part of our fundamental commitment as People of God. It is not something extra or marginal which may or may not be done, but something essential which should and must be done. In the ordinary circumstances of their social and family life and in the sphere of their professions, individual members of the faithful ought to carry out their mission to evangelize. By being “salt of the earth and light of the world” they become both witnesses and living instruments of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By word and example they pass on to others the gift of faith which they received freely as a gift themselves. Indeed, just as so many Catholics came to the faith through the witness and example of relatives and friends, so too each must go out in turn to those around them. “It is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.” The person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. As the Apostle Paul says: “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Rom 10:14)

(References: Mission of the Redeemer #32; Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity #21; Evangelization in the Modern World #24)

2.2 Evangelization at the family level

Each family member has the mission to evangelize the other. This is especially true for Christian couples who are, for each other, for their children and their relatives, cooperators of grace and witnesses of the faith. By word and example, by loving affection and prayer, they form a true Christian home where the faith can easily and naturally be lived out and passed on to the next generation.

Where the majority of the family members are not Christian, the Christian member has a special task of making the saving love of Christ known to his family members. By patient love, the witness of forgiveness, charity and a changed life, the solitary Christian can be a leaven from within, leading other family members to come to know the Good News and receive the gift of faith. (Reference: Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People #11)

2.3 Evangelization by Catholic groups

Catholic groups are special beneficiaries of evangelization and at the same time they are evangelizers. In sending the disciples out two by two, the Lord recognized the value of mutual support in the work of evangelization. Also, we remember that when two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord, he is in their midst. For this reason, Catholic groups can be particularly effective in evangelization.

As Catholic groups and communities become more rooted in the Word of God, in prayer, contemplation and the sacraments, so too will they be better able to proclaim to others the fulfillment of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ. (Reference: Ecclesia in Asia #23)

2.4 Evangelization at the school level

The Catholic school is a favorable place for evangelization and a suitable place for formation in the faith. The witness of Catholic teachers and fellow students is important in this respect. For this reason, they ought to devote a part of their time to the Church, living their faith authentically.

Since the majority of students in Catholic schools profess no faith, the mission to evangelize them is truly "mission ad gentes". This specifically missionary work that Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church should not become neglected or forgotten in our schools.

(References: Mission of the Redeemer #74; #34)

2.5 Evangelization at the parish level

The parish community, rooted in the experience of God which flows from a living faith, is especially well placed to proclaim to others the fulfillment of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ. The parish community brings together a diverse section of the community where each, according to their ability, ought to cooperate in all the apostolic and missionary enterprises of ecclesial family.

In its evangelical outreach, the parish should be aware of the universality of the church and therefore be concerned with the needs of the people of God scattered throughout the world.

(References: Ecclesia in Asia #23; Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People #10)

2.6 Evangelization at the diocesan level

Evangelization should be the common vision and universal mission of each particular church. The local church must represent the universal church as perfectly as possible, remembering that it has been sent to all who dwell in its territory, including non-believers. Furthermore, the vision of each local church should extend beyond its own boundaries and include mission to the universal church. In this way she can truly fulfill the Lord’s command to “go, make disciples of all nations.” (Mt 28:19)

(Reference: Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity #20)

3. CONCRETE PROPOSALS

3.1 Long term evangelization plan

To evangelize ad gentes effectively, the diocese and each Catholic must look upon evangelization as their own responsibility and carry it out. The drafting group proposes numerous tasks, ranging from individual to diocesan level, and, through sustained efforts, we can expect to build a diocese with a greater awareness of

evangelization and more laity to fulfill the mission of spreading the Good News. The following gives a list of proposals from individual to diocesan levels.

3.1.1 Evangelization at the individual level

- a. Personal approach is the most effective way of evangelization. Individual Catholics are encouraged to make good use of personal contacts in their own state of life as an opportunity for spreading the Good News. *89a
- b. Each individual Catholic should attend at least one evangelization formation program, and take part in at least one public evangelization activity. *89b
- c. In the span of one year, introduce at least one non-Catholic to a Church function. *89c
- d. In the span of one year, introduce at least one non-Catholic to catechumenate class. *89d
- e. Catholic domestic helpers are encouraged to propagate the Good News to non-Christian members of their employers’ families, especially the young children. 91
- f. Read The Acts of the Apostles in the “Evangelization Year”, so as to become aware of their evangelical mission. The diocese should also invite relevant people, e.g. the HK Catholic Biblical Institute, to provide guidance for the reading of Acts. 92
- g. The working population should realize that in their respective professions, they participate 90

		in the work for the betterment of the world. Hence, they should work happily, emphasize professional ethics and responsibilities, respect and enjoy their profession. By doing so, they can become the good yeast. In their respective professions, they spread the good news to their own colleagues through words and life witness. The best life witness is to follow Christ and live and spread His spirit of love for all.
93a	h.	Design evangelization websites to help Catholics become aware of their evangelical mission, and provide non-Catholics with an opportunity to know the gospel.
93b	i.	Individual Catholics should make good use of their own places (offices, homes, etc.) and their particular profession to carry out the mission of evangelization, and to become the yeast of evangelization in society.
94	j.	The diocese, parishes and Catholic groups should positively encourage and openly support the faithful to take the initiative to use different means to spread the gospel.
95	k.	Catholics can make good use of opportunities to carry out inter-religious dialogue, since this is also one way of introducing the gospel of Christ to others. In searching for common areas, we can understand the gospel, God, and our Catholic faith more thoroughly and from a wider perspective. We can experience the

spirit of the gospel, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of God in other religions. In learning about the other religions and simultaneously introducing our Catholic belief to others, different religions can enrich one another.

3.1.2 Evangelization at the family level

a.	In order that the family becomes a place for evangelization, Catholic family members should try to influence other members in the family with their speech and life witness.	96a
b.	Catholic family members should take the initiative to invite other family members to pray together for the needy and the sick in the family.	96b
c.	At least once a year, the whole family should attend a Church activity together.	97a
d.	Catholic family members should decorate their homes in order to create a religious atmosphere.	96c
e.	Each family should have at least one Bible. They are encouraged to read the Gospel, and to read and share on The Acts of the Apostles in the “Evangelization Year”, so as to remind family members of their evangelical mission.	97b
f.	Once a month, the whole family should pray together for “evangelization”, e.g. by saying the Rosary.	97c

3.1.3 Evangelization by Catholic groups

- 98a a. To consolidate community life, the group should strengthen its activities of evangelization ad gentes. Therefore, at least once a year, each group should carry out or participate in an evangelization activity.
- 98b b. The groups should systematically share on The Acts of the Apostles, so as to kindle the evangelical spirit within the community.
- 98c c. Catholic groups should use “evangelization” as one of the themes of their annual plan.

3.1.4 Evangelization at the school level

- 99a a. At least once a month invite Catholic teachers or students to share their personal faith experience during the morning assembly, as a way to spread the gospel.
- 99b b. Catholic teachers, staff and students should spread the gospel to their non-Catholic counterparts by their life witness and speech.
- 100 c. Schools should be furnished so as to create a religious artistic environment, such as placing holy statues, crosses, books, posters, accompanied by religious music, etc. in order to edify non-Catholic teachers and students.
- 101a d. Schools should make special decorations for Church feast days, by which to promote the faith.
- 101b e. Schools should consider organizing a catechumenate class, providing the

opportunity for students to learn about the Catholic faith. They should also introduce to students and parents resources on the Catholic faith provided by the Church.

- f. Schools and parishes should work closely together in promoting evangelization activities; schools can employ a pastoral worker or assign a teacher to this task. 103a
- g. Schools can cooperate with parishes in organizing evangelical gatherings for Catholic schools in the respective areas. 103b
- h. Organize parents’ meetings, enabling parents to benefit from evangelization activities. 102a
- i. Schools can organize evangelization activities through parents and teachers associations (e.g. Christmas party). 102b

3.1.5 Evangelization at the parish level

- a. The parish council should have an annual plan and vision for evangelization. *104a
- b. The parish council should have an evangelization committee to carry out the evangelization work of the whole parish. *104b
- c. Catechumenate classes in the parish should pay special attention to the formation of the catechumens in their evangelical mission, and to provide the catechumens with an opportunity to evangelize even before their baptism. In this way, they will become evangelizers after baptism. 105a

- 106 d. The priests and pastoral workers in the parish should strike a balance between their pastoral and evangelization work.
- 105b e. Diversified channels should be available to enable people to become aware of God at an initial stage, serving as the means to learn about Catholic faith before attending the catechumenate class. The Church should support and recognize these channels.

3.1.6 Evangelization work at the diocesan level

- *107a a. Assign the month of October of each year to be the “evangelization month”.
- 108 b. The diocese should do something concrete to enable Catholics pay more attention to evangelization work, both locally and overseas, paying special attention to the needs of the poor and the weak.
- *107b c. The diocese should set up an Evangelization Commission or assign the existing Commission to promote evangelization work of the whole diocese.
- *109a d. The diocesan mass media organizations and bureaus should give first priority to evangelization ad gentes.
- *109b e. The Church has established many public service organizations, such as hospitals, hostels, and social service institutions, etc. These organizations should increase the awareness and work of evangelization, and

should witness the joy brought by the Gospel; from this joyful experience they spread the Good News. Catholic schools should also do the same.

- f. The diocese should consider setting up a school for evangelization, to serve as a place for the ongoing formation of evangelizers. *107c
- g. Organizations and bureaus in the diocese, especially the seminary in forming seminarians, should strengthen the awareness of evangelization ad extra. *107d
- h. It is time for Catholics in Hong Kong to carry on the spirit of evangelization ad extra of the foreign missionaries, doing evangelization work abroad. The scope will also include evangelizing people who come to Hong Kong from abroad to work or study. 110
- i. Extensive use of multi-media for evangelization work, such as the mass media, electronic board, etc. Moreover, evangelization wordings can be developed to create an evangelization culture and awareness. *109c

3.2 Preparation period

In order to proceed with a well-prepared evangelization plan, each Catholic must first have internal renewal. The drafting group suggests that there should be a one-year preparation period which lasts from Mission Sunday 2002 to Mission Sunday 2003. **111a

- **111b 3.2.1 First of all, a Diocesan Evangelization Commission should be established. The Commission would be responsible for coordinating, promoting and supporting the evangelization work of the whole diocese.
- **111c 3.2.2 In the first year, the Diocesan Evangelization Commission should coordinate human resources, establish working groups, carry out promotion and publicity work, and prepare materials on evangelization, such as leaflets, books, audio-visual means, etc. It should also assist the diocesan organizations, groups, parishes, and individuals to bring to full play the evangelical spirit. In this way evangelization work at all levels would be carried out in an interactive and communal spirit.
- 112 3.2.3 Lay down a concrete and feasible target for evangelization. Our group suggests aiming at 10,000 new Catholics by the end of the “Evangelization Year”.
- **111d 3.2.4 The Diocesan Evangelization Commission should assign a Sunday to carry out a “\$10 Campaign for Evangelization” to raise funds for evangelization work.
- 113 3.2.5 Call on every Catholic in the diocese to pray for “evangelization work” during the preparation year, and especially invite the Catholic prayer groups and the elderly to strongly support the project with their prayers.
- **111e 3.2.6 Organize training courses to help parishes train leaders in evangelization work, who will lead the parish and groups in evangelization work.

- 3.2.7 Print prayers, songs, and slogans to prepare for the commencement of the “Evangelization Year”. **111f
- 3.2.8 Invite parishes and groups to respond concretely to the theme of the “Evangelization Year” in its annual planning for the coming year, so that the spirituality and activities of parishes, groups, and individuals can be in line with the aim of the “Evangelization Year”. **111g

3.3 Implementation of “Evangelization Year”

“Evangelization Year” can be seen as a warm-up activity for a long-term evangelization plan. Within the period of one year or so, every level of the Hong Kong Diocese is mobilized to evangelize ad gentes. They can follow the recommendations of the “long-term evangelization plan” and evangelize in their state of life. The drafting group suggests that the “Evangelization Year” begins on Mission Sunday 2003 and lasts until Easter 2005. 114

3.4 Evaluation

An evaluation would be conducted every six months to monitor the direction and progress. At Easter 2005 when the “Evangelization Year” ends, there will be an overall evaluation to formulate the long-term evangelization plan of the diocese. It is hoped that thereafter every Catholic will have a stronger sense of spreading the gospel, and becomes more active in evangelization ad gentes. 115

CONCLUSION

1. Whether a faith group is en route towards growth and maturity can be seen from the importance it gives to evangelization. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the evangelization work also relies on whether the community is continually renewing itself to become an effective tool of God in evangelization.
2. St. Paul said: “how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16) St. Paul had such a strong feeling towards spreading the gospel because he deeply felt the love of God and the urgency of spreading this love. Hence spreading the gospel is not a burden, but a joy motivated by the love of God.
3. This document puts forth in a direct and simple way the present situation of evangelization in Hong Kong on six different levels, namely, individual, family, Catholic group, school, parish, and diocese. Then in line with the basic principles on evangelization, this document proposes a two-year evangelization program. It is hoped that the program will kindle in the heart of every Catholic the desire for preaching the gospel, and an increased confidence in spreading the Good News as well as creating a new culture of evangelization. Nevertheless, the promotion of evangelization in future will depend largely on the follow up made by the diocese after the Diocesan Synod.
4. United with Christ, may our evangelization plan prompted by the Holy Spirit give glory to the Father.

APPENDICES TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People

- #10 *The parish offers an outstanding example of community apostolate, for it gathers into one all the human diversities that are found there and inserts them into the universality of the church. The laity should develop the habit of working in the parish in close cooperation with their priests, of bringing before the ecclesial community their own problems, world problems, and questions regarding humanity's salvation, to examine them together and solve them by general discussion. According to their abilities the laity ought to cooperate in all the apostolic and missionary enterprises of their ecclesial family.*
The laity will continuously cultivate the feeling for the diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell; they will be always ready at the invitation of their bishop to make their own contribution to diocesan undertakings. Indeed they will not confine their cooperation within the limits of the parish or diocese, but will endeavor, in response to the needs of the towns and rural districts to extend it to interparochial, inter-diocesan, national and international spheres. ... The laity will therefore be concerned for the needs of the people of God scattered throughout the world.
- #11 *Christian couples are, for each other, for their children and for their relatives, cooperators of grace and witnesses of the faith. They are the first to pass on the faith to their children and to educate them in it. By word and example they form them to a Christian and apostolic life; they offer them wise guidance in the choice of vocation, and if they discover in them a sacred vocation they encourage it with every care.*
The mission of being the primary vital cell of society has been given to the family by God. This mission will be accomplished if the family, by the mutual affection of its members and by family prayer, presents itself as a domestic sanctuary of the church; if the whole family takes its part in the church's liturgical worship; ... Among the various works of the family apostolate the following may be listed: adopting abandoned children, showing a loving welcome to strangers, helping with the running of schools, supporting adolescents with advice and help, assisting engaged couples to make a better preparation for marriage, taking part in catechumenate-teaching, supporting married people and families in a material or moral crisis, and, in the case of the aged, providing them not only with what is indispensable but also procuring for them a fair share of the fruits of economic progress... To attain the ends of their apostolate

more easily it can be of advantage for families to organize themselves into groups.

Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity

#20 *As the local church must represent the universal church as perfectly as possible, it must remember that it has been sent to those who live in the same territory as itself, but do not believe in Christ so that it might be for them, by the example of the lives of the faithful and of the whole community, a sign indicating Christ. ...*

In the young churches the local priests should give themselves generously to the work of evangelization. They should work with the foreign missionaries, with whom they form one priestly body under the authority of the bishop, not only in ministering to the faithful and in celebrating divine worship, but also in preaching the gospel to those who are outside. They should show themselves ready and should eagerly offer themselves to their bishop to undertake missionary work in distant and abandoned areas of their own or other dioceses when the occasion arises.... In order that this missionary zeal might flourish among their compatriots it would help greatly if the young churches took part in the universal mission of the church as soon as possible and sent missionaries to preach the gospel throughout the whole world, even though they are themselves short of clergy.

#21 *The principal duty of both men and women is to bear witness to Christ, and this they are obliged to do by their life and their words, in the family, in their social group, and in the sphere of their profession.*

They should spread the faith of Christ among those with whom they are connected by social and professional ties, and this obligation is all the more urgent since so many people can only come to hear the gospel and recognize Christ through lay people who are their neighbors. Indeed wherever possible lay people should be ready to carry out the special mission of preaching the gospel and teaching Christian doctrine so that they might strengthen the young church by a more immediate cooperation with the hierarchy.

Ecclesia in Asia

#23 *The more the Christian community is rooted in the experience of God which flows from a living faith, the more credibly it will be able to proclaim to others the fulfillment of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ. This will result 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.

Evangelization in the Modern World

#24 *Finally: the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.*

Mission of the Redeemer

#32 *Missionary activity itself, which is not considered a marginal task for the Church but is situated at the center of her life, as a fundamental commitment of the whole People of God. ... To say that the whole Church is missionary does not preclude the existence of a specific mission ad gentes, just as saying that all Catholics must be missionaries not only does not exclude, but actually requires that there be persons who have a specific vocation to be life-long missionaries ad gentes.*

#34 *Missionary activity proper, namely the mission ad gentes, is directed to peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ, who are far from Christ, in whom the Church has not yet taken root and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. ... The specific nature of this mission ad gentes consists in its being addressed to non-Christians. It is therefore necessary to ensure that this specifically missionary work that Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church does not become an indistinguishable part of the overall mission of the whole People of God and as a result become neglected or forgotten.*

#74 *Besides catechists, mention must also be made of other ways of serving the Church and her mission; namely, other Church personnel: ... leaders of liturgy; ... leaders of Bible study groups; those in charge of charitable works; administrators of Church resources; leaders in the various forms of the apostolate; religion teachers in schools. All the members of the laity ought to devote a part of their time to the Church, living their faith authentically.*

Group Five – Marriage and Family Pastoral Care

INTRODUCTION

In modern society, marriage as an institution is undergoing a severe test, and since the cases of failure are on the rise, pessimism has permeated the whole of society. Yet this pessimistic view is too negative. Indeed, the mass media are in the habit of reporting not good news but bad, which can arouse the readers’ interest and sympathy by its sensational effects. Eventually, the general public would, in their subconscious, agree that marriage is doomed and without any future.

Christians must not simply follow the mentality of the general public. We believe in God, and it is our faith that He is the origin and the ultimate goal of human life. Besides, the reality that “God is love” is manifested by His intervention in human history. The Father’s creation is for the sharing of love, the Son’s redemption is for the purification of the life of love, while the Holy Spirit’s sanctification is for enhancing our ability to love. Since a human is made in the image of God, and God Himself is love, the meaning and aim of human existence is to lead a life in which there is the possibility to love and be loved. Detached from this context, life would definitely lose its lustre. In contrast, selfless love is full of vitality and creativity. Therefore, the only way to accomplish the sacred mission of the union between the two sexes and procreation, is for a man and a woman to give themselves to each other in a lifelong commitment to love and to bring forth and educate their children. Christians firmly believe that, with human effort and God’s grace, the enduring love between a couple would ultimately

triumph over whatever impacts and challenges marriage and family life might encounter.

* * * * *

I. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 1. Modern society has been undergoing rapid, drastic changes. While information technology has been developing at a tremendous pace, social structures, the family and ethical concepts, as compared with the past, are now very different. Thanks to advanced technology, people’s standard of living has been raised, but they are drifting apart as far as interpersonal relationships are concerned. They are more spiritually barren and yearn to be satisfied. As the family is the basic element of social structure, so long as we face all family and marriage problems squarely and tackle them in earnest, we can surely make a crucial contribution to social harmony as a whole.

1.1 General Social Condition and Prevailing Trends of Families in Hong Kong

Over the past twenty years, various political, economic and social changes have taken place in Hong Kong, exerting great influence and bringing about a series of new phenomena and problems for local families. After the confirmation of the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 by the Sino-British Joint Declaration (initialled in 1984), there had been an upsurge in

emigration, with a significant number of Hong Kong residents moving overseas. On the other hand, the reality of Hong Kong residents getting married on the Mainland led to the influx of thousands of Mainland women (and children) to Hong Kong. This has definitely put pressure on Hong Kong's educational, medical and social services, as well as her labour market (particularly in the non-skilled sectors). After the reunion of Hong Kong with China, quite a lot of emigrants decided to return to Hong Kong and be integrated once more into our local society. Due to this fact, the labour market, which has been experiencing keen competition since the economic-monetary crisis of 1997, is becoming more and more difficult. This keen competition in the labour market (especially in the non-skilled sectors) has in turn intensified the conflicts between local residents and the new arrivals from the Mainland.

Since the opening up and liberalization of Mainland China in the beginning of the 1980's, the local manufacturing industries have been moving northwards to China, so that the local economic development has concentrated mainly in the financial and services sectors. Due to economic restructuring, many non-skilled, middle-aged workers have to face the pressure brought on by salary cuts and unemployment. Simultaneously, Hong Kong people from different walks of life have started to work and live on the Mainland for

longer periods, leading to the separation of family members and the phenomenon of "virtual single-parent families". The long separation of spouses not only weakens their relationship and impedes their communication, but also makes the supportive function of the family ineffective.

Along with the economic development and the implementation of general education, the traditional concepts about love and sex have become more vague, while premarital sex, cohabitation and trial marriages have become more socially acceptable. According to a survey of young people, 75% of students were not opposed to premarital sex. It is easy to see that the new generation accepts the idea that if a man and a woman have mutual affection, then they may have sex; the marriage certificate is no longer regarded as the permit for sexual relations. Moreover, marriage is no longer an "inevitable" choice, since the number of people who choose to stay single or cohabit has been increasing. Nowadays men and women also tend to postpone their marriage and having children until much later. According to a government source concerning local families in 2000, the median age for first marriage was 30.0 for a man and 27.3 for a woman.

Following our economic development, local parents have more and more adopted "over-protective" ways to educate their children, who as a result become pampered. According to a study

made by the Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service in September 2000, children were not only being well looked after by their parents and provided for beyond what is reasonable, but often, even what the children ought to do for themselves as a matter of responsibility was done for them by their parents. Parents were also over tolerant of their children's misbehaviour. Consequently, our children lack self-confidence, have less respect for authority, easily get angry and become withdrawn.

With greater economic prosperity, people in this present generation have put more demands on marriage and their spouses. Apart from asking for mutual care, the greater majority of couples also expect intimacy, meaningful communication and a loving sexual relationship. Though couples are expecting more from their marriage, quite a lot of them still spend most of their time and efforts on raising and educating their children, neglecting communication and intimacy with their spouse. The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council Report in December 2000 pointed out that one-eighth of the couples who approached it for marriage counselling were asking for help because their sexual relationship was not harmonious, thereby undermining their marital relationship. This may explain why divorce rates rose from 7,735 in 1994 to 13,048 in 2000, an increase of 68.7%, resulting in thousands of single-parent

families. The soar in divorce rates has brought about another phenomenon, namely, a rise in remarriages, which increased by 24.9% from 5,309 in 1994 to 6,631 in 2000.

