

## **CHRIST AT EDSA: THE FILIPINO FACES OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY**

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### **INTRODUCTION: CHRIST AT EDSA**

**"We were there at EDSA! We stopped the tanks!" We must have heard many remarks like these from those who were at EDSA, Metro Manila during those momentous four days of the 1986 February Philippine Revolution. But the same people who made those remarks, after some thoughtful reflection, would also say, "It was not really ourselves who stopped the tanks. God did it! Our faith won the revolution!" Indeed, for very many of the people who participated in the events, what happened could not adequately be explained except by calling it the "miracle of EDSA."**

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### **THE AWAKENING OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE**

**In truth, what happened at EDSA was the culmination, the climax as it were, of a long process that started many years back. The gradual awakening of our people started even before the declaration of martial law in September 1972. The author remembers even then the involvement of the San Jose seminarians in the demonstrations and rallies before the San Miguel Pro-Cathedral. But during those years, and especially during the martial law years up**

to August 21, 1983, the leading groups were mainly the more militant, cause-oriented groups tending to the Left. Groups in the Church were either not involved, or if they were involved they had aligned themselves with different groups.<sup>1</sup>

But then came the shattering experience of August 21, 1983. Ninoy Aquino was murdered on the tarmac almost immediately after the China Airlines Flight 811 had taxied to a stop. He never delivered the arrival statement that he had prepared, and which read in part: "I have returned on my own free will to join those struggling to restore our rights and freedom through non-violence. I seek no confrontation. I only pray and will strive for a genuine national reconciliation founded on justice."<sup>2</sup>

Overnight the situation changed, and we witnessed changes that can only be described as truly remarkable. Students and seminarians who had never known any other president except Mr. Marcos were in the forefront organizing the people for the wake and the funeral of Ninoy Aquino. Hundreds of thousands, many accounts say millions, of Filipinos showed a solidarity never witnessed before when for eleven hours they joined a procession along a thirty-kilometer route that brought Ninoy to his final resting place.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH

What about the Church after 1983, and especially before and after the 1986 "Snap Election"? The Church had become a rallying point for the people. Moderate groups started to emerge and become very active. Among them we might mention groups like Aware, Manindigan, Atom, Roar, Fasters for Justice, and others. Nor should we forget NAMFREL which was able to recruit and inspire half a million volunteers, a very great number of them priests, nuns, seminarians and students.<sup>3</sup> Of course we must mention the "Namfrel Marines," the trouble-shooters composed of seminarians and religious.

1. For an over-all view of the political movements in the Philippines in recent years especially as they involved Church people, see B. F. Nebres, "Political Spectrum at Present," in *The 'Miracle' of the Philippine Revolution, Loyola Papers* 15 (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1986) 46-60.

2. *The Manila Times*, A Special Report for August 21, 1986, p. 17.

3. Nebres, "Political Spectrum," 47-49.

It is important to note that these activities were not simply political; they were also religious in character. Note how all these rallies and processions would be preceded by prayer rallies and Masses held in places like Santo Domingo and Baclaran churches. Then there were the pre-election and post-election pastoral letters of the Philippine Catholic Bishops.<sup>4</sup>

It can rightfully be said that what happened at EDSA was the inevitable result, the natural outcome one might say, of the long process of conscientization that was happening among various sectors of the Filipino people. And yet if we are going to be true to the perception of so many of those who participated in the February '86 events, we must say that God intervened in a special way in those events, just as He has always intervened in the life of His people.

#### PEOPLE'S FAITH IS PEOPLE'S POWER: FACES OF CHRIST AT EDSA

For the purpose of this paper, more than just being able to label the EDSA event as a "miracle," we wish to understand more deeply the interior dynamism of the faith of the people who went to EDSA, their religious symbols and spiritual values. They came with their statues of the Santo Niño, the Santo Cristo (or the Nazareno), and their different statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They came with their rosaries, their Bibles, and their candles. They prayed the rosary countless times, they sang hymns, and read the Bible. And all of this happened in a kind of fiesta atmosphere.

Foremost among the images of Christ brought to EDSA were those of the Santo Niño and the Nazareno or Santo Cristo. There are, of course, other images of Christ that are popular among Filipinos; among them are the Sacred Heart, Christ the King, Jesus the Miracle Worker, and among the young people today, Jesus the Liberator and Servant.

#### DEVELOPING A FILIPINO CHRISTOLOGY FROM BELOW

Fr. Benigno Beltran, in one of the conclusions of his doctoral thesis on Christology which he completed in Rome not too long

4. The text of the two letters is published in *Pulso* 1, no. 4 (1986) 327-31 and 336-39.

ago,<sup>5</sup> suggested that we must follow the way of the "Christology from below" in developing a Filipino Christology, give more emphasis to the man Jesus, and be more constantly aware that Christ not only assumed a human nature, but that he also had a human history.

The present author would like to suggest that we are already on the road to developing our own version of a Christology from below with the faces of Christ already popular among the Filipino people. This paper will focus on the two most dominant images of Christ in popular Filipino religiosity — that of the Santo Niño and the Nazareno. But to these two should be added a third that up to now is not yet very well known and popular among Filipinos, that of the Risen Christ.

### THE SANTO NIÑO

There is no question that the Santo Niño is very popular among our people.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately there is sometimes the tendency to easily dismiss this image as that of the helpless, innocent Baby who can just be put aside and ignored. But if the Baby Symbol is so popular among us, it must be because it stirs up something that is significant in the Filipino soul.

Both the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel clearly show how children were very close to the heart of Jesus. After all, to inaugurate the new covenant, the Son of God started as a little child. Children are the symbol of the genuine disciples. "For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mt 19:14). One must "accept the reign of God like a little child" (Mk 10:15), otherwise he cannot take part in it. The Kingdom of God must be accepted in all simplicity and humility as a gift of the Father. "Unless you

5. Benigno P. Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate. An Inquiry into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus the Christ* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1987).

6. Among writers and theologians who have written on Filipino devotion to the Santo Niño, a name that stands out is that of Fr. Ruben Villote who has published various reflections and articles on the Filipino Christ; see, for example, his series of reflections on the Filipino Christ, especially "Reflections on the Sto. Niño," and "The Baby Symbol of Christmas" in his *Sapagkat Kami'y Tao Lamang and Other Filipino Christian Reflections* (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1980) 18-22. Worth mentioning also is the work of Douglas Elwood and Patricia Magdamo, *Christ in Philippine Context* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1971) esp. 5-16. The part on the Filipino Christ has been updated by Dr. Elwood for the paper he prepared for the seminar on "The Filipino Face of Christ," held in Tagaytay City, January 15-17, 1981, and published in *Diwa* 6, no. 1 (Oct. 1981) 7-21.

change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God. Whoever makes himself lowly, becoming like this child, is of greatest importance in that heavenly reign" (Mt 18:3-4). There is a definite attitude underlined by these passages. The little children are those who allow themselves to be given grace and in surrendering themselves receive the joy that comes from God. They are those who are vulnerable, who are small and who "feel small" — the attitude that corresponds to what Jesus told Nicodemus, "unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3). Childlikeness, the attitude that the Gospel requires of every Christian, is "a guileless openness to all life's possibilities, to ever new encounters and realities."<sup>7</sup>

Deep in the heart of the Filipino is a childlike attachment to his family, to his father and mother, and all his *kuyas* and *ates*. Even when he has grown up and has his own family, he still maintains a deep attachment to the members of the family he came from. Like a child, he generally is, and remains, tender, warm and friendly, loving and loveable, but also trusting and sometimes defenseless and vulnerable. Writers who have reflected on the events at EDSA saw these qualities among the people who gathered there. They won, and it was clearly the victory of the people, of all the people, but most of all, of the women, the elderly, the Sisters, the children, the poor and the powerless. And they brought it about with their smiles and prayers, their offerings of flowers and food to the soldiers whom they took as their brothers and refused to consider as their enemies.<sup>8</sup>