During the past few years, another serious family problem has been extra-marital affairs. On the one hand, since a large number of Hong Kong men have to stay on the Mainland over long periods for work, their marital relations deteriorated, and this accounts for their being easily tempted to look for mistresses. On the other hand, many people no longer cherish the values of marital fidelity, but instead focus their attention on sensual excitement. According to the statistics on extra-marital affairs produced by Caritas – Hong Kong in October 2000, a considerable number of people (men or women) who have extra-marital affairs are about forty odd years old, and have already been married seven years or more.

Family violence is yet another problem which is seriously affecting the family. Not only is the increase in cases of violence against wives alarming (in 1999 alone, there were more than 3,000 cases handled with the assistance of government departments), but a few parents, for various reasons, had even killed those in their household before committing suicide. This “lack of respect and love for life” is indeed a cause for concern.

The greater majority of couples in Hong Kong have recourse to family planning, but very few of them choose “natural family planning” (NFP). As in other countries, the “Human Reproductive Technology Ordinance” relating to “surrogate motherhood” enacted in Hong Kong for the first time on 22 June 2000, had dealt quite a heavy blow to the moral values which the Catholic Church has been upholding.

Since the general public do not take the moral values related to sex and human life seriously, the problems that follow, such as abortion, have become rather serious.

Though Hong Kong has achieved rapid and remarkable developments in the areas of technology, education, culture, entertainment and internationalization over the past thirty years, a report issued on 22 June 2000 by The Hong Kong Council of Social Service pointed out that there had been a noted retrogression on “family unity” (the indices being +100 in 1991 and -161 in 1998). This is an adequate reflection of the difficulties and challenges that Hong Kong families are now facing.

1.2 Catholic Families and Catholic Marriages in Hong Kong

The Catholic population of Hong Kong (excluding the non-permanent Hong Kong residents) is about 230,000, i.e., about 4% of the

local population of six million. About 10% of local Catholics are Mass-attendants, while the other Catholics, who have distanced themselves from the Church, hold values similar to the other people in Hong Kong, and their situation can be noted from the above general description of Hong Kong. However, even the Catholics who still maintain a relationship with the Church or who are steadfast in their faith, will be influenced to a lesser or greater degree by the wide-spread, prevailing ideas in Hong Kong. Therefore, to a certain extent, Catholics encounter a variety of marriage and family problems that are common in Hong Kong. As believers, they also face other problems, principally as follows:

1.2.1 New Concepts about Marriage

Being influenced by the prevalent trend of society, people are either unclear or skeptical about the basic concepts of marriage and the family, such as fidelity, unity and permanence of marriage, or else they simply disagree with them.

1.2.2 Mixed Marriages

The number of mixed marriages has been on the increase, accounting for more than 80% of the total number of Catholic marriages. These mixed marriages are going to create problems for the Catholic parties,

Catholic families and evangelization. Nevertheless, from a positive viewpoint, they also offer opportunities for evangelization, and so they deserve special attention.

1.2.3 Civil Marriages or Cohabitation

More and more of our faithful, for ideological or practical reasons, are choosing civil marriages, while rejecting or deferring church marriages.

1.2.4 Divorce and Remarriages

From time to time, valid marriages regrettably fail for different reasons. The Catholics who are involved understand well that valid marriages are indissoluble, and so after divorce they naturally feel that they have left the Church. Moreover, being quite ignorant about whether or not they can receive the sacraments after divorce, they sooner or later sever any ties with the Church.

1.2.5 Contraception and Abortion

As far as the promotion of natural family planning (NFP) and NFP education are concerned, not much has been achieved by the Diocese. Not being well informed, many Catholic couples have little confidence in NFP. According to the findings from a questionnaire, 55% of the Catholics who did

not practise NFP were worried that it was not reliable. Another possibility is that, Catholics either do not agree with the Church's teaching that "every conjugal act must be open to procreation", or else, in view of their own difficulties, they do not practise NFP. Some Catholics, when contraception fails, have recourse instead to abortion, which is sometimes regarded as one of the many ways of avoiding childbirth.

1.2.6 Infant Baptism

Quite a lot of couples, in which one party is non-Catholic, cannot grasp the significance of the Church's teaching on infant baptism. Therefore, arguing that children have the freedom and right to choose their own religion, they leave them to make their own choice after they are grown up. Influenced by the free mentality in society, such a wrong idea is also held by couples in which both parties are Catholic.

1.3 Marriage and Family Services provided by the Church and related Institutions

According to a survey, the Church is helping the faithful to tackle problems arising in marriage and family life through two main channels, namely, at the diocesan and parish levels:

1.3.1 Diocesan Level

a. *Caritas Family Service*

A Catholic institution subsidized by the government that provides a comprehensive range of family services, including remedial counseling, educational activities and group sharing in which participants are mutually enriched. The targets are family members of different age levels. In recent years, there has been a positive response to the social issue of extra-marital affairs by providing individual and group counseling for the parties concerned. There are also such new services as “marriage mediation service”.

b. *Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (CMAC)*

A government-subsidized Catholic social work institution which focuses mainly on marriage problems. It provides services for people of different religions, with major objectives in: (1) education; (2) counselling couples who face difficulties; (3) providing “marriage mediation service” for couples whose marriages are no longer viable, allowing

them to break up peacefully with due consideration for the well-being of their children.

c. *“New Family Movement” affiliated with Focolare Movement*

The Movement is engaged in meditating on the Word of God, sharing faith experiences, being companions to married couples and providing formation, etc.

d. *Family Movement*

This is a family pastoral work jointly organized by Caritas Hong Kong and the Diocesan Office for Laity Formation. Through the setting up of family groups, meeting monthly at the parish level, it achieves its objective of strengthening the couples’ marriage vow and their commitment to raise their children according to the Catholic faith.

e. *Courses and activities related to marriage and the family by the Diocesan Office for Laity Formation*

Jointly with the Family Movement, it organizes courses and activities for lay people on marriage and family life, such as child education, and tackles problems related to children and marriages.

f. *Couple Co-Creation Society Ltd*

Formally established in 1994, it has priests and sisters as advisers. It provides a systematic series of gatherings and workshops with specific themes for couples, allowing them to benefit from mutual exchanges and sharings.

g. *Programmes conducted by Fr. Thomas LEUNG, SJ, and Sr. Dominica CHENG, SPB*

They provide formation courses for Catholic couples, the newly weds and couples preparing for marriage. Having completed the programmes, there will be regular follow-up gatherings during which participants can share their experiences and give mutual support.

1.3.2 Parishes Level

A few parishes have formed groups on marriage and the family that take into account the particular social setting of their local community. However, most parishes have only organized occasional talks or activities on marriage. Some parish priests have complained that they are too busy to think about organizing family activities.

There is an imbalance between the services provided by parishes on marriage and

the family and those provided by diocesan organizations. Many parish priests merely concentrate on sacramental services, and are not sensitive enough to the more personal needs of the faithful. Moreover, Catholics in general are not accustomed to voicing what goes wrong in their marriage or family, and so they feel isolated and helpless.

1.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary for the Church, among her other duties, to address the current social problems of estrangements. Accordingly pastors have to devote more time to care for their flocks and be their companions.

II. CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, CHURCH TEACHING AND PRINCIPLES

2. From the analysis of our current situation, it can be seen that many problems arise in marriage and the family because most people (including some Christians) have unclear concepts about marriage and the family, or because there has been a shift in moral standards. There is therefore a pressing need for people to recall the true meaning of marriage and the family. This second part on “Catholic Doctrine, Church Teaching and Principles” is a brief presentation on marriage and the family in God’s salvific plan. Through a deeper understanding, we can have a well-defined goal for the realization of a marriage and family life that is enriching, healthy and happy.

It is necessary for pastors engaged in marriage and family ministry and for related organizations to understand the pertinent pastoral principles of the Church, since deviations in their application could lead to harmful, or even disastrous consequences for the faithful.

2.1 Marriage and the Family in God's Plan

- 2.1.1 In all cultures, marriage entails a promise and a commitment. True love, by its own right, demands commitment and promise. (Cf. FC 11) In order to live their love, the bridegroom (a male) and the bride (a female) commit themselves and promise to be true to each other in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, and to love and honour each other all the days of their lives. They are bold enough, in the face of an unknown future, to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives.
- 2.1.2 The dignity of marriage lies in its fidelity, unity and permanence. (Cf. CCC 1644-1648)
- 2.1.3 In God's plan, husbands and wives are called in marriage to help each other to attain holiness. (Cf. FC 34, 56, 13)
- 2.1.4 The marriage covenant has, between two baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament. (Cf. CIC 1055) God has, through love and a loyal covenant,

lived with His people; similarly, Christ, the saviour of humankind and the Bridegroom of the Church, has helped Catholic couples through the sacrament of marriage. (Cf. GF 48) The conjugal love of husband and wife becomes the symbol of the covenant between God and His people (Cf. FC 12) and of Christ's love for the Church. (Cf. FC 13)

- 2.1.5 The sacrament of marriage conveys special sacramental grace to help couples to carry out their mission. (Cf. FC 13)
- 2.1.6 The marital relationship has been instituted by God Himself. Thus a marriage between two baptized people, once ratified and consummated, is indissoluble and irrevocable (except by death). (Cf. CCC 1640) "So they are no longer two, but become one. (Cf. Gen 2:25) Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together". (Mt. 19:5-6)
- 2.1.7 The loving union of husband and wife is the mutual self-giving in the totality of one's being. "Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter-appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will." (Cf. FC 13, CCC 1643) Love that "is as powerful as death" and that "no flood can drown". (Cf. Song 8:6-7)

There is no other circumstance, except marriage, under which man can offer such a total integrality of the gift (cf. FC 11), self-giving as “bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh” (Gen 2:23), and as the happiness enjoyed by children requires the fidelity of the spouses and the indissolubility of marriage. (Cf. GS 48, FC 20)

- 2.1.8 The virtue of chastity involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift. (Cf. CCC 2337) Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery that is ordered to the gift of self. (Cf. CCC 2339, 2346) One has to practise the virtue of chastity at various stages of one’s life.
- 2.1.9 The conjugal act has a double meaning: the meaning of conjugation and that of fecundity. The relationship between these two meanings is set by God and should not be broken by man. (Cf. HV 12, FC 32) God said, “It is not good for the man to live alone” (Gen 2:18), “ ‘In the beginning the Creator made people male and female,’ And God said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one’ “ (Mt 19:4-5) and “Have many children” (Gen 1:28).
- 2.1.10 The Church can instruct couples, who, with some solemn and just reasons, plan to have

children after a period of time, that they may use the natural cycle basically in their reproductive ability, i.e. only to have conjugal acts during the infertile period. This way of controlling birth does not violate the moral principles of the Church. (Cf. HV 16)

- 2.1.11 The Church has always taught the intrinsic evil of contraception. This teaching is to be held as definitive and irreformable. Contraception is a deliberate act that prohibits fecundity while allowing conjugation between a couple. Contraception is gravely opposed to marital chastity, it is contrary to the good of the transmission of life (the procreative aspect of matrimony), and to the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses (the unitive aspect of matrimony); it harms true love and denies the sovereign role of God in the transmission of human life. (Vademecum for Confessors: concerning some aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life 2.4)
- 2.1.12 Among all the life-violating sins, the characteristics of artificial abortion makes it the most serious and lamentable of all. The definition of abortion and the destruction of infants as given by Vatican II is “a loathsome (mortal) sin”. (Evangelium Vitae 58) Since human life begins right after the

meeting of a sperm with an egg, every human being has the right of life and birth. And everyone should learn to respect life, realizing that it is a gift from God and no one has any right to directly destroy any innocent being, including infants not yet born.

- 2.1.13 The family is the basic unit of society while marriage is the foundation of the family. Conjugal communion constitutes the foundation on which the broader communion of the family is built, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, of relatives and other members of the household. All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family “a school of deeper humanity”. (Cf. FC 21)
- 2.1.14 The essence and the mission of the family are in the final analysis specified by love. (Cf. FC 17) (Some of the ways which help couples and family members to holiness are as follows)
- 2.1.15 Couples should communicate on the basis of sincere dialogue, since how good their relationship can be, depends wholly on their communication. Love between a couple should consist of the spirit of sacrifice and should be centered on Christ. (Cf. FC 20)

- 2.1.16 Parents are teachers and catechists, imparting rudimentary knowledge and catechism to their children through abiding by the will God and the teaching of the Church in helping their children to become good citizens and mature Christians. (Cf. FC 39)

- 2.1.17 Parents have the right and obligation to provide a holistic education for their children, including comprehensive sex education and education for chastity. (Cf. FC 36-37)
- 2.1.18 The family is the place for the formation of vocations and the cultivation of spirituality, and parents have a duty to encourage their children to actively and positively respond to God’s call. (Cf. FC 70-71)
- 2.1.19 As a domestic Church and part of the social community, the Catholic family should undertake the roles of prophet, priest and king in society. The role of prophet is to share one’s faith with others by living out God’s Word and to safeguard rights and promote justice, especially the rights of the family. Then, the role of priest is to dedicate one’s everyday life as a spiritual sacrifice, while the role of king is to provide warm hospitality to the needy, especially showing concern for the underprivileged in society. (Cf. FC 42-48)

2.1.20 Each member in the Catholic family is a catechist, as well as a receiver of the Good News, so that he or she should have the courage to be a witness of the Good News, be in communion with the Church, and take an active and positive part in Church life. (Cf. *Ecclesia in Asia* 46, FC 49-56)

2.2 Pastoral Principles for Marriage and the Family (Cf. FC 65-85)

2.2.1 Pastoral Formation and Counselling before and after Marriage

a. For Practising Catholics

The Catholic family has the responsibility of preparing young people for marriage and providing them with formation and counselling on family life. The changes that have taken place within almost all modern societies also demand that both society and the Church should work together to prepare young people properly for their future responsibilities. Young people who have received adequate formation and counselling on marriage and family life are generally better than others in keeping to a set of correct values and criteria of behaviour, and in their ability to tackle problems. After marriage,

especially in the first few years, couples still need ongoing formation and counselling. Thus, the Church should, with the help of various ecclesial communities (parishes, lay associations and Catholic families, etc.) and specialists, implement a solid and ongoing formation and counselling programme that adopts a positive, gradual, stage-by-stage (childhood, teenage, adolescence, courtship, proximate preparation for marriage and after marriage, etc.) approach.

b. For lapsed Catholics

Pastors should pay special attention to the moral and spiritual dispositions of the bride and bridegroom, particularly in regard to their faith. There are some Catholics who request to be married in church for motives which are social rather than genuinely religious. It is the primary duty of pastors, through premarriage formation, to rekindle their faith and purify their motives, so that they can meet the basic requirements for Christian marriage.

2.2.2 Organizations (diocese, parishes, Catholic families, lay associations and Catholic

institutions) and Personnel (bishop, priests, deacons, religious and specialists) engaged in Pastoral Care of the Family.

There are two aspects to be considered in the pastoral care for marriage and the family: universal and particular. The second aspect is expressed and actuated in the diocesan community, and in particular in the parish, which is a pastoral unit under the diocesan community. Pastoral care for marriage and family undertaken in the parish is more effective, although no plan for organized pastoral work, at any other level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family.

The Church should actively prepare those who will be engaged in the pastoral ministry for marriage and the family, namely, priests, deacons, and men and women religious. The Church should also enlist the help of lay specialists, such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, theologians and marriage counsellors.

As for married couples and Catholic families, they play an unique role in the mission of building up the Church and the Kingdom of God in history. Their tasks include, bearing witness to God as Catholic parents, providing religious, ethical and civic education for their children, teaching them to make proper use of

the mass media, advising them on choosing a vocation, and taking part in the work and activities of the ecclesial and civil community. Catholic parents should co-operate with other Church members who dedicate themselves to the family apostolate. Besides, Catholic families should also assist other families spiritually and materially, especially those most in need of help and support, as well as the poor, the sick, the elderly, the disabled, orphans, widows, abandoned spouses, unmarried mothers, mothers-to-be in difficult situations who are tempted to have recourse to abortion.

All kinds of ecclesial communities, lay associations and various groups and movements, can in a variety of ways and in different areas (such as promotion of natural family planning, defending the rights of women and children, promotion of the public good, etc.), participate in the pastoral work for the family.

The bishop must exercise particular solicitude for marriage and the family, which forms a priority sector of pastoral care. He must devote to this sector personal interest, care, time, personnel and resources, but above all, personal support for and co-ordination of the work of all those who, in the various diocesan structures, assist him in the pastoral care of the family.

Priests and deacons play a crucial role in pastoral work for marriage and the family. Their responsibility extends not only to moral and liturgical matters but to personal and social matters as well. They should give special support to those families in difficulties and pain.

2.2.3 Pastoral Care of Families in Difficult Situations

There are families and individuals who, often against their own wishes and through pressures of various other kinds, find themselves faced by situations, which are objectively difficult. Such, for example, are the families of migrant workers, broken or single-parent families, families with children who are disabled or addicted to drugs, and the elderly who are obliged to live alone with inadequate means of subsistence. These cases are especially in need of pastoral commitment that is generous, wise, prudent and modelled on the Good Shepherd. Apart from providing practical assistance, the Church should encourage these families and individuals to trust in God through prayers. The Church should also study the factors that lead to such situations with a view to helping to look for a long-term solution.

The following is a concrete description of some of the difficult cases:

a. *Mixed Marriages*

In Hong Kong, as in other places, marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics are on the rise, with a non-Catholic party who is either a Christian of another Christian Church or Ecclesial Community, or a member of another religion, or a non-believer. In these mixed marriages:

- i) Pastors should help the Catholic party, before marriage, to understand properly his/her obligation to practise the Catholic faith and the consequent obligation to ensure, as far as is possible, the baptism and upbringing of the children in the Catholic faith. Besides, in keeping with respect for religious freedom, the Catholic party should not bring undue pressure to bear on the non-Catholic party to make him/her change his/her beliefs or outlook on life, or to impede the free manifestation of such beliefs or outlook.
- ii) If both parties are Christians, they should make good use of and develop the elements that they have in common, i.e., those elements deriving from their

common Christian faith that are conducive to the expression of their unity in the sphere of moral and spiritual values, and that can contribute to the ecumenical movement.

- iii) Most importantly, through the support of the community, the Catholic party should be strengthened in faith and positively helped to mature in understanding and practising that faith, so as to become a credible witness within the family through the quality of love shown to the other spouse and the children.

b. Trial Marriages

Many people today try to justify “trial marriages” by attributing a certain value to them. But human reason leads us to see that these marriages, by carrying out an “experiment” with human beings, are in no way acceptable, because they are against human dignity. The Church, for her part, also cannot admit such a kind of union. For, in the first place, the gift of the body in a sexual relationship is a real symbol of the giving of the whole person. In the

second place, marriage between two baptized persons is a real symbol of the union of Christ and the Church, which is not a temporary or “trial” union but one which is eternally faithful.

c. De Facto Free Unions

This means unions without any publicly recognized institutional bond, either civil or religious. This phenomenon, becoming ever more wide-spread, can be attributed to varying factors, including economic considerations, the scorn and rebellion against society or the institution of the family and the social and political order, or the seeking of pleasure, or, a certain psychological immaturity that makes the parties uncertain or afraid to enter into a stable and definitive union.

All the above elements lead to serious consequences: (1) From the religious and moral perspective: loss of the religious sense of marriage; deprivation of sacramental grace; grave scandal. (2) From the social perspective: the destruction of the concept of the family; weakening of the sense of fidelity; possible psychological damage to the children; intensifying of selfishness.

d. *Catholics in Civil Marriages*

From the point of view of civil law, these Catholics have made a commitment to a properly-defined and probably stable state of life. However, similar to those Catholics who simply cohabit with others, they live a life that violates the moral values held by the Christian faith, so that they may not be admitted to the sacraments.

e. *Separated or divorced Catholics who have not remarried*

From time to time, lack of understanding between the parties, the inability to enter into interpersonal relationships or other factors can unfortunately lead to irreparable breakdown of valid marriages. Under these circumstances, separation must be considered as a last resort, after all other reasonable attempts at reconciliation have been in vain.

Loneliness and other difficulties are often the lot of separated spouses, especially when they are the innocent parties. The ecclesial community must support such people more than ever and help them to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness inherent in Christian love,

and to be ready perhaps, to return to their former married life.

The ecclesial groups must offer special love and assistance to those who have undergone divorce but who, being well aware that a valid marriage is indissoluble, refrain from remarrying and devote themselves solely to carrying out their family duties and the responsibilities of Christian life. Besides, they should not be hindered from receiving the sacraments.

f. *Divorced Catholics who have remarried*

More and more Catholics are influenced by the trend of remarrying after divorce. Nevertheless, pastors must be careful in discerning different situations: (1) some people have sincerely tried to save their first marriage, but have been unjustly abandoned by their spouses; (2) some have, through their own grave fault, destroyed a canonically valid marriage; (3) some have entered a second union for the sake of the children's upbringing; (4) some are subjectively certain in conscience that their previous and irreparably destroyed marriage had never been valid.

Pastors and the whole community of the faithful should follow a pastoral principle, i.e., to help the divorced, making sure that they do not consider themselves as separated from the Church, for as baptized persons they can, and indeed must, share in her life. They should be encouraged to listen to the word of God, to attend Mass (but not to receive Holy Communion, see reasons below), to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts in favour of justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace. In this way, they will surely obtain the grace of conversion and salvation.

Under certain circumstances, an ecclesiastical marriage tribunal can assist divorced Catholics in remarrying validly before the Church in accordance with Canon Law.

The Church does not allow divorced Catholics who have remarried to receive Holy Communion or other sacraments. This is not meant as a penalty or discrimination against these Catholics, but as a practice based upon Sacred Scripture. Firstly, their state and

condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist. Secondly, there is another special pastoral reason: if these Catholics were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage.

When, for serious reasons such as the children's upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, they may be admitted to Holy Communion, provided they take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence (that is, by abstinence from the acts reserved to couples who are properly married in the eyes of the Church), and avoid public scandals to the other faithful.

All pastors are forbidden, for whatever reason or pretext even of a pastoral nature, to perform ceremonies of any kind for divorced Catholics who remarry, for this would give the impression of the celebration of a new sacramentally valid marriage, and would thus lead people into error concerning the indissolubility of a

validly contracted marriage. Under certain circumstances, it would be inappropriate, pastorally speaking, for Catholics who have remarried (not in accordance with Canon Law) to hold major posts (such as eucharistic minister or chairperson of the parish council) in the ecclesial community, because it would lead to misunderstandings or scandals.

g. *Those without a Family*

For those who have no natural family as a result of the actual circumstances in which they are living (such as the elderly obliged to stay alone), the doors of the Church must be opened even wider. The Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who “labour and are heavily burdened”.

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Abbreviations:

CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law – 1983)</i>
FC	<i>John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio Regarding the Role of the Christian family in the Modern World (22-11-1981)</i>
GS	<i>Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes On the Church in the Modern World</i>
HV	<i>Paul VI, Encyclical Humanae Vitae On the Regulation of Birth (29-7-1968)</i>

3. CONCRETE PROPOSALS

Our concrete proposals for marriage and family life are based on the following Mission Statement:

Mission Statement

It is in and through marriage and the community of love which is the family that the overwhelming majority of people are called to find their happiness and holiness. From the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, we learn that men and women are made for one another, that neither is whole without the other. Their vocation to love will be realized in marriage: a man is to leave father and mother and join himself to his wife, and they become one body. Through the loving union of husband and wife, God creates new persons destined for eternal life, and this cooperation with God makes the human parents holy. For the prophets of Israel faithful married love reflected the love relationship of God for His people. And for St. Paul, the faithful love of husband and wife is a sign of Christ’s love for his spouse, the Church. Marriage is not just a sacrament: it is the sacrament by which Christians will find God through each other.

We are made to love and be loved. This is what all yearn for. The young couple entering marriage hope to realize this longing through their relationship with one another and with the new lives their love will bring into existence. However, many will be dissatisfied and disappointed. Divorce is a reflection of the gap between high expectations of love and the competence to realize

them. Thus marriage has the potential for tragedy as well as happiness. There is therefore much at stake, for here and for hereafter.

And so as a Church we have to become marriage-oriented. We must be convinced that it is vital to discover imaginative pastoral strategies that will help married couples find their human and spiritual growth through marriage, give support to and confirm the successful and happy marriages, and lend a hand to families which are suffering setbacks and in difficulties. As for the as-yet-unmarried young people, the Church should encourage them to achieve that level of human and Christian maturity that will enable them to find fulfillment in faithful married love. It is within their own family that children are themselves prepared for married life. If parents, by tender love for one another, mutual respect and forgiveness, provide good role-models of married life, their children will be helped to grow into mature, responsible, unselfish persons, capable of loving and being loved, and thus with a greater chance of realizing, in due time, the rich potential for happiness and holiness that the great adventure which is marriage holds out to them.

Our concrete proposals are mainly strategies, and are divided into three sections:

- (1) Regular formation and activities.
- (2) Pastoral measures in response to marriage and family problems.
- (3) Organizational mechanisms to cope with the proposals made in Sections (1) and (2) above.

3.1 Regular Formation and Activities

Whether or not one can enjoy a healthy marriage depends, to a large extent, on the example set by one's parents and on family education. One begins to prepare for one's future marriage from birth. The first three years are the most crucial period. One's concepts and values about marriage will be moulded and will follow a definite pattern as one grows up, and these, in turn, have a great influence on the happiness of one's future marriage. In this area, the parents and the family play a prominent role. Therefore the Church should first intensify the awareness of the parents in this area, and promote the formation for marriage and the pastoral care for the family.

Taken as a whole, marriage formation strategies include the following areas:

(1) conscientisation; (2) premarriage formation; (3) ongoing formation after marriage; (4) responsible parenthood.

3.1.1 Conscientisation

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The Diocese should help the faithful to become more aware of the fact that it is necessary for them to receive ongoing formation so as to achieve a fruitful marriage and a happy family life. The following are some concrete suggestions:

- a. The Diocese can publish leaflets about marriage formation, to be mailed or distributed to registered Catholic families by parishes every year, so that Catholics (including those who do not attend Sunday Mass) may know there is such a thing as formation for marriage.

- b. The Diocese can publish a “Pastoral Guide to Marriage and the Family”, (cf. 3.3.1.) copies of which are to be distributed by parishes to every Catholic who gives notice of his/her marriage, so that he/she can have some information about premarriage formation at least six months before an intended marriage, and can take an active part in the formation programmes.
- c. Special activities relating to marriage and family life can be organized at various levels (e.g. diocesan, deanery and parish levels), such as celebrating marriage anniversaries, the Feast of the Holy Family, Valentine’s Day, Fathers’/Mothers’ Day, etc.; enhancing the esteem of the faithful for a successful marriage and a happy family through experience – sharing on exemplary marriages, a liturgy for renewing the marriage commitment and the witnessing to sound parent-child relationships, etc.
- d. Making the best use of the Sunday homily and experience-sharing, in compliance with the liturgical seasons and readings, to explain the Christian values of marriage and the family.
- e. Bearing in mind the limitations of human resources and the number of attendants, it would be more appropriate that some of the formation programmes on marriage and family life (e.g., talks and courses presented as a series) be organized at the deanery level.

3.1.2 Premarriage Formation

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- a. Publish a “Family Catechism” (cf. 3.3.1) for the use of catechumens and the faithful.
- b. Enforce more vigorously the diocesan regulations “notice of a marriage must be given at least six months in advance” and “premarriage formation is required”. Priests working in parishes should familiarize themselves with the relevant Diocesan norms concerning marriage. They have the primary responsibility to explain both the goal and the significance of premarriage formation to those preparing for their marriage, so as to help them respond positively to their vocation as married couples. Parish secretaries should, as far as it lies within their responsibilities, familiarize themselves with the relevant Diocesan norms concerning marriage. They should also assist the faithful in a friendly way with the wedding formalities.
- c. Pastors should make good use of such occasions as premarriage inquiry, wedding rehearsals and wedding ceremonies to consolidate the formation of the newly weds.
- d. Provide a more substantial premarriage preparation, taking into due consideration the programmes of existing organizations and channels in the Diocese [e.g., Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (CMAC), Caritas Family Service, courses organized by pastors, etc.]; offer short-term (about two days), medium-term (about six months by

stages) and long-term premarriage formation programmes for the Catholics to choose from.

The basic content of the formation includes: the physiology and psychology of man and woman; interpersonal communications (including communications with the parents-in-law); Christian values of marriage and the family; ways of growing into mature individuals who are able to love and make commitments to self-giving; Natural Family Planning (NFP); the essential elements of a happy marriage.

- e. Establish resource centres at the Diocesan level or make use of existing ones (such as Caritas – Hong Kong) to provide reference information on formation for marriage and family life.
- f. Consolidate the training of voluntary couples who assist in premarriage formation.

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3.1.3 Ongoing Formation after Marriage

- a. The organizations which have provided marriage and family life formation for couples (e.g., CMAC and Caritas Family Service) are recommended to set up mechanisms which can facilitate the contacts between them and the newly married couples in the first few years of their marriage, with a view to receiving ongoing formation, and the key points of which include:

Ways conducive to sound interpersonal (including the parents-in-law) relationships and communication; maintaining sound communication and intimacy between husband and wife; learning

to accept, to give support to, and to show understanding towards the other party with a forgiving heart; maintaining a harmonious sexual life; getting to know the characteristics of each party's personality and the distinctive features of different stages of marriage, with a view to becoming more well adjusted with each other; paying special attention to the spirituality of married life so that both parties may grow and attain sanctity together.

- b. The Parish Council (Parish Pastoral Council) must draw up an annual pastoral plan on “marriage and family life” and, according to its ability, promote Christian family life and reinforce the existing related groups, such as ecclesial basic communities involving families, couples' groups, women's groups, men's groups, etc.

3.1.4 Responsible Parenthood

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- a. There is the need for a more vigorous promotion of Natural Family Planning (NFP) with related formation programmes, so that couples can learn how to plan for childbearing.
- b. Sex education of children: Parents should realize that they play an irreplaceable role in the education of their children on family life and marriage. Parents should not shirk their responsibilities towards the senior members in the family and/or domestic helpers. They have the right and the obligation to provide sex education for their

children and to this end they themselves should likewise receive relevant formation. They can also ask organizations, whose objects are in keeping with the Christian faith, for assistance.

- c. Christian family life: The family is an important place for witness to Christian faith, so parents should live out their faith in earnest, and put God's Word into practice. They should see to it that their children are baptized as soon as possible after birth; they should also, by word and deed, bring up their children in the Christian faith.
- d. Parents' Association for Sunday School Children, Parents' and Teachers' Association and Catholic Parents' Association in Catholic Schools: These associations should be set up, and, if they are already set up, one should make the best use of them. Parents should be helpful and steadfast co-workers in the field of education, in accordance with the 18th Recommendation in the Synodal document on "Culture and Education".

3.2 Pastoral Measures in Response to Marriage and Family Problems

In the Section on "Analysis of the Current Situation", certain marriage and family problems have surfaced. Some feasible pastoral measures are proposed below to deal with these problems. There is no intention, and indeed no possibility, of solving each and every one of these arduous problems, and so, only some of the more serious and urgent ones are addressed.

3.2.1 Irregular Sexual Relationships between Unmarried Persons: Premarital Sex, Free Love, One Night Stand, Trial Marriages and Cohabitation

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The cases listed above are more and more common in Hong Kong, undermining marriage as an institution, family life, moral values and social stability. As long-term preventive measures, integrated courses on sex education should be provided for teenagers in Catholic schools; related courses should be incorporated into Sunday schools and the youth formation programmes in parishes; and in particular, the virtue of chastity should be fostered. Besides, the Diocese can analyze the social and cultural factors leading to the above phenomena, and cooperate with the general public and related government departments to look for the means of tackling them.

As for Catholics or their partners who find themselves in the above situations, parish pastors/pastoral workers can help them, through friendly conversations, pastoral counselling and the sacrament of reconciliation, or refer them to social workers. Unmarried mothers or women seeking abortion may be referred to pro-life organizations run by the Church or other bodies.

3.2.2 Catholics in Civil Marriages

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The Church should explain to lapsed Catholics who marry civilly, that, although from the point of view of civil law, they have made a commitment to a properly-defined and probably stable state of life, their marriages lack the faith and ecclesial dimensions. Similar to those Catholics who simply cohabit with others, they live a life that violates

the moral values held by Christian faith, so that they may not be admitted to the sacraments. Pastors should, with a friendly approach, help these Catholics to put their faith into practice and to “convalidate” their marriage in the Church as soon as possible. In the case of a Catholic whose spouse vigorously opposes a church ceremony, the pastor should ratify the marriage in accordance with a special provision of the Code of Canon Law.

Couples in Difficult Situations

Foreword

Couples who are in difficult situations can be classified into three groups: husbands and wives becoming seriously estranged as their love for each other diminishes (3.2.3); husbands and wives being separated from each other (3.2.4); husbands and wives not respecting the unity and fidelity of marriage (3.2.5). Pastors, pastoral workers, counsellors and tutors responsible for formation at all levels (parishes, deaneries and the Diocese) should help these couples to intensify their awareness of the importance of marital relationships and through the liturgy and various kinds of activities help them realize that whether or not the marital relationship can last depends on the efforts of both husband and wife. Provided the couple make every effort, the marriage can be as enduring and as happy as they want it to be. There are ups and downs in the relations between any couple, so they need to be continually nurtured.

3.2.3 Husbands and Wives becoming seriously estranged as their Love for each other diminishes

It is normal for every couple to experience a cooling of their mutual affection. Properly handled, this situation can deepen their mutual understanding and become an opportunity to enhance their marital relation and a step forward in such a growing process. However, when a couple’s serious estrangement surfaces, pastors and pastoral workers in parishes should encourage the husband and wife to actively face and tackle their problems from the outset. They can encourage such couples who seek help, telling them to become more open and to communicate with their spouse more often. They should help these couples understand that though sexual life is important for enhancing their intimacy, heart-to-heart communication is equally important; besides, both approaches to the problem are interrelated and interactive. Pastors can encourage a couple (or the party who is more positive) to create a harmonious atmosphere and more opportunities for communication. They should also encourage a couple to join an ecclesial basic community for couples, so that they may share experiences on their married life with the other members, and with them explore new ways to improve the husband-wife relationship, and take part in the activities of related organizations and groups for improving the husband-wife relationship. Such a couple should also seek professional counselling.

3.2.4 Husbands and Wives being Separated from Each Other

Pastors/pastoral workers in parishes should take the initiative to respond to these kinds of problems, reminding a couple who live apart from each other that they should keep a balance between their family life and their careers. During the period of separation, a couple should be encouraged to maintain daily communication and contact through different channels, so as to express their mutual love and care and keep the other party informed of the daily circumstances of their children. Catholics should take an active part in the life of their local parish, give importance to their spiritual life and remember their spouse in their daily prayers. Husbands and wives must do their utmost to stay away from temptations and pray to God for the grace to overcome them. Parishes should also set up groups for spouses who are living apart, so that with the same living experience they can encourage one other and share creative ways of alleviating the estrangement brought about by separation between husband and wife.

3.2.5 Husbands and Wives not respecting the Unity and Fidelity of Marriage (Extra-marital Sex/Concubinage/Procuring Prostitutes)

A couple should face and tackle these problems from the outset. Pastors should arrange to meet with the couple, with both parties together and with each party separately. A pastor should first of all refrain from

passing rash judgements on the “unfaithful party”, and with a listening attitude try to grasp his/her situation. Having gained his/her trust, the pastor can then help him/her to be aware of the harm that his/her infidelity has brought to his/her spouse and family. The party should be encouraged to give up his/her old self and be reconciled with his/her spouse. A pastor is recommended to invite experienced people (such as those who have overcome similar problems or those with counselling experience) to be “companions” to the “unfaithful party”, to help him/her get through this trying period. If necessary, the party can also receive professional counselling with an open heart.

Other than the assistance mentioned above, the “faithful party” should be given emotional support, so that his/her wounds may be healed.

Pastors can encourage those Catholics who have once been “unfaithful”, but have later been reconciled with their spouses, to give testimony and to share their own precious experiences as couples who have actually gone through difficulties, so as to help those in similar situations. Pastors can also encourage “those who have given testimony” to receive training and become “companions” themselves.

3.2.6 Pastoral Problems brought about by Divorces and Remarriages *125

Pastors and the faithful should have empathy with those whose marriages have failed.

Pastoral workers engaged in marriage and family

ministry should remind the divorced Catholics who remarry or Catholics who marry divorcees to try to adopt the following procedures:

- (1) to seek help, first of all, from the ecclesiastical marriage tribunal-some marriages can be annulled according to the Code of Canon Law, or dissolved in favour of the Christian faith.
- (2) If the above procedure does not work, and the Catholic party concerned cannot be separated from the other party for serious reasons (e.g., they must bring up their children together), then the Catholic party, with the guidance of the confessor, can receive the sacraments on meeting the following two requirements :
 - (a) Both parties of the marriage take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence [that is, by abstinence from the acts reserved to married couples (who are properly married in the eyes of the Church)], and to live together as if they were brother and sister;
 - (b) The Catholic party would not cause scandals when he/she receives Holy Communion in public nor lead to misunderstandings on the part of the other faithful.

If neither procedure (1) nor procedure (2) can be adopted, pastors and the faithful should help the divorced and remarried Catholics or Catholics who have married divorcees, not to feel that they have broken away from or being abandoned by the Church. As

baptized persons, these Catholics can, and indeed should, share the life of the Church in the following ways: they should be encouraged to listen to God's Word, attend Masses (but not to receive Holy Communion), pray with perseverance, undertake works of penance, take part in promoting justice and peace, and bring up their children in the Catholic faith. Through these means, they will surely obtain the grace of conversion and salvation.

Pastoral workers/leaders of parish volunteers should assist the pastors in setting up small groups with similar family backgrounds, so as to give emotional support and be companions to the above families.

The Diocese is recommended to train more clerics and lay people to share the ever-increasing workload of the ecclesiastical marriage tribunal.

For those who have unsuccessfully approached the ecclesiastical marriage tribunal for help, the Diocese is recommended to assign more people (such as married permanent deacons, pastoral assistants, religious brothers and sisters) to provide counselling services, so that those faithful may continue to keep a close tie with the Church.

3.2.7 Contraception

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Pastors should let Catholics know that if they have grave reasons for regulating the number of children or adjusting the intervals between births, they should take into consideration Natural Family Planning (NFP) which is intrinsically open to procreation. Among many Church members, including clerics, the medical profession and

ordinary Catholics, there are quite a lot of misunderstandings about the NFP. One misunderstanding is that the NFP is “unreliable” (cf. 1.2.5). In fact, the NFP (e.g., Sympto-thermal Method or Billings Ovulation Method) is the only method approved by Church teaching. It is highly effective and has no side-effects. Therefore, the positive aspects of the NFP should be vigorously promoted at various levels-the Diocese, parishes, schools and adult catechism classes. Couples who have been successful with the NFP should also be invited to give witness and share their own experience. And with voluntary tutors receiving strict training provided by such professional organizations as CMAC and Caritas-Hong Kong Family Service, the aim “one NFP counselling station in every parish” can hopefully be achieved. Couples, especially those who do not adopt the NFP owing to lack of knowledge or techniques, should be encouraged to make good use of the present resources, like CMAC and the various NFP counselling centres of Caritas-Hong Kong. Those couples who do not adopt the NFP owing to a refusal on the part of their spouse to cooperate, should seek counselling from pastors.

3.2.8 Abortion

In order to put an end to abortions, it is necessary to promote through education, a correct outlook on life (cf. 2.1.12) among the general public. Pastoral workers and the faithful should encourage those Catholics who have had abortions to reconcile themselves with God

through the sacrament of penance and pray for the dead babies, helping them to overcome the traumas caused by abortion. If necessary, these Catholics can also seek help from experienced counsellors. Pastors can encourage them to transform their own bitter experiences into strength, which can be put at the disposal of others : sharing their past experiences with women intending to have an abortion, and encouraging them to overcome their present difficulties and keep their babies. Pastors and pastoral workers can refer those who have the need, like unmarried mothers or pregnant women, to competent organizations (“The Birthright Society”, “Mother’s Choice”, etc.), so that they can have a place to stay before giving birth, or make arrangements for the adoption of their babies.

The Diocese and the faithful must give their full support to organizations which protect the right to be born. The Diocese must staunchly uphold its stand: all Catholic hospitals and Catholic professionals and workers in the medical field must not perform or assist in direct abortions. All the information about the protection of the right to be born should be listed in the “Family Practical Guide” (cf. 3.3.1) for reference.

3.2.9 Family and Faith Problems related to Mixed Marriages *128

80% of the marriages in our Diocese are mixed marriages. It is always fitting, therefore, for pastors to make the as-yet-unmarried Catholics aware of the potential family and faith problems that can be brought

about by mixed marriages. Pastors should remind those Catholics who have the intention of marrying non-Catholics, to have more dialogue with their future spouses on how to live in harmony with each other after marriage in accordance with the principles of religious freedom. They should also deepen the formation of Catholics who are planning to marry, so that they are able to practise their faith after marriage, and try their best to let their children receive Catholic baptism and upbringing. If possible, Catholic pastors can cooperate with pastors of other Christian Churches or Ecclesial Communities to help the bride and bridegroom prepare for their wedding.

Pastors should encourage the Catholic party in a mixed marriage to respect the religious faith of the other party, if the latter is a member of another Christian Church or Ecclesial Community, or a member of another religion. Pastors should also remind the Catholic party to abide by the commitment to faith made before marriage. The pastoral workers concerned should use different means to help the Catholic party keep close contact with the parish community after marriage.

Parishes are recommended to organize more activities for couples of mixed marriages, e.g. liturgical celebrations (e.g. renewing the marriage vows on the Feast of the Holy Family), children-parents' gatherings (e.g. joint birthday party for children) and talks on family life education. Parishes are also recommended to cordially invite the non-Catholic spouses to participate in some specially designed courses, so that they can

understand the outlook on life of their Catholic spouses and to enhance harmony in the family. Besides, parishes can set up catechism classes for the non-Catholic spouses, accompanied by their Catholic spouses.

3210 Single-parent Families

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Single-parent families, whatever might have caused them (separation, divorce or bereavement of one's spouse), should be cared for by Church communities, especially parish communities. Regular visits to these families would be helpful in understanding their practical needs. Parish communities should try their best to help the parents concerned to improve the quality of education for their children, and assist these children in the areas of education, school information and techniques for better learning. When these families fall into dire poverty, parish communities (e.g. Society of St. Vincent de Paul) can help them to meet their urgent material needs, or to apply for public assistance or have recourse to other arrangements.

Pastors should encourage the divorced Catholics and their children to seek family or group professional counselling that deals with the consequences brought about by the separation of the spouses or the parents.

Groups of people whose families are in similar situations (e.g., the divorced or single-parent families) can be set up at the deanery level, and relevant assistance provided for them in regard to information, human resources or peer-groups. (It is not so appropriate for such groups to be set up at the parish

level, since the parties concerned could be easily labelled.)

Domestic churches (i.e. families whose members are all Catholics) have a special mission towards the single-parent families: they should open their doors to welcome the visits of the children of single-parent families whom they know, allowing these children to share their own family life and to have some experience of the roles and behaviour models of different family members.

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3.2.11 Deviations in Children's Behaviour

The reasons for the deviations (e.g. addiction to drugs, joining triad societies) in children's behaviour are complex, and the problems probably have no short-term solutions. Parish pastors and communities should give support to the Catholic parents concerned, so that they could take care of these children with love and patience. Parents are encouraged to be more cooperative with schools attended by their children, to join hands with the teachers and social workers there, with a view to bringing their children back to the right path, and to help their children cultivate a right sense of judgement, so that they would not be easily influenced and misled (e.g. by peers and the media). If necessary, the parents are to be encouraged to seek professional family counselling.

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3.2.12 Abuse of Children, Family Violence

Victims in such cases as abuse of children and family violence, especially in sexual assaults, are

usually reluctant to report their bitter experiences. Therefore, pastors should be sensitive to their needs when helping them. If the personal security of Catholics, their children or their family is involved, pastors and pastoral workers should encourage the Catholics not to keep silent to avoid embarrassment or adopt an appeasing attitude towards the aggressors, but to face their problems and look for solutions, e.g., seeking appropriate professional counselling, or seeking instant and appropriate protection in an emergency by calling the police, or by the intervention of the Social Welfare Department or "Harmony House", etc. If the aggressor is the spouse, the aggrieved party may consider separation.