Fr. Ruben Tanseco, reflecting on the February EDSA Revolution and on the "givens" in the "collective psyche of the Filipino," points out that certain qualities and traits of our people which are generally considered weaknesses in our culture were the very same qualities that facilitated the revolution and made it succeed.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE SANTO NIÑO AND THE "ABBA" EXPERIENCE OF JESUS

In order to truly understand the childlike qualities we associate

7. Rahner-Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965) 73.

8. Alfeo G. Nudas, *God With Us. The 1986 Philippine Revolution* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1986) 104.

9. "Psycho-Pastoral Reflections on the People's Revolution" in *Loyola Papers* 15, 167-80.

with the Santo Niño and which Jesus manifested all throughout his earthly life, and see their value for Christian spirituality, we have to see them in the context of what is called the Abba experience of Jesus.

Jesus regularly calls God "Abba" — my Father or Daddy.<sup>10</sup> For Jesus, God is the Father who knows what his children need (Mt 6:8); whose kindness knows no limits (Mt 5:45), and whose caring extends even to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. The God of Jesus was not the abstract, far-away God of the philosophers, not the God of Aristotle and Plato, but the God of Abraham, Moses and Jacob. He is not the unmoved mover, but the living God of love who has entered into our history and has drawn close to us.

In calling God Abba, Jesus invoked God in terms of unparalleled intimacy and reverent audacity. In this invocation we come face to face with the mystery of the heart, mind, and affection of Jesus. From the center of his life, Jesus related to the Father in radical openness and complete freedom.<sup>11</sup>

The Christian looking for a personal spirituality must start by looking at Jesus. Karl Rahner, expounding on the vision of St. Ignatius Loyola, suggests that the "person" of Jesus is the most intensive radicalization of openness to the Infinite Mystery. Rahner's anthropology and christology, both very much influenced by the Ignatian "being open to God as ever greater" see the human person as a living openness to God; that man is human precisely to the degree that he gives himself to the Infinite One as his ground and goal.

The full meaning of that [human] nature is to give itself away completely, and it only fully realizes itself by burying itself in the incomprehensible. This happens in an unsurpassable manner when this nature, by giving itself completely to the mystery of fullness, so empties itself that it becomes God Himself. Therefore, the Incarnation is the unique case of the perfect fulfillment of human reality — which means that a man only *is* when he gives himself away.<sup>12</sup>

10. Important studies on this topic are Joachim Jeremias, *The Central Message of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1965) 9-30, and *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1967); also W. Marchel, *Abba, Père! La prière du Christ et des chrétiens* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971).

11. Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (New York: Orbis Books, 1978) 71.

12. Karl Rahner, *Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965) 101-2.

We can more deeply understand the "Abba" of Jesus if we listen to it on his lips in the garden of Gethsemane waiting for his betrayer in the dark shadow of the cross. "Going a little further, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 'Abba, Father', he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will but what you will'" (Mk 14:35-36).<sup>13</sup>

The God that Jesus is addressing is not the stern lawgiver who is threatening vengeance, but the Father that he has known all his life and found to be bountiful in his provision, reliable in his promises and utterly faithful in his love. He can obey the will that sends him to the cross with hope and expectation because it is the will of Abba whose love has been proven so that it can now be trusted so fully by being obeyed so completely. This is not legal obedience driven by commandment, but trusting response to already known and experienced love. It is the obedience of the Unique Son greater than that required of any other. "Obedient to death, even death on the Cross," so the first Christians sang (Phil 2:8). In Gethsemane the obedience springs from trust, and on Calvary it is able to rest in that trust again, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46).