3.2.13 Proper Attitudes in dealing with Marriage and Family Problems

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The various difficult situations mentioned above, whether caused by human failings or brought about against one's wishes, definitely bring pressure and pain to the parties involved and to their families. Pastors must imitate Christ the Good Shepherd, and with patience, wisdom and prudence, distinguish between different situations so as to show pastoral solicitude with empathy.

Those who seek help and those who offer help in the above difficult circumstances, must not neglect the importance of prayer. Prayer is the source of strength, and God's graces can make up for human deficiencies.

3.3 Organizational Mechanisms

The foregoing concrete strategic proposals have been made in response to the radical changes undergone by marriage as an institution, and family life in contemporary society. In order to carry out these proposals effectively, the Diocese of Hong Kong should introduce some organizational mechanisms.

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3.3.1 Setting up a “Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family” (abbr. as “PCMF”)

Since, at present, there are only organizations engaged independently in marriage and family pastoral care in our Diocese without a co-ordinating body, the setting up of a “PCMF” at the diocesan level is proposed. This body will be responsible for coordinating and consolidating the existing services and for formation related to marriage and family life; for following up on and periodically evaluating the implementation of all the concrete proposals made in this document; and for formulating and promoting new pastoral strategies.

Responsibilities of the PCMF may include:

- i) To publish the “Family Catechism”, “Pastoral Guide to Marriage and the Family”,
“Family Prayer Book” and “Family Practical Guide”;
 - “Family Catechism”: It introduces the meaning and mission of Christian marriage, and providing a family spirituality and basic information for Catholic families in the light of the local situation of Hong Kong, etc.

- “Pastoral Guide to Marriage and the Family”: It deals with the basic contents, stages and methods for formation and counselling before and after marriage, ensuring that Church teachings on marriage (including pre-marital sex, de facto free unions, trial marriages, mixed marriages, birth regulation, religious formation of children by parents, divorces, under what circumstances divorced Catholics or non-Catholics can remarry validly according to Canon Law, etc.) are accompanied by sound pastoral principles. The Guide keeps a balance in presenting the information on the different aspects – doctrinal, pedagogical, legal and medical – concerning marriage. The Guide also enables Catholics who are entering marriage and those who are already married to realize that it is not enough to acquire knowledge about the family, but that, in addition, they should actively fulfill the evangelical mission of Catholic families, participating in the life of Church and working together to build up the Kingdom of Heaven.
- “Family Prayer Book”: teaching Catholics the art of family prayers.
- “Family Practical Guide”: mainly for facilitating pastoral workers and the faithful in promptly referring Catholics who have marriage or family problems to appropriate professional counsellors or institutions.

- ii) To publish a periodical (e.g., a brief monthly newsletter) to report on the work and activities of the PCMF; to provide information on formation programmes and activities for marriage and family life at the parish level; to provide short articles on marriage and family life. The PCMF is recommended to have its own homepage.
- iii) To create new media communications (or make good use of existing ones, such as those operated by Caritas, the Diocesan Office for Laity Formation and the Diocesan Audio-Visual Centre) such as resources centre, telephone hotlines, websites, emails, chat rooms, the production of VCDs, a special column in Kung Kao Po, etc;
- iv) To study and put into practice the recommendations of the Apostolic Exhortation “Familiaris Consortio”;
- v) To promote natural family planning;
- vi) To advocate a Pro-Life culture;
- vii) To promote the virtue of chastity;
- viii) To set up funds so as to provide doctrinal formation and pastoral training for voluntary workers recommended by parishes, with the assistance of professional organizations (e.g., CMAC and Caritas).
- ix) To provide pastors with a channel for further training, so that they may cope with the contemporary needs of marriage and the family, and to provide professional training to pastors specifically responsible for marriage and family pastoral care;

- x) To discuss the feasibility of setting up a “Diocesan Marriage and Family Research Centre”.

Members of the PCMF may include: Catholic married couples, a representative from the professional family service organizations, a representative from organizations engaged in marriage and family pastoral care, Catholic professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, social workers), priests, a married permanent deacon, a religious Sister and a religious Brother, etc.

3.3.2 Setting up a “Parochial Pastoral Committee for the Family” (abbr. as “PPCF”) *134

The setting up of the PPCF is aimed at coping with and supporting the plans and services of the PCMF. Guidelines for the PPCF can be promulgated by the Diocese. The PPCF can operate, giving due regard for the functions of existing related organizations in the parish, or it can merge with them.

Responsibilities of the PPCF may include –

Coordinating and supporting the plans and services of the PCMF:

- i) Taking into due consideration the plans of the PCMF, to provide premarriage formation for the faithful and ongoing formation after marriage;
- ii) To provide formation on “natural family planning” as promoted by PCMF;
- iii) To recommend mature couples showing potential to the PCMF, so that they can take part in marriage and family life pastoral services, and if possible become long-term voluntary workers;

Others:

- iv) To coordinate and implement the pastoral plans for marriage and family life as drawn up by the Parish Council (Parish Pastoral Council);
- v) To organize various kinds of activities for enhancing family harmony and strengthening family ties;
- vi) To organize couple and family gatherings and promote family prayers;
- vii) To make good use of the cultural festivals (such as the Fathers' Day, the Mother's Day) and other celebrations (such as birthday, wedding anniversary) for the promotion of family life and the enhancing of children-parents relationships;
- viii) To promote family visits, putting love and care into action and enhancing the sense of the family as a community;
- ix) To show concern for : the elderly, couples living apart and single-parent families, as well as issues involving abuse of children and family violence, etc., in the parish;
- x) To reinforce marriage and family consultation services;
- xi) To set up a marriage and family life bookshelf;
- xii) To provide referral services relating to material and spiritual needs, for couples whose marriages are in danger of breaking up or have already broken up;
- xiii) To help teenagers live by the true values of marriage and family life, and to develop a mature personality (which involves sound relationships with family members, a proper attitude towards friendship, emotional stability, etc.);

- xiv) To convey to teenagers the positive messages of an enduring marriage and a happy family, especially through dramas and music which are more appealing to them.

In order to save resources and to encourage participation, some of the proposals mentioned above can be carried out at the deanery level.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

Marriage and the family have a direct bearing on the well-being of humankind. The sacrament of marriage is the symbol of Christ's unfailing love in the world. As Church members, we should attach great importance to marriage and family life, paying special attention to the impacts of "popular culture" on married couples, whose lifelong commitment takes the form of a covenant. In our contemporary world, marriage and the family as institutions are on the brink of collapse, with a retrogression of family life and children encountering immense obstacles during their physical and psychological growth. In the face of these negative phenomena, we have even greater responsibilities to equip ourselves for remoulding the family: strengthening marital relationships through formation, and lending our support to the rebuilding of broken family and interpersonal relationships. If we wish the Church to make progress and priestly and religious life to flourish, we need more healthy families. If we wish to foster the well being of the family, we need more men and women who know how to love and how to commit themselves unreservedly to married life. Only in this way can we provide our society with a new and better generation than the preceding one, and help our faithful to achieve sanctity in their family life.

Group Six — Education and Culture

PROLOGUE

“Education” and “culture” belong to two entirely different, but closely related fields. In discussing the future development of education and culture, this document will focus on “education”, but insert a “culture” component, which is related to education.

In 1989, in his Pastoral Exhortation, His Eminence Cardinal John-Baptist WU Cheng-Chung hailed Education, Pastoral Care and Social Service as the three pillars of the activities of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong. The Catholic Church’s contributions to education in the territory over the past 150 years are well known to all; the Church will continue to make further endeavours in this area.

The educative spirit of the Catholic Church originates from Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself was a great educator of mankind, who during three years of evangelization exerted an edifying and elevating influence on plain fishermen and greedy tax collectors. It may be seen from this that the essence of education lies in personal contact, persuasion, imparting and admonition. For all their importance, accessories such as relevant facilities, curricula and mechanisms are mere instruments. The educational ideal of the Catholic Church is based on the “holistic concept” in the Catholic philosophy of life, which aims at developing the total personality of man, not only by guiding man’s bodily life in keeping with the changes of society, times and culture, but also by enlightening man’s spiritual life. “Thus the Catholic school, taking into consideration as it should the conditions of an age of progress,

prepares its pupils to contribute effectively to the welfare of the world of men and to work for the extension of the kingdom of God, so that by living an exemplary and apostolic life they may be, as it were, a saving leaven in the community.”⁽¹⁾

According to the data available in the Hong Kong Catholic Church Directory for the Year 2000, Hong Kong has altogether 323 Catholic schools, of which 132 are run by the Diocese (including the Holy Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy and the Biblical Institute), 49 by Caritas, 138 by different religious congregations, and 4 operated privately by lay Catholics, with a total enrolment of 289,391 students, representing 30% of the total student population in Hong Kong. Among the students in Catholic schools, 6.56% are Catholics, and of the 11,645 teachers 27.26% are Catholics. As the biggest School Sponsoring Body in Hong Kong, the Catholic Diocese has a responsibility to play a prophetic role and see that diocesan schools work hand in hand with Religious and Caritas schools as well as schools operated by Lay Catholic schools for the betterment of society and the advent of the kingdom of heaven.

In what follows, we shall first make a brief analysis of the current situations as well as the Catholic educational undertakings in Hong Kong. This will be followed by a description of our great aspiration to improve society through educational work, including a vision about the kind of community we wish to foster and the mission we set for ourselves in bringing up youth and students. Finally, in order to carry out our educational mission and turn our vision into reality, we shall make concrete recommendations on how to bring about reforms and innovations.

I. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATIONS

The current conditions of education in Hong Kong are most intricate and complex. We shall first attempt of brief analysis of the social environment and youth problems. We shall then examine schools' general negligence of Chinese culture and make a summary scrutiny of the shortcomings in Catholic educational undertakings.

1.1 Social Environment

Recent decades have witnessed Hong Kong's enormous achievements in commerce and industry as well as material development. But the social environment and moral standards in the territory have been deteriorating. In the process of its urbanization and commercialization, rampant utilitarianism and the fad of seeking material comforts are not without influence on parents' and teachers' conceptualization of values. Many parents consider providing their children with material comforts or necessities of life to be what the fulfillment of parental duty is all about. On their part, many teachers confine their efforts to imparting knowledge and skills for making a living, and would have very little to do with genuine education and character formation. Greed for monetary gains has led producers to flood the Hong Kong market with sex and violence movies and publications. Moral decadence led many youths and teenagers to go astray. In order to improve the social milieu in Hong Kong, there is a definite need to spare no efforts in promoting moral education in Hong Kong.

1.2 Perplexities Bedeviling The Youth

Youths will be the pillars of society. In our lively and energetic community, many youths are praiseworthy in their academic and group activities. However, there are also many youths who are struggling with all sorts of perplexities.

Children begin to receive education at the age of three, which is the beginning of lifelong learning. If educators teach without understanding children's needs, they cannot achieve the objectives of education. Among youngsters of the schooling age, those in the primary and secondary schools are most likely to suffer from perplexities. Hence, it has become an important educational objective of Catholic schools to help such students solve the perplexities they face.

As the younger generation is the target of education, educators who fail to understand the needs of the youth will also fail to achieve the goals of education. For this reason, it has become an important objective of education to help solve the predicaments which are being faced by young people.

Today's young people are confronted not by a simple society, but by an environment full of temptations. Furthermore, the development of school education does not synchronize with that of society and the blow to students' psychological and mental growth cannot be neglected. Under the spell of modern trends, many young people have become intoxicated by an illusory world. Charmed with unhealthy ideas, many

blindly go after love and passion, peer recognition, violent inclinations, materialistic worship and fetishism, at the expense of search for true living or a correct outlook on life. In the past, such phenomena occurred mostly to secondary school students, but nowadays, they happen to children in the upper primary classes, thus making counseling also an onerous task in primary schools.

When they experience feelings of affection, many young people lack communication skills and do not know how to express themselves. Egged on by the media, some young people turn to enchanting affection, which is by no means easy to come by. When confronted with difficulties, they do not know where to turn to unbosom themselves. Some students mistake sex for love and indulge themselves, which harms both their body and soul.

It is quite common for both parents to work outside. Under the pressure of their own work, they have less time to communicate with their children or to keep them company. Thus the lack of communication between young people and their family has become an issue that deserves our close attention. Some parents try to use material things to fill the inner emptiness of their children. This constitutes a deficiency in the children's growing process, making it difficult for them to strike a normal balance between their parents' love and concern on the one hand and the inclination towards materialistic values on the other. Because they work outside, parents have less time to share with their children than was

formerly the case. On their part, young people need to cope with their studies and assignments, and when confronted with the impact of different values, they do not know how to share views with other members of their family. Owing to lack of communication between parents and children as well as differences in concepts of values and in living experiences, when young people come across problems in studies and assignments, and those resulting from clashes of different concepts of values, they do not know how to share their problems with their own family, instead, they turn to their peers for help. Yet, their peers have only limited experiences in life, and more often than not, provide the wrong kind of advice. This has been the source of numerous problems. There are many such cases in church schools. Teachers who can barely cope with their heavy workload find it beyond their ability to deal with problems of students' character formation.

In front of rapid development of information technology, young people wallow in internet culture, making friends through the internet, ICQ and electronic games, but they are unable to make use of technology to help them in their search for spiritual values, traditional culture, and ethical and moral accomplishments. This will lead to an aftermath of social issues and problems.

What is more, under the influence of cartoons, many young people believe in using violence to solve problems, and try to emulate personalities in the cartoons. The vulgar language and the perverted and illusory protagonists in the cartoons affect the growth of

youngsters. Such circumstances aggravate schools' difficulties in promoting language studies and moral education.

1.3 Inadequacy in Promoting Chinese Culture

Many schools have not given due attention to the invaluable elements in Chinese culture, nor have they guided school children to appreciate and identify themselves with where their "root" lies. This has resulted from several factors. Since the end of the 19th century, many Chinese intellectuals who are favourably disposed toward western civilization, have put the blame for China's feudalism and backwardness on traditional Chinese culture with Confucianism as its backbone. The educational policy in the colonial period was biased towards introducing western civilization, science and technology; lay particular emphasis on the teaching of the English Language at the expense of Chinese; and strove to prepare young people for overseas studies and to produce civil servants and obedient citizens. Then, the community's process and urbanization and commercialization, many schools have put their emphasis on imparting knowledge and skills for making a living, to the detriment of character formation and cultural accomplishments. The situation has not changed for the better since the handover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1997. As Chinese culture is where Hong Kong people's "root" lies, Catholic schools should promote the invaluable elements in Chinese culture and help students revive confidence in their own heritage.

We should therefore make the promotion of Chinese culture one of the main emphases of our educational work.

1.4 Religious Formation in Schools

A school should be a good place for evangelization a suitable milieu for the formation of faith. This is because the seeds of faith are brought to fruition by the importance which schools attach to the formation of faith as well as by the commitment of Catholic teachers and students. What is more, schools that have close links with parishes enjoy the additional benefit of parish support. However, the small percentages represented by Catholic teachers and students in their total numbers in the schools make it difficult to generate a religious atmosphere or a clear thrust in the formation of faith. The absence of pastoral workers in many schools hinders the provision of pastoral care.

The kinds of activities conducted in schools are not dissimilar from those organized by Small Christian communities. But they attract a cold response from some students. Are or are not the substance and modes of such activities incompatible with the needs of students? Do or do not students have preconceived ideas about religious activities being boring and of a routine nature?

Another phenomenon that gives one much food for thought concerns the responses which religious activities obtain from Catholic and non-Catholic students. Sometimes, non-Catholic students show a more positive response as well as greater zeal and commitment than

Catholic students. By contrast, some Catholic students are more reserved and introvert, and attend activities in a perfunctory manner, thus without true participation. Those are usually students who were baptized at a much younger age. For lack of faith formation at home, their faith does not have a firm foundation. They labour under the impression of being compelled to join faith formation activities. Hence, they give a relatively cold response and adopt a more passive attitude.

A vast majority of schools have established at least one Catholic Students Society or some Christian communities. Such groups conduct periodical and rather frequent gatherings, with activities falling into such categories as “spiritual” (like retreats), “recreational” (like outings) and “concern for society” (like services). Relatively speaking, they seldom engage in imparting religious knowledge or assisting students with their personal growth. Basically, such groups are unable to exert influence in schools. Most students give preference to other extracurricular activity organizations.

In another perspective, coordination between schools and parishes is worth our attention. Students will sooner or later finish their studies and leave school. It is most important to make them proceed from schools’ Christian communities to those in the parish, where they can continue their journey of faith. It is therefore incumbent upon schools and parishes to set up networks to let youth pastoral care cater for the growth of the youth in an all-round manner. If pastoral workers in parishes can provide support to the faith formation

activities in schools, it will facilitate students living and growing within their own parish after leaving school. Otherwise, their attrition rate might be fairly serious. In some cases, the relationship between schools and the parish is maintained just by the use of each other’s space or by inviting priests to say Mass, thereby resulting infrequent opportunities for “interaction” and also in a lack of contact between pastoral workers and students. Consequently, when students wish to learn catechism, they do not get a chance to do so because of lack of communication with the parish, which is of course a great pity!

1.5 Pre-school And Adult Education

The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, some Religious Congregations and Caritas operate kindergartens with the mission of educating children with love and commitment in keeping with the Christian spirit. These kindergartens are able to keep up with the improvements of the times and meet the needs of society. They Help children to learn in a cheerful and effective manner, by providing them with an all-round and balanced environment for learning, based on their developmental needs. This enables children to develop initiative in learning, looking for new knowledge, forming a positive and pro-active outlook of life, and laying a foundation for lifelong learning. Each kindergarten has its own style and its own devices to attract pupils. Parents are free to choose suitable kindergartens for their children.

In recent decades, the livelihood of Hong Kong people has undergone major changes. Their work requires substantial knowledge, but knowledge changes continuously. Everybody has to cope with different domains of knowledge, hence they need to learn all the time. In response to such circumstances, Caritas has, since 1963, adopted adult education as one of its principal thrusts in the education field. Through the provision of various kinds of service, Caritas has constantly promoted lifelong learning and a general learning culture in the community. All along, Caritas has maintained an open access policy, thus providing those in need with first or second opportunities for education, with the aim of equipping them with literacy and working skills, helping enhance their academic qualifications. Apart from helping people to cope with their working needs, Caritas adult education also contributes to their personal development and social participation.

With a longer life expectancy, the population of Hong Kong is getting older. Often because of their lower level of education, elderly people experience difficulty in getting along with others. On their part, through long periods of lack of contact with society, housewives are unable to keep up with modern changes and lag behind their children who are receiving education. This has led to serious problems of generation gap. Owing to cultural differences, immigrants from the Chinese mainland find it difficult to integrate themselves into the local community. The contributions which Caritas has been

making to improve the lot of these underprivileged groups are genuine endeavours to put into effect the spirit of the Gospel. If a dimension of the Catholic faith is introduced into its services, they will serve as even better witnesses to evangelization.

1.6 Catholic University And Community Colleges

Furthermore, lifelong learning has become a new trend in Hong Kong. In response to this trend, the Diocese should establish community colleges with a flexible admission policy, so as to allow young students and working adults to pursue studies at their convenience and also serve as one of the best channels for entry to the above-mentioned Catholic university.⁽²⁾

II. VISION AND MISSION

After the analysis of the current situations, in order to chart the future course of educational development, we must first ask ourselves what are our final aspirations. In other words, in using education to edify and reform the masses, in final analysis, what sort of community do we wish to foster? Such aspirations and long-range prospects may be called “Vision”.

For making our “Vision” come true, we must set up a “Mission” for us to put our heart and soul to. We should particularly consider what sort of persons we wish to produce for society when we educate children, teenagers and adolescents.

The “Vision” and “Mission” of our educational work are spelled out in the following paragraphs.

2.1 VISION

To foster a community which cherishes and promotes Christ’s teachings of love and service as well as the social values and love of life in its own culture,⁽³⁾ and which strikes a balance between the development of the quality of livelihood and the development of the quality of spiritual life.

2.2 MISSION

To make Christ the foundation of the whole educational enterprise, offering Him as the One Who ennoble man, gives meaning to human life, and is the Model for all people.⁽⁴⁾

To present the Christian concept of life according to the Gospel and the invaluable essence of Chinese culture, so as to generate human attitudes⁽⁵⁾ and, in collaboration with parents⁽⁶⁾, help youth and students to cultivate wisdom and virtues, peruse the truth, verify merits, and to develop into:

- Persons who hold dear the basic human rights and dignity⁽⁷⁾ the values of honesty, fairness, justice, integrity, self-sacrifice and altruism, filial piety, diligence, frugality, the thirst for learning, respect for life⁽⁸⁾, harmony, peace, reconciliation⁽⁹⁾, tolerance and acceptance, and a strong sense of environmental responsibility⁽¹⁰⁾ and the bond of brotherhood that makes all man one;

- Persons sound in body and mind, who are always full of vitality, take a positive and proactive attitude in all matters, and are ready to rise to challenges;
- Persons of compassion who have a preferential love of the poor⁽¹¹⁾ and serve generously people in need;
- Persons with civic responsibility who are eager and competent to make contributions to the social and moral well-being of the nation and the local community⁽¹²⁾;
- Persons with a discerning mind and moral courage, capable of making a critical evaluation of social media trends and media output⁽¹³⁾, and making positive recommendations;
- Persons with good taste, capable of appreciating the beautiful in nature, art, music, literature, etc.,
- Persons with creativity, who develop individual innate potentials to the fullest, and motivated by “the truth which makes one free”⁽¹⁴⁾, journey toward the “new heaven and new earth”⁽¹⁵⁾.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to carry out their educational “mission”, and through the inculcation of the Christian spirit and the invaluable essence of Chinese culture, to turn their ultimate “vision” into reality, the Catholic School Sponsoring Bodies in Hong Kong must begin with a scrutiny of the education system and a curricular reform, provide a healthy campus life, and develop pastoral work. Then there ought to be close

coordination among the Diocese, the parishes and the schools; and front-line educators must be provided with the kind of formation they need. This will be how, of one heart and mind, all who are involved in educational undertakings, should work together for the upbringing of the younger generation. Among other things, the establishment of a Catholic university and community colleges should be important task for the new era.

3.1 Educational Mission

3.1.1 The major mission of Catholic education is as follows:

With Christ as the foundation of the whole educational enterprise, to endeavour to present the Christian concept of life according to the Gospel and the invaluable core of Chinese culture, so as to generate human attitudes and help youth and students to cultivate wisdom and virtues, pursue the truth, verify merits and develop into persons who cherish human values and who are sound in body and mind, moral courage, good taste and creativity.

3.1.2 The above mission should be adopted as the primary aim which all Catholic schools and educators should go all out for and be used as basis for annual evaluations.