It is clear that the strong devotion of the Filipino to the Santo Niño, if deepened and joined to a good understanding of the "Abba" experience of Jesus, can be the foundation of a truly solid Christian spirituality. Admittedly, the discussion of the Abba experience of Jesus might get lost in the speculative heights of abstract anthropology and transcendental theology as Johannes B. Metz suggests could happen in the theology of Rahner.<sup>14</sup> Metz would argue that the anthropology of Rahner ignores the concretely sociopolitical aspects of reality and suggests that "openness to the Infinite Mystery needs to be filled out with partisanship for the suffering and oppressed."<sup>15</sup> Metz says:

I am of the opinion that Karl Rahner's transcendental theology can only be continued without a break if it is criticized and corrected with the

13. Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *God the Father* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 72-73.

14. Johannes B. Metz, *Faith in History and Society* (New York: Crossroad, 1980) esp. 13, 64-66, and 223-27.

15. William M. Thompson, "Christologies from Above and Below," *Chicago Studies* 26, no. 3 (Nov. 1987) 310-11.

help of experiences and a praxis that are not derived from the theological system hitherto in use.<sup>16</sup>

The understanding of the Abba experience of Jesus can be further deepened and its practical aspects can be more clearly seen if it is considered in connection with his teachings regarding the Kingdom of God as we shall immediately do.

#### THE ABBA EXPERIENCE AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD<sup>17</sup>

Considering the Abba experience of Jesus in connection with his Kingdom teachings will make it clear that calling God "Father" is not a banal, almost automatic intimacy, nor is it the individualistic, interiorized message of fatherhood, but the revelation that God is the father of all, the God who is near and who cares for all people, even for the lilies of the fields and the birds of the air. That God is God in love, inviting the disciples to believe, which means trusting and building on the power of God which is at work in Jesus, making God the foundation of existence. It means letting God act and recognizing his rule.

The intimacy, familiarity and authority expressed in the direct invocation of his God as Abba was in Jesus' own life the personal basis for his preaching about the Kingdom of God. This experience of God as Abba gave Jesus in the depths of his spirit, the courage and the capacity to envision God's reign as near in a way which was novel, compelling and radical. In this experience God is not the unmoved mover nor the unchangeable source, but the living God of love, the God of history who creates and carries through a new beginning, just as much as he is the power of the future. The experience and message of Jesus about the coming of God's kingdom in love means that the ultimate meaning of all reality is now coming to be in a new and final form and invites us all to share in the realization of God's kingdom now.

Joachim Jeremias has already shown that it was from his prayer rooted in his experience of God as Abba that Jesus received the

16. Metz, *Faith in History*, 13.

17. The two following paragraphs owe very much to the reflection of Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (London: Burns & Oates, 1976) 80-83. See also I. Howard Marshall, "The Hope of a New Age: The Kingdom of God in the New Testament," *Themelios* 11, no. 1 (Sept. 1985) 5-15.



Kingdom message. Jesus experienced God as the one who comes as unconditional love.<sup>18</sup> When Jesus spoke to God, he did so like a child to its father, simply, confidently, inwardly; the use of Abba by Jesus in addressing God reveals the heart and deepest core of his relationship with God. But what is revealed is not just the familiarity and the special relationship with God but also shows the complete surrender of the Son in relation to the Father.

Jeremias has also pointed out that in the prayers of Jesus the Abba is not only an expression of obedient trust (Mk 14:36), but is at the same time a word of authority.<sup>19</sup> It represents Jesus' own most characteristic mode of speech and it is the profoundest expression of his authority and of the consciousness of his mission. "Everything has been given over to me by my Father" (Mt 11:27). The ultimate root of the Kingdom message was the experience of God which Jesus had in himself and which determined his whole life and which formed the heart of his entire message. In addition to Sonship, other scholars include the experience of the eschatological Spirit as being at the root of Jesus' Kingdom message.<sup>20</sup>

By now, it should be abundantly clear that true Christian spirituality can only be rooted in the Abba experience itself of Jesus. By authorizing his disciples to say "Abba," Jesus gave them a share of his relationship with God. St. Paul told the early Christians that with the simple cry of "Abba, Father," the Spirit himself gives witness with their spirit that they are children of God (Rom 8:15 f.). And the proof that they are really children of God is the fact that God has sent forth into their hearts the spirit of his Son which cries out "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6). St. Paul is saying that the saying of "Abba" is beyond all human capabilities and is only possible within the new relationship with God given by the Son.<sup>21</sup>

But Jesus not only authorizes his disciples to say "Abba" after him and thereby gives them a share in his sonship, but he goes on to say that it is this relationship that will open to them the doors to God's Kingdom. "I assure you, unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God" (Mt

18. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, 54-65.