3.2 Educational System and Curriculum

3.2.1 Review of the Education System

The Diocese should develop a comprehensive education system embracing kindergartens, primary

and secondary schools, community colleges and a university, which cherish the same ideals and dovetail their curricula.

3.2.2 Curricular Reform to Promote Holistic Education

Holistic education should include spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic formation. In order to give students more time to receive holistic education, schools should make appropriate tailoring and consolidation of their curricula. Furthermore, with the provision of holistic education, schools should adopt multi-faceted appraisals of students, which include not only intellectual assessment, but also evaluations in non-academic areas such as spiritual, moral, physical, social and aesthetic formation.

As far as possible, Catholic kindergartens should accept or apply for government subsidies, e.g. Quality Education Fund, in order to improve children's education. In their curricular design, kindergartens should take into consideration children's psychological, mental and physical development.

3.2.3 Religious and Moral Courses⁽¹⁶⁾

The Diocese should formulate guidelines for the teaching of religious and moral studies. It should produce teaching materials which are related to people's daily life and in keeping with the times, and which help the younger generation

build up a positive outlook on life replete with true love. These teaching materials should guide them to adopt Christ and His perfect personality as their own model, i.e. using imitation of Christ's spirit of love and service and an infinite motivation in their search for perfection. At the same time, experiences in daily life should often be quoted to stimulate students to brood over problems concerning the value of life, find their own directions in life and foster sound concepts of values. Social issues such as single parent families, new immigrants, the "money talks" policy, materialism, sex and violence, etc. should be discussed on the basis of ethical principles and Christian love. Besides, edifying and heuristic religious books should be introduced to students so as to give them opportunities to get in touch with Lord Jesus and to have a personal experience of His love.

Religious curriculum should have two components: formal and informal, which permeate, or liaise with, different subjects and all kinds of activities. Religious dimension should not stop at the planes of experiences and thinking, it should go further and deeper into those related to the meaning of life and concepts of values. In consonance with such a dimension, Catholic schools should form a Religious Group or a School-based Values Group dedicated to enhancing religious education to meet the mission goals of the school or the priority objectives of the relevant year.

Moral courses should help students to cherish human dignity and basic rights, honesty, fairness, justice, integrity, self-sacrifice and altruism, filial piety, respect for life, Diligence, frugality, harmony, peace, reconciliation, tolerance and acceptance, care for and appreciation of the needs of under-privileged groups. The courses should also foster students' eagerness to serve people in need, strengthen students' sense of environmental and civic responsibility, and make them cherish the bond of brotherhood that makes all men one.

The contents and teaching approaches of religious and moral courses should fit in with the levels of various classes. The courses should cover human ethics, the spirit of the Gospel, the meanings of Church rites and rituals, the social value of the faith, the relations between the development of high technology and mass media. When dealing with the values promoted by the Catholic Church, there should be a greater contrasting exposure to traditional Chinese concepts, so as to create links with the Chinese cultural root of the people of Hong Kong.

The top priority is to compile textbooks of religious and moral studies textbooks that fit in with various levels, they would solve the pedagogical difficulties of teachers on the one hand, and on the other, would help students to face public examinations. Provided that the teaching materials are compiled and presented in a lively

manner in accord with the times, they will be welcomed by students and will thereby reap the added benefit of evangelization.

3.2.4 Faith and Culture⁽¹⁷⁾

The Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops which took place in 1999 emphasized that “the separation between the Gospel and culture is a tragedy of our times; it deals a heavy blow to evangelization and culture”. The message promulgated by Catholicism is to “Love God and Man” and to appreciate and protect those cultures of various peoples that honour God and love man.

As the culture of a nation is not separated from her language, schools should strengthen students’ learning of their mother tongue and their understanding of Chinese culture. As the use of mother tongue as medium of teaching enables more students to understand and to learn better, endeavours should be made to remove the public’s misunderstanding about the use of mother tongue and to help them to realize the effect and significance of adopting mother tongue as medium of teaching. Nevertheless, because of Hong Kong’s status as an international economic and cultural centre, all walks of life have high demands for proficiency in both Chinese and English.

In addition to taking an active role in promoting Chinese language and culture, therefore, Catholic schools should enhance students’

knowledge of and proficiency in English. This is because proficiency in both Chinese and English and a pluralistic approach to teaching are necessary.

In order to promote Chinese culture, the school curriculum should include Chinese literary works and selected readings from ancient writings, which will help students to get to know and identify themselves with the time-honoured magnificent culture of their fatherland. Such selected readings will also help students to appreciate and implement the special traits and teachings of traditional Chinese morals, such as filial piety, sincerity, honesty, trustworthiness, kindness, peacefulness, esteem for teachers and their teachings, eagerness to learn, diligence, thrift, courage to serve a just cause, love of life, respect for the elderly, moderation in all things, self-sanctification for public service, the brotherhood of mankind, civic responsibility for the global community, etc. The school curriculum should also include an extensive introduction to Chinese adages which contain the popular wisdom of the Chinese people. These adages have been handed down through the centuries and have been on almost everybody’s lips so that they have worked on common people’s life styles and attitudes, and thus deserve being called one of the invaluable treasures of Chinese culture. The inclusion of Chinese literary works, selected readings from ancient writings and the Chinese sayings and

adages in the school curriculum serves to assist students, on the one hand, to gain a personal knowledge of, and identify themselves with, what represents their own “root”, and, on the otherhand, to drink in the essence of the moral messages and translate it into action in their daily life.

Cultural refinement is an important aspect of education. It includes cultivating good taste and aesthetic understanding capable of appreciating not only literature, but also what is beautiful in nature, music, chess, calligraphy, painting architecture, sculpture, landscape gardening, dramas operas, dances, etc.

There is also a need to get an in-depth understanding of the culture of the modern youth so as to be able to give them effective guidance and to introduce the Gospel to them.

No matter how hard Catholic schools may try, they will not succeed in preventing the invasion of the unhealthy costumes, trends and culture of society. Catholic schools cannot protect their own virtue in isolation from the rest of the world. Rather they must criticize the errors of the times and launch counter currents of culture for students’ choice. Such counter currents may revert the trends and prevail over them. An interaction between the spirit of the Gospel in Catholicism and the treasures of civilization in Chinese culture will add radiance and beauty to each other. Schools should therefore integrate the two so that hand in hand

they might do a more effective job of spreading the Gospel and providing pastoral care to the youth of Hong Kong.

3.2.5 Physical and Mental Health

Schools should strengthen and sports activities and foster physical and mental health. They should help students to form the habit of engaging in daily physical exercises; guide them in managing their time among work, pleasure and rest; assist them to develop pastimes and hobbies that are conducive to physical and mental health, to know how to relax and how to reduce and remove mental strain, and to gain a sound understanding of food hygiene, nutrition and mental health. All this will enable students to become persons sound in body and mind, who are always in high spirits and full of vitality, take a positive and proactive attitude in all matters, and are ready to rise to challenges.

3.2.6 Elicitation Approach to Teaching

Schools should use extensively an elicitation approach to teaching, train students’ ability to observe, imagine, infer, discern, and solve problems, and also in inspiring and fostering students’ interest in self-motivated and self-initiated studies, in forming a lifelong unswerving eagerness to learn, and a strong determination for continual improvement.

In the teaching of various courses, care should be taken to integrate the knowledge from various

sources in the light of the Gospel and to lead students to the eternal fountain of all knowledge.
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3.3 Campus life

3.3.1 Developing a Campus Immersed in a Religious Atmosphere ⁽¹⁹⁾

Catholic education should be committed to providing students with a healthy and correct outlook on life, ecology and the universe, specially by introducing to them the spirit of the Gospel and the fine elements in Chinese culture. There is a need for all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school to join in to create a religious atmosphere. This cannot be the duty of the teachers of a single subject.

There ought to be suitable exhibits and decorations on the campus of a Catholic school, which enable teachers, students and visitors to feel a religious ambience. Schools should therefore install or display within their campus the status of patron saints, crucifixes, verses from the Bible, etc. as symbols of faith. When possible, schools should establish a chapel or a prayer room, provide a quiet place where staff and students can pray and meditate. Schools should set aside a religious section in the school library, where religious books and church publications are available, thus providing staff and students with opportunities to learn about and deepen their faith.

3.3.2 Energetically Promoting Religious Activities ⁽²⁰⁾

Catholic schools should live in the blessings and grace of God. Therefore, each day of campus life ought to begin and end with prayers. Schools should design different lively and varied forms of prayers for the morning assembly and for the ending of classes. This will allow the students to realize the constant linkage between faith and life. Apart from Biblical studies and moral education courses, schools should set aside time for religious activities, such as arranging Scripture reading, Masses, preaching, faith and life camps, retreats, etc in accordance with different Liturgical seasons. If possible, contests and appreciation sessions related to religious arts (like hymns, Gospel plays, ritual dances, painting, wall newspapers, essays, etc.) should be organized so as to strengthen staff and students' knowledge about the Church and the practice of their faith. There is a need to organize Catholic Students Societies and Catholic Staff Associations for the purpose of strengthening the links among Catholic students and staff.

Schools should organize annual religious activities days, inviting spiritual directors to promote Catholic students' and staff's religious practice and enhance their spiritual development.

In order to enhance their interest and fit in with their needs, students and staff should be invited to join hands in planning and organizing various religious activities.

3.3.3 Providing Abundant Extracurricular Activities

Schools should provide all sorts extracurricular activities for students to participate in. Attending school is the most precious time for developing ideals and potentials. getting to know their own inherent aptitudes and interests, forming gregarious and dynamic attitudes, as well as furthering their moral awakening and spiritual growth. Schools are mini societies, which are the best places for students to learn to discipline themselves. Apart from organizing activities, contests and games, students unions perform such functions as learning to manage students' welfare, conducting opinion surveys, synthesizing views, making constructive recommendations to the school authorities.

Students should be helped to develop their potentials and strengths and to care about schoolmates, their own school and the community at large, and to be eager to make positive contributions to society.

3.4 Pastoral Care in Schools

3.4.1 School Chaplain and Pastoral Assistants

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Each school should, through a good management of resources, employ a professional to assume responsibility for administering pastoral care to its students, whether clergy, religious, or lay pastoral assistant. School chaplains and pastoral assistants can assist students with their religious

formation, run catechumen classes, establish Small Christian Communities, organize teachers' Bible Reading Groups, provide opportunities for all teachers and students to listen to Bible readings, or conduct school-wide liturgical services or prayer gatherings. They can further hold periodical meetings with different classes of students to talk about problems of life, faith and vocation, and provide individuals or small groups with spiritual counseling. They can also assist in the work of fostering the pastoral zeal of the school principals, and staff.

Pastoral assistants can coordinate pastoral care activities in the school and the parish. It will be appropriate for schools to employ young lay people to serve as pastoral assistants, for young people will have a stronger appeal for students.

The Diocese should establish a School Pastoral Care Group responsible for studying the possibility and feasibility of "One Chaplain for Each School" and problems relating to the development of such a policy and relevant formation and support. The Group should also provide guidance and support for the current pastoral work in the schools.

3.4.2 Counseling Students

Schools should mobilize all teachers, in their various capacities, to provide counseling to students. They should encourage teachers to

develop good relations with students, to adopt a humble attitude as they try to understand students' needs and aspirations, to display wisdom and loving care, counsel students with a friend's heart, and to assist them in coping with problems they encounter in studies, in life and in friendship.

3.4.3 Fostering Students' Spirit of Service

Schools should encourage each student to do some voluntary work periodically. This will enable students to form the habit of providing generous service to schoolmates and people in need, with loving care and altruism. For instance, pupils in the lower primary classes can serve as pupils on duty on a rotation basis, with duties relating to cleaning and the maintenance of order in the classroom or on campus. Students in the upper primary classes and in secondary schools, apart from serving as students on duty within the school, can help students in lower classes with their studies, through arrangements made by their teachers. Schools can also make arrangements for students to pay visits and undertake other voluntary work outside. A performance pledge may be made for each student to render one hour of voluntary service every week.

Encouraging students to do voluntary work will not only able them to carry out by actual efforts the Christian spirit of love and service, but will also have the of fostering a good ethos and a healthy and positive culture. When a review is

made of their voluntary work, students should be invited to examine its effectiveness and limitations, so as to address problems relating to systems and procedures.

3.4.4 Family Life Education

Family and society often exert a bigger influence on teenagers and adolescents than the school. Many problem students have grown up in problem families, such as families with single or divorced parents, or those lacking parental care. In order to help students to draw strength from their religious faith and ethical values so as to face their problems with a positive attitude, the Catholic Diocese has published a series of "Love and life" education learning units, which provides materials for teaching the significance of marriage, true meaning of family life, virtue of chastity, sex education, human relations and the meaning of life. These materials can give correct concepts to help students face problems of pre-marital sex, co-habitation, broken marriages in families, etc. These units were compiled and written by the teachers themselves, and were published after trial teaching and revisions. It is recommended schools encourage teachers of different subjects to merge the contents of such units into relevant fields of studies.

The education which schools provide to students may well influence parents, allowing them

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to absorb correct signals and values, and bringing about positive changes.

Channeling through Parents and Teachers Associations, schools can further conduct seminars, experience sharing forums, and special topics learning sessions to provide parents with theories and implementation methods for educating children, so that parents may become effective and stable partners in educational work.

For sex education, top choice should be given to talks, activities and support provided by the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and Caritas Family Service, so as to ensure that the information supplied to students conforms to the Catholic faith.

In order to perform their duty of educating children in a proper manner, parents and schools should adopt a humble attitude when they try to understand children's needs and aspirations at various stages from early childhood to teenage and adolescence, and then, with wisdom and loving care, provide them with proper help. Families and schools must go about this sacred work of educating children hand in hand and supporting each other. Parents and teachers, therefore, should have frequent contacts and exchange views.

Parents and Teachers Associations serve as one of the channels of communication between families and schools. Campus newsletters, teachers' comments written in students' report books, teachers' visits to students' families, teachers'

appointments with parents, parents day, new students day, etc. are all conducive to promoting cooperation between parents and teachers.

3.5 Coordination Among Schools, Diocese and Parishes

3.5.1 Diocese

The Diocese should play a more active role in promoting coordination and communication among various organizations concerned with youth and education, such as Catholic Education Office, Diocesan Youth Commission, Diocesan Catechetical Commission, so that they may contribute to the all-round education of youth in a more effective manner.

The Diocese should strengthen the functions of the Catholic Education Office so that it may play a role in coordinating communication and cooperation among Catholic schools, in making effective uses of the resources of the schools (including human and physical resources, hardware and software), taking an interest in and making positive responses to government policies relating to education, and enabling all Catholic schools to develop the relationship of partners in striving to reach their common objectives with one heart and mind. On the other hand, forums or lectures should be organized for the benefit of the principals, staff or teachers of religious studies of various schools to enable them to share experiences, learn from one another's strengths and make progresses hand in hand.

Diocesan schools and Religious schools should strengthen their communication with one another, find out their common objectives, support one another, and conduct large scale religious activities for all the Catholic schools in Hong Kong (like the “Journey of the Wind” conducted on Mission Sunday in 1998), which are likely to be rewarded with good results. On the other hand, individual schools should use their specialties and resources to develop their strengths in order to serve the best interests of their students.

It is recommended to establish a liaison organization (similar to the Federation of Catholic Students) entrusted with the responsibility of promoting the development of Youth groups in Catholic schools and the launching of religious activities. This responsibility may be assumed by the Youth Commission or the Students’ Youth Movement. Cooperation could be fostered on a district basis, for instance, for the benefit of all the schools within the same Deanery. This could help in making arrangements for school chaplains, catechism classes, spiritual and counseling activities for teachers and students, as well as sharing gatherings for committee members and advisors of Catholic Students Societies, which may lead to inter-school functions.

Catholic organizations, like Caritas, can provide housewives with parenting courses, to help them understand their children’s living culture, thereby reducing generation gaps.

3.5.2 Parishes

The Parish Council should at least once a year convene district-wide meetings or forums, inviting Church institutions (schools, social centres, hospitals or homes for the elderly, etc.) to send delegates to attend, for the purpose of strengthening communication, and developing collaboration for the benefit of the whole district. Such collaboration may include providing space for gatherings and providing care for the youth, launching youth centers with special emphasis on the healthy growth of the younger generation.

Parishes may lengthen their opening hours (which will necessitate the employment of evening staff) to provide students with self-study rooms and the youth with space for cultural and recreational activities. This will strengthen the parishes’ links with the district and enable them to be in rapport with young people.

It is recommended to encourage parishes to run Sunday schools for the kindergartens and primary schools within the district, so that pupils’ faith formation may begin at an early age. Parishes and schools should coordinate their faith formation work for children who have been baptized. As far

as Christian living is concerned, the administering of the Sacraments is the responsibility of the parish. For instance, instructions before First Communion and Confirmation are to be provided by the Sunday School. This will permit children to establish a close family relationship with the Church. The parishes may also invite teachers who are in charge of religious formation to come and provide support for the formation of students in the parishes.

The Parishes can cooperate with Caritas to offer leisure and hobby courses to help reduce pressures. In daily lives and literacy and social classes to help the elderly to get along with others.

3.5.3 Schools

All Catholic schools, be they run by Religious Congregations, the Diocese or Caritas, should maintain a collaborative relationship with the Diocese and the parishes, strengthening communication and mutual support. Schools should participate in and publicize the important activities in the Diocese and the parish. They should also encourage students to attend activities in the Diocese and in the nearby church, like visiting the Cathedral and other churches and taking part in the liturgy, the Sunday school and activities of the parish to which they belong. Organized activities may include providing students with opportunities to help the elderly and children in the parish.

Schools should have close links with the parish to which they belong, and provide active support to, and take part in, parish activities. School representatives should hold periodical meetings with the clergy of the parish to discuss matters relating to collaboration.

Catholic schools can organize catechumen classes. They may invite parents and devout lay people to help with pastoral work in the schools. If they are short of teaching manpower, they may seek help or referral in the parish. It is recommended that the parish follow up with the religious life of baptized students and their participation in the Sacraments so as to prevent students' faith coming to an end after leaving school.

3.6 Formation of Educators

In order to carry out their educational mission, the Catholic School Sponsoring Bodies in Hong Kong must seek talents, train leaders, foster a healthy religious environment and continually strengthen the formation of teaching staff.

The decision-making and top management people of schools must consider it as their serious duty to carry out the Catholic educational mission and make it the essential focus of their institutional work.

Catholic schools (including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) should provide principals and Catholic staff with more religious formation, clearly

require all staff to identify themselves with and carry out the Catholic educational mission and respect the Church's position.

3.6.1 Target

Sponsoring Bodies must further set up a formation mechanism which will imbue all fellow educators with Catholic educational spirit and enable them to achieve their schools' mission goals. Sponsoring bodies should also do their best to provide educators with the necessary environment and support, to enable them to realize that their education work is a special vocation in Christ, thereby giving them a strong sense of mission in performing their duties; helping their human nature achieve renewal and sanctification in Christ and advance towards an all-round development of the total personality, so as to bring about an early advent of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

3.6.2 Formation

Catholic educators should live up to a profound faith and spread the Gospel by both precept and example. Catholic teachers need to share pastoral work. Principals and teachers should set good examples in their speech and action. All non-teaching staff, including minor staff, should maintain a good attitude of service. Such behaviour will exert a positive influence on students.

In order to actively promote religious education, the supervisors and principals of

Catholic schools should be assumed by the clergy, religious or lay people who have a zealous commitment to religious education. Religious studies, Biblical studies and moral education should be taught by Catholic teachers who are dedicated to evangelization and have the necessary knowledge and training in the subjects concerned.

3.6.3 Diocese and Schools Providing Teachers with Formation and support

Catholic educators should live their faith and should receive training so that they can conduct activities of evangelization. Schools should encourage and subsidize Catholic teachers in continually pursuing theological programmes which include religious studies, Biblical studies, moral education, catechism, pastoral care, etc.

The Catechetical Centre, Catholic Biblical Institute, the College of Theology and Philosophy and other Diocesan institutions should offer more short-term, year-long or credit-bearing programmes and courses in Theology and Philosophy or courses for the teaching of catechism to meet the needs of educators. Teachers should be allowed to choose from a whole range of courses from the introductory level to degree standard, so as to suit their needs.

The non-teaching workload of teachers, particularly of Catholic teachers, ought to be reduced if possible, so as to permit them to pay

attention to students' general and spiritual needs. Specially, there is a need to reduce the teaching hours of Catholic teachers to enable them to look after extracurricular activities of religious nature. Schools may well arrange annual retreats for all the teaching and non-teaching staff, so as to strengthen their spiritual formation.

Schools should strengthen the teaching and non-teaching staff's sense of mission while working in the school. It should be emphasized to Catholic teachers that besides their ordinary duties, they should assume responsibilities in spreading the Gospel. Schools should care about the physical and mental health of their staff, and provide them with opportunities for spiritual development and formation. This will help them to instill the Christian spirit into their teaching and administrative work and their daily life, so that their good examples may produce edifying effects on students.

Schools should arrange spiritual activities for Catholic teachers on a periodical basis, including annual retreats, gatherings of Small Christian Communities (which ought to be established within the school for Catholic teaching and non-teaching staff), Biblical sharings, etc. With a view to promoting the Christian spirit of mutual aid, love and support, schools can invite non-Catholic teaching and non-teaching staff to join such gatherings; this might reap the benefit of evangelization.

3.7 Establishment of a Community Colleges and Catholic University

In response to the lifelong learning campaign in Hong Kong, community colleges should be launched as soon as possible. With a flexible admission policy, they will provide young students and working adults with opportunities for further studies. They should offer extensive extramural courses in the areas of theology, philosophy, Chinese culture, psychological health, music, painting, drama, calligraphy, creative writing, art appreciation, etc., designed to enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the faithful and the general public.

Hong Kong is a part of China, situated on the edge of the Chinese mainland which, with a population of 1.2 billion, does not even have a single Catholic university. In keeping with the spirit of the Declaration On Christian Education, the Diocese should consider Hong Kong to be a strategic location and establish a Catholic university here as soon as possible.

In the light of the continuously evolving environment in Hong Kong and the changes in people's thinking and behaviour brought about by the convergence of Chinese and western cultures and the impact of science and technology, the Diocese should develop a Catholic University on the foundation already laid down by Caritas Francis Hsu College and the College of Theology and Philosophy of the Holy Spirit Seminary. With a mission to develop students into persons imbued with the Christian spirit of love and

service, The Catholic University will not only provide the faithful with a holistic faith formation and turn out good teachers for Catholic schools but will also assume the important responsibility of evangelizing to the intelligentsia in Hong Kong and the whole of China. The Catholic university will of course help deepen Christian students' faith in Christ, but will also assist non-Christian students to foster noble spiritual values and living ideals. Under the principle of respecting freedom of belief, the Catholic university will never compel anybody to embrace the Catholic faith. But, the kind of education it will provide will free students from narrow individualism, extend their vision and broaden their intellectual horizons. It will assist students to take a wider and longer view and consider major issues from the perspective of a life filled with even greater splendours and the more enduring happiness for individuals, the whole community and the entire human race, thereby producing persons imbued with the spirit of Christian love and a strong sense of social consciousness.

In the cultivation of virtue and character formation, example counts more than precept. Therefore, the Catholic university will need to be staffed by many clergy, religious, and devout lay people, whether in teaching, administration or student affairs, who will quietly inspire students with their altruistic spirit of sacrifice and their zeal to serve Christ.

Another very important task for the Catholic university will be to bring about an integration of the

words to live by in Catholicism and the words to live by in Chinese culture, so that each will shine that much more brightly in the other's company. Theology and philosophy (undergraduate departments and research institutes) that are to be among the strong disciplines of the Catholic university should endeavour to find the way to transform traditional Chinese moral values so as to enable them to regain life and vivacity, and exert an edifying influence on modern society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have come up with recommendations on such issues as education system and curricular reform, campus life, pastoral care in schools, services for new immigrants, coordination among Diocese, parishes and schools, formation of educators, and the establishment of a Catholic university and community colleges. The biggest and ultimate aim of these recommendations is to endeavour, under the premise of promoting the Christian philosophy of life and the invaluable elements in Chinese culture, to help students to develop into persons who hold human values close to their heart, who are sound in body and mind, rich in compassion, with a sense of civic responsibility, a discerning mind and moral courage, and an ability to innovate.

Jesus Christ wants the faithful to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world", to put their heart and mind to sanctifying humankind. In the words of Guanzi, "it takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred to educate a man." But, for the Church, the educational mission is a great undertaking that will last for

thousands of years. In order to bring this sacred mission to fruition, the Hong Kong Catholic Board of Education should, through the Catholic Education Office, guide all Diocesan, Religious and Caritas schools to implement the above recommendations, with one heart and mind. On the other hand, since the establishment of a Catholic university will be a completely new undertaking, a separate committee should be set up to chart its course of development and take charge of all related matters.

Notes:

- (1) *Declaration On Christian Education* 8
- (2) *Ibid* 10
- (3) *The Catholic School On The Threshold of The Third Millennium* 14
- (4) *The Catholic School* 34,35
- (5) *Lay Catholics in School – Witness to Faith* 18
- (6) *The Catholic School On The Threshold of the Third Millennium* 20
- (7) *Ecclesia-In Asia* 33
- (8) *Ibid* 6
- (9) *Ibid* 38
- (10) *Ibid* 41
- (11) *Ibid* 34
- (12) *Ibid* 45 47
- (13) *Ibid* 48
- (14) *Jn* 8:32
- (15) *Rev* 21:1
- (16) *The Religious Dimension of Education In A Catholic School* 88-95
- (17) *The Catholic School* 38-43
- (18) *Ibid* 41
- (19) *The Religious Dimension of Education In A Catholic School* 24-30
- (20) *Ibid* 47-50

Group Seven — The Vocation and the Continuing Formation of the Diocesan Priests

INTRODUCTION

The Apostolic Exhortation “Pastores Dabo Vobis” (issued by Pope John Paul II in 1992), as well as the document entitled “The Priest and the Third Christian Millennium” issued by the Congregation for the Clergy in 1999, have provided us with a number of basic principles with a forward-looking vision on the subject under consideration, i.e., Nurturing of Vocations and Continuing Formation of the Diocesan Clergy.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1.1 One Common Mission: To develop a New Evangelisation

“New Evangelisation” is meant to denote that the whole church, that is to say, all the baptised persons (as individuals or in groups), have been called to enter into the new century with a renewed vigour and a generous spirit, and to proclaim to the world the perennial good news: “Behold, the Saviour of the World has been born for us”. Although the responsibility of evangelisation rests mainly on the College of Bishops, presided over by its Head, Successor of Peter, all the priests have, by virtue of Holy Orders, become the collaborators of the Bishops, and have consequently inherited “New Evangelisation” as their prime function.

1.2 Two Objectives: To look for the lost sheep within the Church and to spread the Gospel among the flock outside the Church

The New Evangelisation requires Priests to bring back to the Church, with the tenderness of maternal care and love, baptised persons who have distanced themselves from the Church because of their weakened faith or lukewarmness. This New Evangelisation also requires Priests to realise that they have a right as well as an obligation to spread the Gospel to people outside the Church.

1.3 A Triple Identity and Function

A Priest should simultaneously be a Teacher of the Divine Word, a Minister of Sacraments, and a Loving Pastor.

1.3.1 As a Teacher of the Divine Word, a Priest is required by “New Evangelisation” to render service to the Divine Word with zeal and show an exemplary life through his words and actions. He should be well versed in Theology, Spirituality and Ethics, able to fully grasp their essences, and make good use of modern tools and appropriate methodologies in explaining and disseminating truths which have been revealed by God to us. He should also render assistance in the formation of the faithful with spirituality and ethics, helping them to apply these truths to their daily lives, so as to become themselves witnesses to the truths, and dedicate themselves to apostolic work.

1.3.2 As a Minister of Sacraments, a Priest should look upon the Eucharistic Celebration as the core function of his ministry. He should help the faithful to understand the meaning of the celebration of the Eucharist on the altar. He should also lead the faithful to prepare properly, carefully and effectively the rituals for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is of paramount importance that prior to the celebration of the Eucharist, the Priest is seen by the faithful to be well recollected in preparing himself for the celebration. Because of the zeal and devotion the Priest has for the Eucharist, the faithful will follow his good example. They will also imitate the Priest in staying behind for a while to say a prayer of thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. As a Minister of Sacraments, a Priest is also required by “New Evangelisation” to lead the faithful in receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (i.e., Confession). In the face of the present day world which has a weak notion of the gravity of sins, those members of the laity who have been affected by sins need to experience individually the mercy of the Almighty God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Sacrament can also help the faithful to receive some useful personal spiritual guidance. Furthermore, this may also cause the Priests themselves to become more concerned about nurturing religious vocations. Therefore, it is to be encouraged that arrangements should be made for

the confessional in a church to be attended by a Priest to hear confessions at appointed times. The Priest himself should be a person who receives the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis.

- 1.3.3 As a Pastor, a Priest is required by “New Evangelisation” to manifest and propagate the merciful love of God. As a matter of fact, there is a close link between the spirituality of the Eucharist, pastoral charity and priestly life. If a Priest in discharging his ministerial function in the service of the Eternal Priest – Christ, is willing to dedicate his intelligence, will, voice and hands to offering to God the Father a sacramental Sacrifice of Retribution (i.e., the Mass), he ought to be in empathy with the love that Christ has for us and live a life enriched with God’s grace for the benefit of his brethren. The grace inherent in Holy Orders confers on a Priest not just a limited function, but an all embracing mission of saving the souls of the people at large. Therefore, a Priest should have much concern about the formation of the faithful, his own pastoral function, pastoral care for the young people, social development, justice, evangelisation through culture, marriages and families. (Please refer to the “Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests” issued in 1989 by the Congregation of Evangelisation of Peoples).

1.4 Four Areas of Formation

The Mission of New Evangelisation as well as the Triple Identity and Functions of Priests, require candidates aspiring to the priesthood to enter a Major Seminary to undergo several years’ integrated training in the four areas of Character Formation, Spiritual Formation, Theological/Philosophical Studies, and Pastoral Care. Even after ordination, Priests need to undergo a life-long process of continuing formation, so that they may always keep ablaze the zeal bestowed on them through their ordination. As for the duration, format and methods of continuing formation, apart from some specially arranged courses, the more common modes include short-term sessions held annually. These sessions not only help strengthen the link between the Priests and the Bishop, but also deepen the fraternal bond among the Priests themselves, much to the benefit of their spiritual life, as well as the improvement of the quality of their apostolic and pastoral work.

2. REFLECTIONS ON CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 The Identity and Pastoral Mission of a Priest

- 2.1.1 In general, Diocesan Priests in Hong Kong have a good appreciation of their own status as Representatives of Christ. They lead a humble and modest life (showing no arrogance, nor obsequiousness) that positively reflects the effect of the formation they have undergone in the seminary.

They are trying their best in playing the role of a pastor, showing concern about people at all strata. They respond to the needs of the disadvantaged sector with the compassion of Christ. They respond actively to any social injustice that is found in the community.

- 2.1.2 It cannot be denied, however, that there are isolated incidents of Priests whose life-style is somewhat at variance with that of a “Representative of Christ”. They have given people a rather unsatisfactory impression: working without much zeal and with an attitude of indifference. Their daily lives are passed as a matter of routine. They show little concern about the spiritual or material needs of their people. They are unaware of any acts of injustice occurring in the community.

2.2 Spirituality of Priests and Their Fraternal Communion

- 2.2.1 It is only when a Priest possesses a deeply-rooted spirituality and a zealous love that he can fulfil his pastoral mission in accordance with his true identity. What is seen externally is indeed a manifestation of what is hidden internally. A vast majority of the Diocesan Priests have acquired, in the course of their priestly formation, a solid foundation of sound spirituality. Some of them have advanced further in their spiritual life through various spiritual exercises (e.g., the Divine Office,

Meditation, etc.). Despite the heavy load of their pastoral and other duties (e.g., as school supervisor, or involvement in social services), they make good use of these exercises to reap spiritual benefit for themselves. The monthly retreats, annual retreats, prayer groups, Bible study groups, are actively attended by most of the Priests, and these activities bolster their pastoral work too. Some Priests make use of their vacation period to engage themselves in spiritual formation, such as making Long Retreats, Spiritual Exercises and Pilgrimages. Most of the other Priests take an active part in various types of continuing formation provided by the Diocese, such as Study Camps and Seminars. Furthermore, a big majority of the Diocesan Priests participate in various liturgical activities officiated at by the Bishop, e.g., the Chrism Mass on Maundy Thursday, Ordinations, Funeral Services, fully displaying fraternal communion. Whenever there are celebrations in parishes, such as Feasts of their Patron Saints or anniversaries, the Bishop is always present. A family atmosphere is keenly felt in the parishes. The regular monthly meetings of the Chinese Diocesan Priests provide an invaluable opportunity for the spirit of fraternal communion to manifest itself. All these clearly show that the Seminarians have, during their period of formation, acquired a good corporate spirit that ensures harmony and mutual support.

2.2.2 Undeniably, among the clergy there may be some who are not entirely fit for their work. This is probably due to the fact that during the period of formation, they did not have a good and solid foundation in their spiritual development. Nor was there consolidation of their previous training since their ordination to the priesthood. Added to this is their heavy load in pastoral work which leads to their discharge of priestly duties in a mechanical and disinterested manner. They show little interest in any mode of continuing formation. However, in terms of fraternal communion, it can be said that the Priests have by and large maintained a good rapport among themselves. The Deanery System has indeed provided the Priests with a good opportunity to nurture a spirit of mutual support and understanding, whereby problems are effectively solved in good time.

2.3 The Formation of Priests and their Continuing Formation

2.3.1 St Francis de Sales once said, “It is my firm belief that in the case of Priests, ignorance is even more terrible than sin. In the structure of the Church, knowledge can be deemed as the Eighth Sacrament”. This clearly shows that “Formation and Continuing Formation” is an essential element in the life of a Priest. The Hong Kong Diocese always looks upon formation of Priests as something very important, and has therefore

deployed a large amount of resources, human and financial, to the running of the Holy Spirit Seminary, for the purpose of providing the Priests-to-be with a holistic formation in four different areas, namely, Character Formation, Spiritual Formation, Theological/Philosophical Studies, and Pastoral Care. The process of formation of the future Priests is not confined to the Seminary. Rather, it is extended to cover various social strata of the community, so as to enable the future Priests to acquire a variety of experiences, which will eventually help them to discharge their priestly functions more effectively. Furthermore, the Diocese has also established a “Committee for the On-going Formation of the Clergy” to coordinate or organise various activities concerned with continuing formation, such as Lectures on Special Topics, Study Camps, Discussion Days, etc. In addition, to meet the changing needs of society, the Committee has also invited or assigned some Priests to undertake special studies of subjects on Pastoral Care for the Youths, Catechesis, Spiritual Counselling, Social Psychology, etc.

2.3.2 The Chinese saying “Even a clever woman cannot cook without rice” may be an apt description of the situation in the Hong Kong Diocese with regard to vocations. Whilst the Diocese has employed various measures to nurture and promote vocations, the responses are few and far between. Scarcity of

vocations in the Diocese is something blatantly obvious. On the other hand, the ageing of the serving Priests has made the situation even more critical. What has caused this scarcity of vocations? There must be a number of factors contributing to this situation, but the main one, it is believed, may perhaps be the lack (or inadequacy) of efforts in “nurturing vocations”. In the wake of many changes in the society, the “Minor Seminary” has ceased to exist. As a result, the onus of “nurturing vocations” has now fallen on the Holy Spirit Seminary and the Diocesan Vocations Committee. During the past ten years or so, “Vocation Camps” were held on a number of occasions, and similarly there were special monthly prayer gatherings. But the effect of these activities was by no means significant. Diocesan Priests seldom (or have no time to) make efforts to encourage young people to respond to vocations. The annual “Vocation Sundays” have aroused only short-lived interest among the faithful, but the tangible response is only about passable. The Diocese has also deployed a large amount of resources in mounting several large-scale “Vocation Exhibitions” which have indeed attracted large numbers of visitors from groups of young men and women. However, the ultimate aim of the exhibitions has not really been achieved. The establishment of “Small Community to Foster Vocations” as promoted by the Diocese a few years has managed to yield a

meagre harvest with only a few young persons joining. The Diocese has recently appealed to all parishes to establish “Vocations Promotion Groups” to pray specially for vocations, and to publicise and promote vocations. The response has been barely satisfactory. It will be quite a while before we can hope to see a good result emerging.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 A Priest’s Identity, Spirituality and Pastoral Mission

- 3.1.1 By virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the relationship between the Priests and the Bishop, and that among the Priests themselves, are like the relationships among members of a family. The Priests are each endowed with different gifts and graces by God, but they can live and work in harmony, helping each other. They have become living witnesses to true Christian charity. The gatherings of Deaneries and the Chinese Priests Association provide for them good opportunities for sharing. Priests should therefore participate in these functions actively. The above-mentioned relationship between the Bishop and the Priests can be further enhanced by annual encounters which the Bishop has with the Priests individually. *165
- 3.1.2 Those Priests who live together in the same house, apart from sharing meals together, should try to have joint activities such as concelebration of the 166

Mass, prayers, sharing, and recreation. All these activities will strengthen the bond of their fraternal communion.

- 167 3.1.3 Quite a number of spiritual movements and organisations have sprung up in the Church. Many of these have been given due recognition by the Vatican. Priests should keep an open mind towards them trying to understand them, and to give them appropriate attention.
- *168 3.1.4 Priests should listen attentively to the voices of the disadvantaged, maintaining an unswerving concern for this group. They should show appreciation and render appropriate support to those workers who provide direct services to the disadvantaged sector of the community.
- *169 3.1.5 Parish Priests should encourage their parishioners to participate and to share in the work and mission of the parish and the Church. Parish Priests should keep an open mind towards and welcome those parishioners who have pursued Theological Studies so that they may also participate in the work of evangelisation.
- *170 3.1.6 Some Diocesan Priests are so over-worked that they cannot allot adequate time for prayers, rest, or physical exercises to the detriment of their mental and physical health. A well-regulated pattern of life is therefore of utmost importance. It would be very useful to have Daily or Monthly Schedules drawn

up to earmark appropriate time for prayers, work and rest. The rule requiring an annual medical check-up should be strictly observed.

- 3.1.7 Every Priest should set aside a period of time every day for spiritual reading and meditation. 171
- 3.1.8 Every Priest should encourage at least one young person to enter the Seminary. 172
- 3.1.9 Within a period of two years, every parish should set up a “Vocations Promotion Groups” which will offer daily prayers for priestly vocations and actively encourage the young people to respond to priestly vocations. *173

3.2 Priests’ Continuing Formation

- 3.2.1 Diocesan Priests should, within the first 25 years after their Ordination, make use of their quinquennial vacation leave to attend short training courses. The Diocese should also provide appropriate training courses for serving Priests to improve themselves. 174
- 3.2.2 Every Priest should make efforts to study ecclesial documents recently issued by the Pope and local bishops, and explain to the faithful the content of these documents. 175
- 3.2.3 A proper mechanism should be set up to provide Priests with appropriate pre-posting training before they are assigned to new jobs of a specialised nature (e.g., schools, hospitals, prisons). 176

3.2.4 The “Diocesan Committee for the On-going Formation of the Clergy” should provide Priests, on a regular basis, with reference materials on further studies so that Priests may thereby engage themselves in a process of lifelong formation.

Ad Hoc Committee

For the

Evaluation of Pastoral Ministry to Foreigners

PROLOGUE

When the Diocesan Synod was convened in accordance with the Directory for the Diocesan Synod, seven working groups were formed to deal with the seven subjects chosen for consideration.

Although the care of migrant workers and foreigners received mention in Group 3, on Social Concerns, the Major Superiors of men considered that this category demanded more urgent attention. Of this category, Filipinos alone constituted almost a third of the total Catholic population of the diocese. Considering the size of this group, and the urgency of their needs, the Major Superiors petitioned Cardinal Wu to add an eighth working group to the seven already appointed. Cardinal Wu, while appreciating their proposal, felt that the rules governing the Diocesan Synod process did not permit the addition of a further group.

However, he graciously provided for another means to address the situation of foreigners and migrant workers.

Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee for the Evaluation of Pastoral Ministry to Foreigners was set up independent of the Synod, but working in parallel with it. This new body was tasked to make recommendations for the proper pastoral care of foreigners to Cardinal Wu in his capacity as Synod head, which recommendations, should the Cardinal determine that they were for the good of the diocesan community, should be incorporated into the final documents of the Synod.

Reference:

1. *Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests*
2. *Apostolic Exhortation: Pastores Dabo Vobis “To the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day”*
3. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*
4. *The Priests and the Third Christian Millennium*

I. REFLECTIONS ON CONCRETE SITUATION

As in other parts of the world, the Church of Hong Kong has adopted the Ministry to Foreigners as one of her major concerns. Guidelines for pastoral care to foreigners have been refined over the years. The most recent document, Guidelines for Pastoral Ministry to Foreigners, promulgated by the Diocese on 22 May 2000 has set down its official policy towards an often neglected section of the Church. Pastoral directives aimed at regulating and improving the pastoral care of foreigners have served to encourage all sections of the Church to take a greater interest in our brothers and sisters who have come to the Diocese from other countries.

The Ad Hoc Committee has made a thorough appraisal of pastoral activity directed towards foreigners present in the diocese. After much deliberation, the committee has determined that the time has come to give to the official guidelines issued by the Diocese the authority of the Diocesan Synod and to make certain recommendations to His Eminence. The committee believes that pastoral care of foreigners will be seen as the responsibility of all members of the local church, which will enrich the local church and enhance the care of souls.

II. BASIC PRINCIPLES

In 1995, this concern of the Diocese was underscored by the exhortation of the Holy Father in his Message for the World Migrants Day: In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the

whole human race, the Church is the place where immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various dioceses actively to ensure that these people, who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood in the Christian community.

The same message also exhorts us: The importance of the parish in welcoming the stranger, in integrating baptized persons from different cultures and in dialoguing with believers of other religions stems from the mission of every parish community and its significance with society. It is not an optional, supplementary role for the parish community, but a duty inherent in its task as an institution.

III. CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of these principles enunciated above, with all respect, we make the following proposals to His Eminence John Baptist Cardinal Wu to consider the following proposals for incorporation into the final documents of the Diocesan Synod.

1. Pastoral ministry to foreigners in the Diocese of Hong Kong is the responsibility of all pastors and ministers within the Diocese and is not to be restricted to chaplains especially chosen.

For this reason, ministry to foreigners, in so far as this is possible should be parish based. In this way, the proliferation of individual groups, which operate independently of the diocesan parish structure, shall be supervised.

2. Pastors are called upon to show a special regard for foreigners who reside within the boundaries of their parish. Frequently they shall make their parishioners aware of the particular problems, both spiritual and secular, faced by foreign workers. In this way, all are made more conscious of their responsibility to treat foreign workers in a manner that is truly fraternal. These people deserve special consideration, more so since most of them are women.

Locals and foreigners are to be encouraged to participate actively in parish activities so as to form a truly united community, e.g. shared liturgy, bilingual notices and publications.

3. The Diocese should search for forms of ministry aimed at providing proper care for the large numbers of Catholics who have no recognizable connection with the local church and thus are in danger of being lost permanently to the church. Efforts to minister to the large number of unchurched foreigners should be guided by the principle that it is more effective to bring the Church to the disaffiliated, rather than to bring the disaffected to the churches.
4. All organs that are appropriate to such ministry are to be explored and enlisted in the aid of this ministry, particularly the ministry of media. These organs include principally the newspapers published by the Diocese. However a real attempt should be made to penetrate the secular press with items of Catholic concern especially where publications of definite ethnic slant are open to such articles. Specialized religious broadcasts in the

areas of radio and television transmission offer a less frequent but still very valuable means of reaching society at large with information of pastoral importance. The website of the Diocese with both audio and visual presentations will likewise prove more and more useful in making known our ministry to migrants and itinerants.

5. All pastors and those who supervise schools and other religious institutions in the Diocese should study ways and means of extending the use of their facilities particularly for the use of migrant workers wherever possible. When school premises are needed, the Parish Priests should approach the principals for help.
6. Regular reporting of the nature and demands of ministry to foreigners should be made to pastors on a deanery level.
7. Links with existing Church organizations should be developed and improved. All things being equal the services these organizations provide for local Church members should be made available without distinction to foreigners.

In particular, attempts should be made to develop some working arrangement with those groups expressly concerned with furthering the protection of human rights and justice, and the implementation and revision of labor laws.

8. The structure of the Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Ministry to Filipinos should be developed so as to increase the membership and extent of this body. Within this body, working secretariats should be appointed whose task is to handle liaison between existing groups,

particularly but not restricted to the Justice and Peace Commission, the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labor Affairs, the Diocesan Liturgy Commission, the Catholic Board of Communications, to name a few.