19. *Ibid.* 63.

20. John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1987) 91.

21. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, 65.

18:3). Only the person who, through Jesus, allows himself to receive and nourish the childlike trust which resides in the word "Abba" will find his way into the Kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup>

### THE NAZARENO AT EDSA

Christ was also prominently present at EDSA as the suffering Jesus, the Santo Cristo or Nazareno. The Protestant theologian Dr. Douglas Elwood affirms that the image of the Suffering Christ is very popular among Filipinos as borne out by two surveys among Filipino college students that he first made in 1970 and then again in 1980.<sup>23</sup> He quotes with approval the conclusion reached by the late Jesuit socio-anthropologist Dr. Frank Lynch in his study of organized religion in the Philippines. Lynch wrote:

The Christ of the Filipinos is pre-eminently a suffering Christ. He is the beaten, scourged, humiliated and defeated Christ. With Christ under this aspect the people of the Philippines, in particular the men, readily identify themselves.<sup>24</sup>

It is not difficult to see why the ordinary Filipino would readily identify with the suffering Christ. We have as a people suffered very much. Devotion to the suffering Christ can be very meaningful and can bring comfort and courage to a people facing all sorts of problems and difficulties. For the Filipinos at EDSA, we can presuppose that there was enough faith and trust to assume that the Santo Cristo would naturally be with them.

It is of course true that Filipinos have attached a disproportionate importance to the Suffering Christ. Historically, through a lack of sufficient religious education, Filipinos have tended to neglect the image of the risen Christ. It is even possible that the very strong devotion to the Nazareno could have developed a fatalistic attitude among many Filipinos, while the popularity of the devotion to the Santo Niño could have contributed to neglecting the life and teachings of the adult Jesus.

22. Ibid. 97.

23. See above n. 6.

24. Quoted in Elwood, *Christ in Philippine Context*, 6.

## THE NAZARENO AND THE SERVANT OF YAHWEH

Devotion to the Nazareno can be deepened and made significant for Christian spirituality by linking it to the conception of the Servant of Yahweh specially as found in the Servant Songs of Second Isaiah.<sup>25</sup> Through his sufferings, the Servant of Yahweh shall achieve the reconciliation of men with God (Is 53:3-12). So too Jesus has come "not to be served but to serve and to give his life in ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Jesus looked upon all that was going to happen to him as willed by God, as part of the divine plan. He embraced his Father's will with loving obedience (Mk 14:26; Mt 26:39, 42; Lk 23:42).

Just as the Servant of Yahweh suffered not for his own sins but for those of others (Is 53:4-6, 11-12), so the sufferings of Jesus were to be vicarious, for others. In seeing himself as the suffering servant of Yahweh, Jesus saw his whole life, but more specifically his death, as grounded in fraternal service. This attitude of service led him to his death, a death that gets its meaning from all that went before: his words and his deeds. Jesus lived for others, he will die for others.

Various scholars who have commented on the EDSA Revolution agree that the murder of Ninoy Aquino on August 21, 1983 was a prime catalyst in the awakening of the Filipino people that led to the momentous four days of February 1986. But it was a vision similar to those of many martyrs that led Ninoy to his resolve. In a speech to the Asia Society in 1980, he said:

I have asked myself many times: Is the Filipino worth suffering or even dying for? I have carefully weighed the virtues and faults of the Filipino and I have come to the conclusion that he is worth dying for, because he is the nation's greatest untapped resource.<sup>26</sup>

## THE NAZARENO AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

What is the importance of the image of the Nazareno for the spirituality of the Christian?<sup>27</sup>

25. This is more fully developed in Pedro C. Sevilla, *People's Faith is People's Power. A Filipino Christological Catechism* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1986) 29-30.