9. The work of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos needs to be given prominence. We look to it to be truly a resource centre particularly for migrants and foreign domestic helpers providing shelter, advice, assistance, and spiritual solace whenever possible and necessary. Being at the forefront of the Diocese's ministry to foreigners, part of its mission is to reach out to parish communities, cooperate with the clergy, cooperate with the press and the local media, initiate and improve development programs for the holistic well-being of the migrant people. Reports of activities should be made at Pastoral meetings, at Deanery meetings, and other official meetings so that all clergy and religious are informed of the good that is being done, of the enrichment of the local Church that can be anticipated from welcoming strangers into their midst, and of the pressing needs and problems that still need attention. The work of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos should be publicized in the mass media and on the internet in such a way that everyone in the Diocese may be made aware of its work and of current news of its activities.
10. It is strongly recommended that attention be given to migrant ministry starting at the seminary level. Candidates for the priesthood will be encouraged to see that their ministry includes all, whether local or foreign,

who reside within the parish boundaries. Indeed, it is required that all should show a special affection for the foreigners, for in ministering to strangers, they minister in a special way to Christ himself.

11. There is an urgent need to proceed with the printing of an updated booklet containing definite guidelines on the administration of sacraments to migrants. In particular, regulations concerning marriage and baptism for the instruction of both clergy and lay people should be included in this booklet. Other information, like, the contact address of pastoral ministers, English / Tagalog Mass schedules and labor laws should also be included.

CONCLUSION

During the Regional Meeting of the Secretaries of the Episcopal Commission on Migration / National Directors for Migration of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of Asia and the Pacific in September 1999, it was emphasized that the type of care for migrants that a church provides reveals the understanding of the universal character and the nature of mission that a church has. Thus, increasing awareness for the needs of migrants, instead of distracting the attention of the Church from other pressing issues, produces a general reawakening on the values of the Gospel and the implications of mission. In fact, migration brings mission to our door.

(III)

***THE RECORDS OF
THE SYNOD
OPERATIONS***

Diocesan Synod Notebook

Preparation Period of the Diocesan Synod (15th October 1999 to 3rd March 2000)

1. Cardinal John Baptist Wu announced that the Diocesan Synod would be convoked and established a Preparatory Committee on 15 October 1999.
2. The Preparatory Committee convoked several meetings to discuss the operating model, rules and regulations, synodal topics and draft pattern of the Diocesan Synod.
3. Cardinal John B. Wu conferred with the Diocesan Curia members; Diocesan Personnel Commission and the Board of Diocesan consultors approved and adopted the proposals of the Preparatory Committee. After that, the Preparatory Committee published the “Directory for the Diocesan Synod” booklet and the “What is the Diocesan Synod” Special Issue.
4. Each unit elected its representatives towards forming the synod member list in accordance with the established rules and regulations.
5. Cardinal John B. Wu appointed the Vice-Chairpersons, Moderator and 206 Synod Members. By this time the Preparatory Committee had fulfilled its mission and was duly dissolved.

Processing Period of the Diocesan Synod (4th March 2000 to 30th December 2001)

6. 4 March 2000, during the Opening Ceremony with a Eucharistic Celebration, Cardinal John B. Wu officially

announced the inauguration of the Diocesan Synod, and all synod members made a profession of faith, expressed their acceptance of the appointments and readiness to fulfill the synod duties. Together they said the following prayer:

PRAYER FOR HONG KONG DIOCESAN SYNOD (Extracted from the liturgical booklet for the “Opening Ceremony of Diocesan Synod)

*Bishop: Brothers and Sisters, please pray for the Diocesan Synod.
May the Lord help us seek his will.*

All: Almighty and everlasting God, your Son established the Church so that your people, filled with the Spirit, may become your fervent witnesses to the world. Through the message of the Gospel and by the efforts of our predecessors, we have become your children. On the occasion of the Jubilee 2000, we assemble for the Diocesan Synod to pursue your will in order to continue the endeavours of the past and to open up new horizons for generations to come. As we strive together to draw up a plan for a new evangelization in a new millennium, we implore you to send forth your Holy Spirit to guide us, pastors and flock, so that united in mind and heart and sharing our gifts, we may become better witnesses and our faith may be strengthened. Grant that we, in word and action may enlighten those who are in error, care for the little ones and the needy, practise justice and thus help spread the Kingdom of God. We make our prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

7. Immediately after the Opening Ceremony, the First Plenary Assembly was held. The Questionnaires were distributed to all synod members and who were asked to choose the synodal topics.

(Extracted from the “Synodal Topics Questionnaire”)

1. Background of the Questionnaire

- 1.1 According to the Instruction on Diocesan Synods, one of the important tasks of the Preparatory Committee for the Diocesan Synod is to assist the Diocesan Bishop to set up a list of topics for discussion in the synodal meetings.
- 1.2 After several meetings and consulting relevant documents, the Preparatory Committee has drafted a preliminary list of topics for discussion.
- 1.3 These topics are drawn up from the following documents: The document of the last Hong Kong Diocesan Convention; Cardinal Wu’s Pastoral Exhortation and its Interim Report; Kung Kao Po “Ten Major Thematic Task Proposals”; proposals collected on the “Day for Priests and Religious”; Document of the Synod of Bishops Special Assembly for Asia; Letter to the People of God and Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesial in Asia.
- 1.4 To allow synodal members to express their opinions, wishes and requests on the topics for discussion (as well as the number of items), and in accordance with the instruction of Cardinal Wu, all synodal members are invited to complete the attached questionnaire.
- 1.5 The final decision on the topics will be taken by Cardinal Wu, and will be announced in the next plenary assembly. Every topic is the basis to become a draft.
- 1.6 According to the Diocesan Synod Directory, the drafting will take about 9 months to complete, thereafter each draft will be tabled separately for a month long discussion before being voted on. As a consequence, the number of drafts is decisive for the duration of the whole Synod.

2. PRELIMINARY LIST OF TOPICS FOR DIOCESAN SYNOD

Please put a (in the box corresponding to the topics of your choice for the Diocesan Synod.

(NB The number of drafts (topics) is decisive for the duration of the whole Synod)

1. The vocation and the continuing formation for the clergy ☐

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 2. Faith formation of the laity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Lay ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Family Pastoral Care | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Youth Pastoral Care | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Education and Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Social concerns (servant and prophetic roles) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Mass media | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Communion and collaboration with Asian Churches | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Consecrated Life | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Pastoral care of non-Chinese faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Evangelization | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Christian ecumenism and religious dialogue | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. 15 March 2000 collecting and processing the answers to the Questionnaire. According to the preferences of the members of the Synod, synodal topics were arranged in order of priority and submitted to Cardinal Wu.

Cardinal Wu decided on the following Topics for the Synod in accordance with the wishes of the synodal members: –

1. Faith Formation of the Laity and Lay Ministry
 2. Youth and Young Teenage Pastoral Care
 3. Social Concerns (Servant and Prophetic Roles)
 4. Evangelization (Ad Gentes)
 5. Marriage and Family Pastoral Care
 6. Education and Culture
 7. The Vocation and Continuous Formation for the Diocesan Priests
9. 20 March 2000 sending letters to members of the Synod asking them to prioritize and to choose any 3 out of the 7 topic-groups, which they would like to join in.
 - 27 March 2000 receiving answers from synod members regarding the topic-groups.
 - 28 March 2000 forming topic-groups.

10. 8 April 2000 Second Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod. Electing the 3 non-ex officio Vice-Chairpersons, Recorders, Scrutineers. Announcing the appointed 6 News Group members and introducing the draft pattern.
Calling 7 topic-groups' meeting in which each group elected the Group Chairperson.
11. 18 April 2000 First Meeting of the Coordinating Committee and the Presidency of the Synod.
12. 16 May 2000 Second Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
13. 28 June 2000 Third Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
14. Between 8 April and 8 July the Topic-Groups met weekly to study the topics, to research and to gather materials for writing the first drafts.
15. 8 July 2000 Third Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
First Drafts of the 7 synodal topics were ready for the synod members and the general public for consultation.
16. 23 July 2000 First Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the first drafts of synodal topics (New Territories region).
12 August 2000 First Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the first drafts of synodal topics (Kowloon region).
2 September 2000 First Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the first drafts of synodal topics (Hong Kong region).
17. Between September and December 2000 the Topic-groups met regularly to study and select the comments that were collected from the First Open Forums, so as to write the second drafts.

18. 5 September 2000 Fourth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
19. 21 November 2000 Fifth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
In the meeting, it was decided that starting from the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod, all the coming assemblies would be scheduled on public holidays.

(Extracted from the minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Diocesan Synod)

(5) Discussions:

The 4th Plenary Assembly

The Committee agreed to take a whole day meeting, from 9am-6pm, as follows:

- ① 16 April 2001 (Monday, Easter Monday)
- ② 30 April 2001 (Monday, Birth of the Buddha)
- ③ 1 May 2001 (Tuesday, Labour Festival)
- ④ 25 May 2001 (Monday, Tuen-Ng Festival)
- ⑤ 2 July 2001 (Monday, Anniversary of the establishment of HKSAR)
- ⑥ 2 October 2001 (Tuesday, the day after the Mid-autumn Festival)
- ⑦ 25 October 2001 (Thursday, Chung Yeung Festival)

20. 18 January 2001 Sixth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
21. 11 February 2001 Second Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the 2nd Draft of synodal topics (Kowloon region).
18 February 2001 Second Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the 2nd Draft of synodal topics (New Territories region).

- 25 February 2001 Second Open Forum to consult the general public regarding the 2nd Draft of synodal topics (Hong Kong region).
22. 26 February 2001 Seventh Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
 23. 3 March 2001 Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 24. 16 April 2001 Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 25. 17 April 2001 Eighth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
 26. 30 April 2001 Sixth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 27. 1 May 2001 Seventh Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 28. 7 May 2001 Ninth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
 29. 25 June 2001 Eighth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 30. 3 July 2001 Tenth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
 31. 25 September 2001 Eleventh Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod.
 32. 2 October 2001 Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 33. 25 October 2001 Tenth Plenary Assembly of the Diocesan Synod.
 34. 20 November 2001 first round ballots on the concrete proposals; voting for priorities (Public counting of votes).
- As there were three concrete proposals with the same number of votes, it was decided to list all 42 concrete proposals.

- The top 42 Concrete Proposals were: No. 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 32, 33, 40, 62, 63, 80, 81, 84, 89, 104, 107, 109, 111, 116, 117, 118, 119, 125, 128, 129, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139, 145, 148, 150, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170, 173.
35. 3 December 2001 second round ballots on the concrete proposals; voting for priorities (Public counting of votes).
Top 10: No. 4, 6, 15, 32, 84, 111, 116, 133, 148 and 164.
 36. 30 December 2001 Closing Ceremony with Eucharistic Celebration.
(Extracted from the liturgical booklet for the “Closing Ceremony of Diocesan Synod”)

CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG DIOCESAN SYNOD

Address by Rev. Dominic Chan, V.G., Moderator, Coordinating Committee of the Diocesan Synod.

Presentation of Resolutions of the seven Synodal Groups and of the Committee for Foreigners to Cardinal Wu.

Cardinal Wu signs the Decree for the Closing of the Diocesan Synod.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Almighty and everlasting God, your Son established the Church so that your people, filled with the Spirit, may become your fervent witnesses to the world. Through the message of the Gospel and by the efforts of our predecessors, we have become your children. On the occasion of the conclusion of the Diocesan Synod, we thank you for helping us throughout the past year to continue the endeavours of the past and to open up new horizons of evangelization for generations to come. Admitting our weaknesses, we beg for your continuing help. At the same time, with faith and hope, we entrust our diocese to your hands, and implore you to send forth your Holy Spirit to guide us, pastors and flock, so that united in mind and heart and sharing our gifts, we may seek and carry out your Will. Grant that, in word and deed, we may enlighten those who are in error; care for the little ones and the needy, practise justice and thus help spread the Kingdom of God. We ask that Our Lady, patroness of the Diocese, intercede for us.

Implementation Period of the Diocesan Synod (31st December 2001 onwards)

37. Cardinal Wu met with the Board of Diocesan Consultants to classify the top 10 priorities into three main concerns; Faith Formation of the Laity, Marriage and Family Pastoral Care, Youth and Young Teenage Pastoral Care. He promulgated these as the pastoral emphases for the coming decade.
38. 1 January 2002 Cardinal Wu appointed a Post-Synod Working Committee based on the three main concerns; Faith Formation of the Laity, Marriage and Family Pastoral Care, Youth and Young Teenage Pastoral Care. Its task was to draft a five-year practical work plan within three months.
39. 15 April 2002 the Post-Synod Working Committee completed the work plan and submitted to Cardinal Wu.
40. 8 September 2002 Cardinal Wu signed the decree of the Diocesan Synod and the Pastoral Letter “Love life, the gift of God!”, and promulgated on 22 September 2002.

Directory for the Diocesan Synod

1. Introduction

Historical Background

The early Church developed rapidly as its ministers travelled around to evangelize other peoples. As the Church continued to expand, its ministers became separated. This made them more conscious of the need to come together to share their experiences and discuss problems arising from various parts of the world in order to arrive at a common solution.

Hence, a diocesan synod was established as early as the 4th century and it became normative by the 11th century. Norms regulating diocesan synods have also undergone amendments in various Ecumenical Councils because of the situation and exigencies of the Church.

1983 revised version of the Code of Canon Law

§ 460: Definition and purpose of a Diocesan Synod. Two principal reforms are: (1) participation of the laity in the Synod. (2) The Synod is not merely considered for its legislative function but rather as a means to broaden horizons, study problems and search for answers.

1997 “Instruction on Diocesan Synods” (Jointly promulgated on March 19, 1997 by the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples)

In order to clarify confusions encountered in some parts of the world during diocesan synods, the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples jointly issued this text proposing arrangement for diocesan synods.

According to this Instruction, a diocesan synod is “the assembly of selected priests and other members of Christ’s faithful of a particular Church which, for the good of the whole diocesan community assists the Diocesan Bishop.”

A diocesan synod aims at helping the Diocesan Bishop to fulfil the ministry proper to him, i.e. the government of the Christian community. This specific aim of the synod determines the particular duty of priests taking part in the synod who by nature are the collaborators of the Bishop. A diocesan synod also creates opportunities for the Bishop to invite some members of the laity and religious families to collaborate with him.

The synod is a special way for all the faithful to share responsibility for constructing the mystical body of Christ.

In the process of the diocesan synod, the Bishop exercises his governing power. He convokes the synod, puts forward topics for discussion and presides over each and every assembly. Since he is the sole legislator in the diocese, all synodal declarations and decrees will be signed and promulgated by him alone.

All participants in the synod, which has a consultative nature, assist the Bishop by making “suggestions” and casting “votes”. It is at the discretion of the Bishop whether to accept the proposals put forward to him by the synodal members. This, however, does not mean that the “suggestions” and

“votes” are unimportant or that they are merely “superficial” consultations. The synodal members, using their experiences and suggestions, take an active part in drafting all synodal declarations and decrees.

“Communion and Mission” are the integral elements of all pastoral actions in the Church and hence constitute the ultimate reason for every diocesan synod, i.e. the welfare of the diocese.

A diocesan synod promotes apostolic zeal, fosters pastoral efforts and maintains the liturgical, spiritual and legal traditions of the diocese.

2. DECREE OF CONVOCAATION OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD (Cf. p.1–3)

3. Composition of the Diocesan Synod

The total membership of the Diocesan Synod assembly will be around 200 Church members.

3.1 Ex Officio Members around 25

Cf no.3 of Part II of the Instruction on Diocesan Synods, jointly promulgated by the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on March 19 1997.

3.2 Elected Members

3.2.1 “Those who have the care of souls” around 45

Elected from among all diocesan priests and priests of religious institutes/missionary societies officially appointed to parishes.

**1. Election among those who have “care of souls”
[CN, B.2]:**

- a) *During the coming Clergy Study Camp, 4-6 January, the procedure for the synod and the duties of its members will be explained.*
- b) *The election will be performed in the deaneries with each deanery electing representatives proportionate to the number of priests eligible for election. (The number of representatives for each deanery is 45 multiplied by the number of priests eligible for election in the deanery divided by the total number of priests eligible for election in the diocese.)*
- c) *The election is carried out by mail. The ballot papers will be handed to those concerned who attend the Study Camp and mailed to those not attending.*
- d) *The completed ballot papers should be placed in the envelope provided and returned to the Preparatory Committee before 13 January 2000. There will be a public counting of votes on 16 January at 3:00p.m. at the Catholic Diocese Centre, 9/F. A relative majority will suffice for election. Before the counting, a member of the Preparatory Committee will explain the method of dealing with tie votes.*

3.2.2 Representatives of men religious/

missionaries around 20

The procedure for election is to be decided by the Association of Major Superiors of Religious Men in Hong Kong.

3.2.3 Representatives of women religious/

missionaries around 30

The procedure for election is to be decided by the Association of Major Superiors of Religious Women in Hong Kong.

3.2.4 Representatives of the Laity around 78

- (1) One representative from each parish: total 58.
One member from the parish is to be elected by office-bearers of the Parish Council/Parish Pastoral Council during a meeting.
- (2) Ten representatives from the Diocesan Commissions and Diocesan Bureaux as listed in the Hong Kong Catholic Church Directory 2000.
Each Commission and Bureaux elects one representative and these representatives at a meeting on a fixed date elect ten members from among themselves.
- (3) Ten representatives from the Associations of the Laity as listed in the Hong Kong Catholic Church Directory 2000.
Each Association elects one representative and these representatives at a meeting on a fixed date elect ten members from among themselves.

**3.3 Members nominated freely by the
Diocesan Bishop**

around 10

3.4 Observers

The Diocesan Bishop may invite other concerned people to attend the Synod as “observers” in accordance with the Instruction on Diocesan Synods.

3.5 Advisors

The Diocesan Bishop may invite advisors to attend meetings at any stages of the Synod.

Personnel Changes among Synodal Members

An ex officio member, as an individual (cf 3.1) will retain synodal membership even if his term of office expires during the synod. The person newly appointed to this office by the Diocesan Bishop is entitled to become a new ex officio member.

Whether or not an elected member, on leaving the Diocese of Hong Kong or owing to grave reasons, is unable to fulfil his/her duty, is to be replaced is decided by the Presidency (cf 4.1.1). The norm for replacing the member is also decided by the Presidency.

Duty and Right of Synodal Members

All legal members of the Synod have the duty and right to attend all synodal meetings. They shall have no proxy when legally prevented from attending a meeting, though they have to report to the Bishop the reason for their absence.

Before the synod’s first assembly, all members are to make their “profession of faith” in accordance with §833#1 of the Code of Canon Law.

4. The Proceedings of the Diocesan Synod

The Diocesan Bishop presides over the Diocesan Synod.

4.1 Those bearing special office during the Synod:

4.1.1 Plenary Assembly

(I) Presidency

(1) Composition:

The Diocesan Bishop presides

3 Ex officio Vice-Chairpersons: The 3 vicars general.

3 Elected Vice-Chairpersons: to be elected by all the members during the plenary assembly.

(2) Function:

To assist the Diocesan Bishop to conduct synodal meetings.

(II) Moderator:

To be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to organize, coordinate and handle synodal affairs.

(III) Coordinating Committee:

- (1) *Composition:*
The Presidency with the Moderator (Convenor) and Chairpersons of Drafting Groups.
- (2) *Function:*
To organize and coordinate all synodal affairs.

(IV) Recorders:

- (1) *Composition:*
6 persons (3 for Chinese and 3 for English) to be elected by all the members during the plenary assembly.
- (2) *Function:*
To record the proceedings of the Synod and produce minutes to be amended and approved by the Assembly. The Recorders are supported by the Secretariat for the Diocesan Synod.

(V) Scrutineers:

- (1) *Composition:*
4 persons to be elected by all the members during the plenary assembly.

- (2) *Function:*
To scrutinize ballots and votes in the Assembly.

(VI) News Group

- (1) *Composition:*
6 persons (3 for Chinese and 3 for English) to be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
- (2) *Function:*
Responsible for Diocesan Synod news dispatches and for keeping in constant contact with the Moderator.

4.1.2 Drafting Groups (the number of Groups depends on the number of topics for discussion, cf no. 2 of 4.5)

(1) Composition:

- 1 Chairperson to be elected by the members of the individual Drafting Group
- 2 Vice-Chairpersons to be elected by the members of the individual Drafting Group
- 2 Recorders (1 for Chinese and 1 for English) to be elected by the individual Drafting Group

(2) Function:

- Chairperson: chairing group meetings
- Vice-Chairpersons: co-chairing group meetings

Recorders: recording the proceedings of group meetings and keeping in constant contact with the Secretariat for the Diocesan Synod.

4.2 Secretariat for the Diocesan Synod (Non-Synodal Member)

Supporting the Diocesan Synod in its affairs and related organizing works.

4.3 Procedure for Electing Office-bearers in the Synod:

4.3.1 Plenary Assembly

(1) Election of 3 non-ex officio Vice-Chairpersons:

To be elected by written ballot and a relative majority in the Plenary Assembly

(Replenishment: Memorandum of the Election of the non-ex officio Vice-Chairpersons)

In accordance with the Directory for the Diocesan Synod promulgated on 4 March 2000, the three non-Ex officio Vice-Chairpersons will be elected by written ballot and a relative majority in the Plenary Assembly. The election will be held on 8 April 2000 during the Second Plenary Assembly.

All synodal members present at the said assembly have the right to vote and, excepting the three Ex officio Vice-Chairpersons, are eligible to be elected.

The candidates of the non-ex officio Vice-Chairpersons should possess the following qualities:

- (i) Enjoy High prestige and command universal respect.*
- (ii) Good knowledge of the Diocese*
- (iii) Possess leadership skill with experience in holding large scale conference.*
- (iv) Christians, religious brothers or sisters, since 3 of the Ex officio Vice-chairperson are priests.*

The Chairperson of the Assembly, having consulted the three Ex officio Vice-Chairperson, decided upon the following guidelines:

- 1 Nomination of candidates by written ballot: Each member can choose 3 names from the list. The scrutineers appointed by Cardinal Wu for the occasion will read out the names chosen. The 10 names with the highest votes shall be the candidates. When the same number of votes occurs the number of candidates will increase accordingly.*
- 2 In the case of a candidate renouncing the right to be elected: With the approval of the Chairperson the vacancy shall be filled by the one having the next highest number of votes.*
- 3 Before the official election each candidate shall make a brief introduction of him/herself.*
- 4 Each member can write out not more than 3 names on the ballot. The 3 names with the highest number of votes shall be elected. When the same number of votes occurs it shall be decided by drawing lots.*

- (2) Election of 6 Recorders:
To be elected by relative majority in the Plenary Assembly
- (3) Election of 4 Scrutineers:
To be elected by relative majority in the Plenary Assembly

4.3.2 Drafting Groups

- (1) Election of Chairperson:
To be elected by members of each Group by absolute majority
- (2) Election of Vice-Chairpersons (2 persons):
To be elected by members of each Group by relative majority
- (3) Election of Recorders (2 persons):
To be elected by members of each Group by relative majority

4.4 Proceedings of the Synod

4.4.1 Plenary Assembly

(I) Quorum

The Quorum for a regular assembly is fixed at more than half the total membership.