26. *The Manila Times*, A Special Report for August 21, 1986, p. 4.

27. Sevilla, *People's Faith*, 34-35.

1) The passion and death of Jesus established the pattern of Christian spirituality: through the cross and death to new life. As the Gospel of John says: "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit" (Jn 12:24). The passion and death of Jesus also provides the concrete norm for love, the ultimate basis of all Christian morality and spirituality. And that is the self-sacrificing, self-forgetting love rooted in God's love for us. As John says: "Love consists in this: not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us and has sent his Son as an offering for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10).

2) Since the cross was the consequence of a fundamental attitude on the part of Jesus, Christian discipleship and spirituality entails imitating the attitude of Jesus when he incarnated himself in a concrete situation, taking a stand vis-a-vis the sinfulness that confronted him. Christian discipleship and spirituality has at its very core the following of Jesus even unto the cross. The prayer of this type of discipleship is one of obedience and faith and trust. "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:42).

3) Finally, we should teach Christians that the action of Jesus emptying himself gives meaning to their sufferings. The sufferings of Christians are not meaningless torments to be stoically endured or evaded by any means. They are "filling up" in one's own flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church (Col 1:24). There was a new sense of purpose, a sense of participation in God's grand plan of bringing all things together as one in Christ. The personal sufferings of Christians need not be wasted; they may be used to build up the members of the Church. We can see that if our people can truly follow the way of the Nazareno — of being obedient to the human condition, of learning to live humanly through his teachings and example, of accepting even death as part of who we are — then they too will be raised up in Jesus to enjoy eternal life.

## THE RISEN CHRIST

But there is another image of Christ that at the moment is not yet very popular among Filipinos. That is the image of the Risen Christ. Unfortunately many Filipinos are not yet conscious of the

value of the Resurrection of Jesus for the Christian faith. For many Filipinos, the celebrations of Easter are practically anticlimactic. They have, so to speak, spent all their energies and emotions for Good Friday, nothing more is left for Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.<sup>28</sup> Yet the resurrection of Jesus is the cardinal affirmation of the Christian faith. It is asserted over and over in the New Testament, not only at the end of each Gospel, but in the Epistles and other documents as well.

However, instead of going into a detailed exegesis and study of the Resurrection event, this part of the paper will only try to bring out the meaning and significance of the Resurrection for Christian discipleship and spirituality.<sup>29</sup>

1) The Resurrection of Jesus is a salvific event. The proclamation of the Resurrection does not simply give us information about a past event, no matter how memorable like, for example, the shooting of Ninoy Aquino on the tarmac, but the resurrection of Jesus must be acknowledged as something that has changed the world and our lives. Contrariwise, the denial of this event entails not only a denial of our future resurrection but also a denial of the new life which we received in baptism. "If Christ was not raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17).<sup>30</sup>

2) The Resurrection is the basis of Christian hope. In the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus is indissolubly linked to the virtue of christian hope. For the first Christians did not regard the Resurrection simply as a marvelous event in the life of Jesus, but they attached to it very specific hopes for themselves, for mankind and for the world. They expected nothing less than a new creation, where there will be no more death, sin would be forgiven, and evil would be vanquished. "The old order has passed away; now all is new," proclaimed St. Paul (1 Cor 5:17). For the Christian who believes in the Resurrection, the future has already begun. Through hope, he lives in the present but from the future. This means that in all that he does, he is sustained by the certainty of God's final

28. Ibid. 41-42.

29. Numerous studies have been published in recent years on the meaning of the Resurrection for the practical life of Christians and the various ideas proposed have become so much a part of contemporary reflection on the Resurrection that it is sometimes difficult to say when and by whom a particular idea was first proposed. The following paragraphs owe very much to these recently published studies.