The Quorum for the final voting of Drafts is fixed at two-thirds of the total membership.

(II) Intervention

All members may make two interventions in the assembly: 3 minutes for the first round and 2 minutes for the second.

Members may also put forward their suggestions in writing to Drafting Groups.

(III) Voting

(1) Voting on Draft items:

In the first round of voting, the ballots are to be expressed with “placet,” “non placet,” or “placet iuxta modum.” Approval for any item must have an absolute majority.

Those who vote “placet iuxta modum” must also present their amendment in writing. The amendment is left to the discretion of the Drafting Groups in question.

(2) Voting on matters pertaining to procedure or a “straw vote” must have an absolute majority for approval.

When members deem it necessary, they may present their request in writing, with no less than 10 signatures to the Presidency, asking for a “straw vote”.

(3) For approval, the final voting on the whole Draft requires two-thirds of the ballots from the membership present.

4.4.2 Drafting Groups

(I) Quorum

The quorum for a regular meeting must be more than half the Group members.

The quorum for voting on the Draft to be presented to the Plenary Assembly must be two-thirds of the Group members.

(II) Voting

The approval for the Draft to be presented to the Plenary Assembly must have the ballots of two-thirds of the members present.

4.5 Schedule for the Advancement of the Synod

Cf. Appendix

5. Draft Pattern

Drafting Members are to produce a draft on the topic of choice according to the following pattern:

(I) Basic Principle:

The Draft must be inspired and directed by dogmatic and ecclesial documents and relevant to the topic in question. (Note 1)

(II) Reflection on Concrete Situation:

The members of the Drafting Group must look at the concrete situations and pastoral needs and explore a future line of action by observing attentively the signs of the times and phenomena in our society.

(III) Concrete Proposals:

After reflecting on actual situations, the members of the Drafting Group must gather together to make practical suggestions. These suggestions must be concrete, practical and feasible so that they can be studied further and evaluated by an accountable mechanism to be set up in future. (Note 2)

Practical suggestions, which can be formulated in precise terms and used as “concrete proposals” intended to assist pastoral ministry, are essential for the second draft. All formulations must be voted on individually by the whole assembly before they can be regarded as synodal resolutions.

There may be many basic principles in the first draft but they are merely supportive of the proceedings of the Synod and are to be regarded as secondary.

Preference may be made regarding “resolutions” if they appear too many at the final stage of the Synod and in such a form are presented to the diocesan Bishop for his final decision. This preference depends on the actual personnel and resources at the disposal of the Diocese so that these resolutions can be studied further and implemented at various stages.

✕ Different topics demand different Draft Patterns and must be treated with flexibility in accordance with their nature and contents.

(Note 1) Instruction on Diocesan Synods, V, 2, “By the terms ‘decrees’ and ‘declarations’ the Code of Canon Law envisages the possibility that texts emanating from Synods consists, on the one hand, of true juridic norms – that may be termed “constitutions” or otherwise – or directives for future pastoral programmes and, on the other, of opportune affirmations of truth of the Catholic faith or morals, especially in relations to more important aspects of life of the particular Church.”

(Note 2) Instruction on Diocesan Synods, IV, 6, “...In the preparation of such documents every effort should be made to arrive at precise formulations intended to assist the pastoral ministry and to avoid generalizations or merely reducing such texts to exhortations which render them less effective.”

Replenishment (1): Letter of 24th April by the Secretariat of the Diocesan Synod (Let-11-2000)

The Coordinating Committee of the Diocesan Synod met on 17 April to review the proceeding of the Plenary Assembly on 16 April. In order to allow for a smooth process for the coming assemblies the said committee came up with the following guidelines:

1 Regarding the “Basic Principle” and “Reflection on Concrete Situation” of the Drafts:

- No discussion will be held (as these will not be voted on). Members are encouraged to write in their suggestions to improve the text.*
- All written suggestions are to be studied by the Drafting Group in question and submitted to the Presidency.*
- In the final documents the two parts will serve as references to support the “Concrete Proposals”.*

2 The Assembly will only discuss on the “Concrete Proposals”, part by part

(A) Synodal members wishing to intervene in the first round should register with the Secretariat of the Diocesan Synod three days before the Assembly (stating which part of the Concrete Proposals).

Time limit for each intervention during the first round is 3 minutes. The content should be put in writing and handed in to the Secretariat on the same day.

(B) Members wishing to intervene in the second round can indicate by show of hands after the first round.

Time limit for each intervention during the second round is 2 minutes.

The second round of interventions is only to respond to the first round. No new questions or suggestions will be accepted. The content should be put in writing and handed in to the Secretariat on the same day.

3 The Drafting Group in question will study all the suggestions. (Should any difficulties arise the drafting group can request for a “straw vote” in order to get a general indication from the assembly).

After studying these suggestions the drafting group should explain to the assembly the reason for their acceptance or rejection of

certain suggestions. (Members who do not agree with the reason given can request for a “straw vote”)

4 The Drafting Group will present a list of proposals (either the original or the amended) for voting. Before voting the assembly can, if necessary, ask for some clarifications but no discussions will take place.

Voting: each proposal will be voted on individually.

(A) In the first round of voting members are to expressed with “placet”, “non placet” or “placet iuxta modum”. (“placet iuxta modum” is to express a basic agreement, with only minor points to be amended). Those who vote “placet iuxta modum” should hand in a written amendment on the same day.

(B) After working on the amendments the Drafting Group should present the new proposals to the assembly for a second voting. (only voting “placet” or “non placet”)

In the meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Synod on 7th May, it was decided that the synod members might discuss the concrete proposals part by part and/or comment on the whole section of the concrete proposals.

(Extracted from the minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Diocesan Synod)

About the Priority Vote method of the “Concrete Proposals”

It was decided in the meeting:

- ❶ The No. of votes in the first round will be increased to 40 items, and 10 items would be elected from the Top 40 items in the second round.*
- ❷ The selection criteria for the General Priority-Vote would be changed as “The prior items to be resolved by the Diocese in the Next 10 years”.*

Clarification on the voting procedures:

- ❶ Vote on the Concrete Proposals of each Drafting Group*
- ❷ Final vote for the General Draft*
- ❸ Sending out the ballots of the priority-vote by mail (First Round)*
- ❹ Collecting the ballots of the priority-vote (First Round)*
- ❺ Vote for the General Priority of the concrete proposals (Second Round)*

6 Prayer for the Diocesan Synod

Like any other ecclesial event or mission, prayer is the secret to the success of the Diocesan Synod. Cardinal Wu recommends all members of the faithful, whether clergy, religious or the laity, to pray with one intention, i.e. for the progress and success of the Diocesan Synod, so that it may become a real event of grace for the whole Diocese.

Prayer for the Diocesan Synod:

JUBILEE 2000 PRAYER FOR HONG KONG DIECESAN SYNOD

Almighty and everlasting God, your Son established the Church so that your people, filled with the Spirit, may become your fervent witnesses to the world. Through the message of the Gospel and by the merits of our predecessors, we have become your children. On the occasion of the Jubilee 2000, we assemble for the Diocesan Synod to pursue your divine will in order to continue the endeavours of the past and to open up new horizons for generations to come. As we strive together to draw up a plan for a new evangelization in a new millennium, we implore you to send forth your Holy Spirit to guide us, pastors and flock, so that united in mind and heart and sharing our gifts, we may become better witnesses and our faith may be strengthened. Grant that we, in word and action may enlighten those who are in error, care for the little ones and the needy, practice justice and help spread the Kingdom of God. We make our prayer through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father

Blessed Martyrs of China, pray for us.

Appendix

Estimated Time-table for the Diocesan Synod

Selecting topics for discussion	When membership list is confirmed	
	1 st plenary assembly: (Opening Mass)	
	Exposition of proceeding and timetable of the Synod.	
	Consultation by questionnaire of the synodal members (on numbers and priority of topics for discussion).	
Setting up Drafting Groups	Collecting the questionnaires and presenting them to the Diocesan Bishop for his decision on the topics for discussion.	1 month
	Communicating the list of selected topics for discussion in writing to all synodal members so that they can make their first and second choices of topic. The Diocesan Bishop will decide on the composition of the drafting groups (one group per topic).	
	2 nd plenary assembly: Announcing the list of drafting groups.	3 months
	Explaining the pattern and procedure of drafting.	
Drafting	All drafting groups working on the first draft	
Consultation	Consultation of the whole diocese (suggestions thus collected will be presented to the drafting groups concerned).	2 months
	Synodal members discuss drafts prepared by other groups within the groups they belong to and present their suggestions to the groups concerned.	

Revising Draft	Each drafting group study the collected suggestions and make necessary revision to produce the second draft	1 month
Synodal Members study the Second Draft	<p>All synodal members study each revised draft personally and in their respective groups and present their suggestions to the groups concerned.</p> <p>Each group may need to revise again their own draft to produce the third draft.</p>	2 months
		Totally 9 months
Final stage	<p>Synodal members discuss all drafts in the plenary assembly</p> <p>Each member can make 2 interventions, 3 minutes for the 1st round and 2 minutes for the 2nd.</p> <p>(Each draft will take approximately 16 hours for deliberation and must be completed within a month)</p> <p>NB: X topics = X drafts which will take X months to finish. The total duration of the Synod = 9 + X months</p> <p>This fact must be taken into consideration when deciding on the number of topics for discussion.</p> <p>The resolutions will be presented to the Diocesan Bishop for approval.</p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop will sign the synodal document during the concluding Mass.</p>	

Name-list of the Synod Members

There were totally 206 synod members and the list was as follows: –

(A) Ex officio

Coadjutor Bishop Joseph Zen, V.G.	(Group 2)	(Ex officio Vice-Chairperson)
Auxiliary Bishop John Tong, V.G.	(Group 7)	(Ex officio Vice-Chairperson)
Rev. Dominic Chan Chi-ming, V.G.	(Group 3)	(Ex officio Vice-Chairperson & Moderator)
Rev. Lawrence Lee Len	(Group 5)	
Rev. John Russell, SJ	(Group 5)	
Rev. Edward Khong Kin-cheung	(Group 6)	
Rev. Gabriel Lam Cheuk-wai	(Group 4)	
Rev. John B. Tsang Hing-mun	(Group 1)	
Rev. Francesco Conte, PIME	(Group 5)	
Rev. Luigi Bonalumi, PIME	(Group 5)	
Rev. Philip Chan Tak-hung	(Group 2)	
Rev. Francis Che, SDB	(Group 7)	
Rev. John B. Kwan Kit-tong	(Group 5)	(Group Leader)
Rev. Pierre Lam Minh, MEP	(Group 1)	
Rev. Joseph Mak King-hung	(Group 2)	
Rev. Henry Ng Kwok-po	(Group 6)	
Rev. Patrick Sun Ing-feng	(Group 5)	
Rev. David Chan Kwok-fai	(Group 5)	
Rev. Ferdinand Lok Hung-cheong	(Group 4)	(Group Leader)
Rev. Dino Doimo, PIME	(Group 3)	
Rev. Peter Ho, SDB	(Group 2)	
Rev. Thomas Leung, SJ	(Group 5)	
Rev. Salvador Sanchez, MG	(Group 4)	

(B) Elected members

(1) Priests who have the Care of Souls

Rev. Louis Ha ke-loon	(Group 6)	
Rev. Louis Lee Kwok-hung	(Group 7)	
Rev. Peter Leung Tat-choy	(Group 7)	
Rev. Francis Tam Kam-wing	(Group 6)	
Rev. Francis Tse Kin-shing	(Group 5)	
Rev. Thomas Wei Si-sin	(Group 1)	
Rev. Joseph Yim Tak-lung	(Group 7)	(Group Leader)
Rev. Edward Yu Fook-min	(Group 1)	
Rev. Victor M. Zavala C., MG	(Group 1)	
Rev. Edward Chau King-fun	(Group 6)	
Rev. Peter Choy Wai-man	(Group 7)	

Rev. Benedict Lam Cho-ming	(Group 7)
Rev. Joseph Lee, SDB	(Group 3)
Rev. John Wotherspoon, OMI	(Group 4)
Rev. David Lau Foo-kun	(Group 6)
Rev. Stanislaus Loh, SDB	(Group 5)
Rev. Vincenzo Carbone, PIME	(Group 5)
Rev. James Hurley, SJ	(Group 3)
Rev. Jacob Kwok Wai-ki	(Group 2)
Rev. Francis Lau Tak-kwong	(Group 2)
Rev. Bruno Lepeu, MEP	(Group 6)
Rev. Bosco John U Sheung-shat	(Group 5)
Rev. Luc Young, OMI	(Group 4)
Rev. Stephen Chan, OFM	(Group 3)
Rev. Anthony Chang Sang-loy	(Group 1)
Rev. Aloysius Nato, SVD	(Group 3)
Rev. Pierre Le Van Thang, MEP	(Group 6)
Rev. Simon Li Chi-yuen	(Group 2)
Rev. Ferdinand Bouckhout, CICM	(Group 6)
Rev. Peter Devos, CICM	(Group 4)
Rev. Giovanni Giampietro, PIME	(Group 4)
Rev. Brian Lawless, SVD	(Group 4)
Rev. John Tsang Wai-hung	(Group 4)
Rev. Joseph Fung Che-ho	(Group 2)
Rev. Paul Kam Po-wai	(Group 5)
Rev. Renzo Milanese, PIME	(Group 4)
Rev. Luke Tsui Kam-yiu	(Group 4)
Rev. Piero Zamuner, PIME	(Group 3)
Rev. Stefano Andreotti, PIME	(Group 2)
Rev. Anthony V. Brennan, MM	(Group 1)
Rev. Marcos Pablo Delos Trinos, CICM	(Group 3)
Rev. Franco Cumbo, PIME	(Group 3)
Rev. Thomas Law Kwok-fai	(Group 1)
Rev. Jose Serafin, MG	(Group 4)

(2) Representatives of Men Religious / Missionaries

Rev. John F. Ahearn	(Group 7)	Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, Inc
Rev. James Areechira	(Group 2)	Society of the Divine Word
Rev. Louis F. Baudry	(Group 7)	Institute "Of The Incarnate Word"
Rev. Richard Brodeur	(Group 4)	P.M.E. Fathers
Rev. John Nep. Chai	(Group 7)	Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Rev. Bro. John Chong Kee Ann	(Group 6)	Marist Brothers of the Schools

Rev. Msgr. Tom T. Gonzalez	(Group 3)	Mission Society of the Philippines
Rev. Joseph Ha	(Group 6)	Franciscan Order
Bro. Thomas Lavin	(Group 6)	Brothers of the Christian Schools
Rev. John Le Dinh Cac	(Group 1)	Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
Rev. Fernando Montes	(Group 4)	Guadalupe Missioners
Rev. Thomas McIntyre	(Group 3)	Society of Jesus
Rev. Gerard Neylon	(Group 4)	Missionary Society of St. Columban
Rev. Patrick Taveirne	(Group 4)	Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Rev. Carlo Tei	(Group 4)	Pontifical Foreign Missions Institute
Rev. Paul Vallat	(Group 3)	Paris Foreign Missions
Rev. Simon Lam	(Group 2)	Salesians of Don Bosco
Rev. Lionel Xavier	(Group 7)	Dominican Order

(3) Representatives of Women Religious

Sr. Anna Maria Kwan	(Group 7)	Canossian Daughters of Charity
Sr. Esther Ling	(Group 6)	Canossian Daughters of Charity
Sr. Goretti Wong	(Group 7)	Canossian Daughters of Charity
Sr. Elizabeth Lee	(Group 3)	Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
Sr. Maria Teresa Li	(Group 6)	Chinese Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
Sr. Nadia Marmondi	(Group 4)	Contemplative Missionary Fraternity
Sr. Rosetta Lee	(Group 2)	Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
Sr. Rose Yick	(Group 6)	Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
Sr. Grace Chu	(Group 7)	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Sr. Judith Yuen	(Group 3)	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Sr. Teresa Yuen	(Group 2)	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Sr. Lucy Chung	(Group 6)	Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows
Sr. Agnes Lai Fong of Jesus	(Group 4)	Fraternity of the Little Sisters of Jesus
Sr. Rose Margaret Chung	(Group 7)	Little Sisters of the Poor
Sr. Marie Magdalen Lau	(Group 7)	Little Sisters of the Poor
Sr. Mary Anima	(Group 1)	Missionaries of Charity
Sr. Mary Chung Ai	(Group 3)	Missionaries of Charity

Sr. Nancy Mak	(Group 4)	Missionary Sister of Our Lady of the Angels
Sr. Ann Gray	(Group 3)	Missionary Sister of St. Columban
Sr. Izabel Patuzzo	(Group 4)	Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate
Sr. Maria Goretti Yeung	(Group 5)	Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate
Sr. Agnes Lin	(Group 1)	Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Sr. Clare Sin	(Group 7)	Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Sr. Margaret Fung	(Group 1)	Sisters Announcers of the Lord
Sr. Joanna Marie Cheung	(Group 7)	Sisters of St. Paul De Chartres
Sr. Laura Watt	(Group 4)	Sisters of St. Paul De Chartres
Sr. Marie Pauline Wong	(Group 6)	Sisters of St. Paul De Chartres
Sr. Madeleine Kwong	(Group 7)	Sisters of the Precious Blood
Sr. Maria Goretti Lau	(Group 1)	Sisters of the Precious Blood
Sr. Goretti Leung	(Group 1)	Society of the Helpers

(4) Representatives of the Laity – Parish

Mr. Hon Yim-luen	(Group 6)	St. Anne's Parish
Mr. Cheung Wah-keung	(Group 5)	Star of the Sea Parish
Ms. So Suk-yin	(Group 5)	Holy Cross Parish
Mr. Suen Mau-biu	(Group 5)	St. Jude's Parish
Mr. Yeow Yu-hong	(Group 5)	St. Margaret's Parish
Mr. Ng Cheuk-chiu	(Group 5)	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish
Mr. Lee Chiu-ming	(Group 7)	St. Joseph's Parish (Mid-Levels)
Mrs. Purple Kwong	(Group 4)	Cathedral Parish
Mr. Fok Shung-kei	(Group 1)	St. Anthony's Parish
Mr. Fok Kin-keung	(Group 4)	Our Lady of the Rosary Parish
Ms. Wong Kam-fung	(Group 6)	Our Lady of Lourdes Parish
Mr. Yeung Siu-hung	(Group 6)	St. Peter's Parish
Mr. Lam Wing-fai	(Group 2)	Epiphany Parish
Mr. Siu Kwok-wai	(Group 4)	St. Lawrence's Parish
Mr. Mak Tsui-hung	(Group 6)	St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Ms. Wong Wai-ling	(Group 5)	Our Lady of China Parish
Ms. Chan Wing-ho	(Group 6)	St. Paul's Parish
Ms. Li Suk-sim	(Group 1)	St. Teresa's Parish
Mr. Lau Tak	(Group 1)	Holy Spirit Parish
Ms. Tong Shuk-yi	(Group 5)	Rosary Parish
Ms. Wong Tsing	(Group 5)	St. Mary's Parish
Mr. Liu Wing-sun	(Group 4)	Notre Dame Parish
Ms. Wong Lai-ying	(Group 7)	Mary Help of Christians Parish

Mr. Wong Chiu	(Group 3)	St. Ignatius Pastoral Zone
Mr. Wong King-sing	(Group 1)	St. Vincent's Parish (Wong Tai Sin)
Mr. Chan Shu-wing	(Group 7)	Mother of Good Counsel Parish
Mr. Wong Chien-yeh	(Group 7)	St. Bonaventure Parish
Ms. Tam Nin-chee	(Group 3)	St. Patrick's Parish
Mr. Lee Chi-hung	(Group 6)	Holy Family Parish
Mr. Ng Shu-pang	(Group 2)	St. Francis Xavier Parish
Ms. Chui Ching-sie	(Group 4)	St. Joseph's Parish (Kwun Tong)
Mr. Wong Chung-hong	(Group 6)	Christ the Worker Parish
Mr. Wong Wah-sing	(Group 5)	Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish
Ms. Chow Ching-man	(Group 5)	St. Edward's Parish
Mr. Chim Chiu-wah	(Group 6)	Resurrection Parish
Mr. Chow Yu-hong	(Group 1)	St. John the Baptist Parish
Mr. Chan Chi-ngai	(Group 1)	Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish
Ms. Wong Shuk-chun	(Group 5)	St. Vincent's Parish (Hang Hau)
Mr. Lai Sang	(Group 4)	St. James's Parish
Mrs. Chung Chan Yuen-ching	(Group 5)	St. Andrew's Parish
Mr. Paul Yau	(Group 2)	St. Alfred's Parish
Mr. So Wai-yin	(Group 7)	St. Benedict Parish
Mr. Chow Yuen-han	(Group 5)	St. Francis Parish
Mr. Luk Hok-hei	(Group 5)	Sacred Heart Parish
Ms. Yeung Lai-yen	(Group 1)	Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (Tai Po)
Mr. Lam On-wa	(Group 1)	St. Joseph's Parish (Fanling)
Mrs. Kam Ip Pik-yan	(Group 3)	Mother of Christ Parish
Mr. Wong Sing-kit	(Group 2)	SS. Peter and Paul Parish
Ms. Tsang Sui-fong	(Group 3)	St. Jerome's Parish
Mr. Leung Ting-cheung	(Group 4)	Holy Redeemer Parish
Ms. Cheung Hoi-law	(Group 2)	St. Matthew the Apostle Parish
Mr. Leung Wai-pui	(Group 4)	Annunciation Parish
Mr. Suen Lap-kwong	(Group 5)	St. John the Apostle Parish
Ms. Wong Mei-ling	(Group 1)	St. Stephen's Parish
Ms. Cheung Bik-ha	(Group 5)	SS. Cosmas and Damian Parish
Mr. Chau Wing-keung	(Group 6)	St. Thomas the Apostle Parish
Mr. Cheung Wang-yan	(Group 7)	Our Lady of Fatima Parish

(5) Representatives of the Laity – Diocesan Commissions/ Bureaux

Mr. Yung Yuk-yu	(Group 2)	Committee for Promoting the Cardinal's Pastoral Exhortation
Mr. Lee King-chi	(Group 3)	Diocesan Ad Hoc Committee for Services to New Arrivals from Mainland China
Mr. Chan Kwok-keung	(Group 3)	Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to the Disabled
Ms. Tsang Tak-lan	(Group 1)	Diocesan Catechetical Commission