30. Schuyler Brown, "The Resurrection of Jesus in the Life of the Christian," *Worship* 45, no. 9 (Nov. 1971) 514.

victory when God will be all in all. However, he does not live in the future. The paradoxical situation of living in the present but from the future is precisely what makes the uniqueness of Christian hope. The basis of Christian hope lies outside ourselves and outside history. It is the act of God's creative mercy which has manifested itself in the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>31</sup>

3) The Resurrection of Jesus is the basis of Christian faith and of the Christian Church.<sup>32</sup> From a historical perspective, the Resurrection provides the main foundation and starting point for the proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth as the God-sent Messiah, the Christ. The very first proclamation of the disciples turned substantially on the following key thought: Jesus, put to death by the authorities, is awakened by God and lifted up, and therefore we proclaim him as the Christ. In the Resurrection, God has completed his plan of salvation, namely the release of his people through the rejected Jesus. The crucified Jesus lives and in this lies the salvation of the world.

For the Apostolic Church, the decisive function of Jesus as God's Christ is totally clear only in the Resurrection. The Resurrection means that Jesus is once again with his disciples, but in a way that is no longer limited by the restrictions of time and space. Because of the Resurrection, Jesus has become the universal presence throughout all history, throughout the whole cosmos. "I am with you until the end of time" (Mt 28:20). This presence is his presence for all times in a universal way through the Spirit. Easter and Pentecost point toward the mutual fulfilling of one theological reality: the Crucified, returned through the Resurrection, exalted in the Ascension, is in the glory of the Father himself. With the Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost, the Christian Church is born. Without belief in the Resurrection, there would not exist a Church of Christ.

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE CROSS

The resurrection of Jesus does not mean simply that there is life after death; rather it was and is life that comes from death

31. Ibid. 516-17.

32. Peter Schmidt, "The Interpretation of the Resurrection," *Communio* 11 (Spring 1984) 80-83.

and through death. The Cross cannot be separated from the Resurrection. It is, after all, the Crucified who was raised by God (Mk 16:6). The death of Jesus has become the source of life for all who believe in him, the offering of his obedient love has become the death of death.

The link between the Cross and the Resurrection is very important for Christian discipleship and spirituality. For it is this that prevents Christian hope from degenerating into daydreams and phantasies. For the Christian's acceptance of the Cross as the sign of God's future does not entail an attitude of simple passive resignation. The Christian who lives from the future is inflamed by an intense desire to bring this future into the present, where the present is not allowed to remain as it is. For this reason, thoroughgoing conservatism, understood simply as the strict maintenance of the status quo, is radically unchristian.<sup>33</sup> Christian resurrection hope proves itself by energetically opposing, in the name of God's future, all that stands in conflict with that future: sin, injustice, division, and death itself. The resurrection of Jesus was God's protest against death and the humiliation of men through injustice and misery. The link of the Cross and the Resurrection shows the Christian today the path that he too must follow.

#### THE RESURRECTION AND THE MANDATE FOR THE CHRISTIAN

There is an element of each resurrection story crucial to it and not emphasized sufficiently. Each time that Jesus is discovered alive, the person is sent with this good news to the world. In other words, the appearances of the risen Lord generally include a missionary mandate. "Go and make disciples of all the nations. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt 28: 19 f.). And in John: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

As witnesses of Jesus' resurrection we are in turn called to witness to others the reality of the Resurrection. We cannot be concerned only with our own salvation and happiness. Rather we hear Jesus' call to be his witnesses to the power of the resurrection over death, and the dawning of the Kingdom. We are called to pro-

33. Brown, "The Resurrection," 519-20.

claim the resurrection of the Crucified in such a way that men can begin to hope again and, through the power of this hope, to take upon themselves the cross of love that leads to life and freedom. Just as Christ in the resurrection has conquered injustice, alienation, sin and death, so all Christians can do likewise in the power of the Risen Lord acting in them.

### CONCLUSION

Christ was present at EDSA, as he is very much present among our people today. There is still so much to be done, yet there is so much to build upon.