

37

THE CHURCH OF INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

Twenty-eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time

9 October 1977

2 Kings 5:14-17

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Luke 17:11-19

First of all, we want to thank the youngsters of the musical group from Santa Tecla for their presence here this morning. We can truly feel the joy and the hope that these young people have in Christ. Each Sunday we have the opportunity to get to know these musical groups that have an important role in the liturgy of the church. We want to thank all those who have participated, and we invite all the communities that have choirs to organize themselves to participate in this Mass, which is the principal Mass of the archdiocese. The cathedral as a sign of unity gathers together these voices that sing of the Lord's glory throughout the archdiocese.

News from the communities

Speaking of Santa Tecla, I want to remind you that this afternoon we will meet with all the vital sectors of this community to plan a team approach to our pastoral ministry; we will work with all the forces of the church that exist there, including priests, religious, and schools. The life of the church there is marvelous and can produce much good not only for that urban zone but also for the whole archdiocese. Please, then, all those who attended the last meeting and all those interested in working for the life of the church are invited to come this afternoon at 3:00 o'clock to the Escuela Masarello in Santa Tecla.

Continuing with news of the communities, I rejoice with the parishes of San Francisco and Concepción, where I had the good fortune to celebrate the feast of their patron Saint Francis and to be made aware of the fervor of the priests and the faithful in these communities. I hope to see more of the same later today, after this Mass, in Soyapango where they are celebrating the feast of the Virgin of the Rosary.

Father Samuel Orellana has been appointed pastor of Ayutuxtepeque. We will soon travel there to hear his first impressions. Next Sunday at 7:00 o'clock in the evening we will install the new pastor of Candelaria, Father Próspero Diaz. The community of the archdiocese will also make its presence felt at the installation of Bishop Rivera in Santiago de María on November 5 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning. I invite all of you who can do so to participate in this celebration because we share in his responsibility. In the early days of Christianity, when a member of one community was chosen by God to bring the Gospel message to another community, the whole sending community felt united with that person. We feel the same way about Bishop Rivera who

was very active in this community of the archdiocese, and now the whole archdiocese will participate in his new responsibility.

The community of the church of La Merced is concerned about the condition of their pastor, Father Torruella, who as you know has suffered an accident last week. Both he and his mother are in the Polyclinic. We pray for his speedy and complete recovery.

Continuing with news of the parishes, I rejoice with the communities of San Antonio in Colonia America, the Sanctuary of Fátima in Los Planes, María Auxiliadora, and Corazón de María, where the new catechumenate movement has been active in these days. Three apostles of the catechumenate have been promoting this new form of religious instruction: Father José Angel from Spain and a brother and sister team, Tino and Lucía, from Italy. In ancient times the candidates for baptism attended a school that was called the catechumenate. In our days, unfortunately, we do not have such a school; as a result, we have many persons who are baptized but do not live the responsibility and the glory of their baptism. This new movement responds to the desire of the Council to reestablish the catechumenate for adults preparing to be baptized, as well as for those already baptized, so that they will be more aware of their incorporation into Christ and the church (SC 64). During these weeks the catechumenate is celebrating the presentation of Bibles to the candidates. I participated in some of these celebrations, and it is truly moving to see the solemnity with which the word of God is presented to the Christians so that they will make it the code of conduct for their life and the norm for their existence. This week another presentation will take place in Corazón de María and in María Auxiliadora. I congratulate everyone participating, and I pray that all those who complete the course will continue to create catechumenal communities in all the parishes of the archdiocese. I pray also that all baptized persons seeking to be faithful and coherent with their baptism will take part in these communities, where they will learn about the great mission of the Christian in the world.

During this past week two Salvadorans have participated in international assemblies. At the United Nations the foreign minister of El Salvador, referring to human rights, stated that these rights are respected in El Salvador and that the vigilance of other nations in this regard is unjustified interference. I would only like to clarify, dear sisters and brothers, that this political perspective is quite different from the church's perspective. As Catholics and as church, we do not share many such political perspectives. We are not surprised that for political reasons the United States has nothing to say about human rights. We do not rely on political convenience.

What we want to say and what should be very clear to every Catholic is that respect for freedom and the defense of the dignity and the rights of the human person are for the church a mission that rises above all politics. It is the duty of the church sent by God as a prophet to the world to defend the image of God which is in every person. That is why we put aside the opinions of presidents, cabinet ministers, and politicians. Instead, we cherish deeply in our hearts the law of God and the Gospel vision. Never, sisters and brothers—and I say this regarding many things—never should we take advantage of the religious situation for our political convenience. Likewise, the politicians should not use religious moments for their own political convenience. Religion reaches far above all of this. The church's criteria are very lofty when she

defends these causes; she is not engaging in party politics. Rather, she is clearly defending what God wants her to defend according to God's law.

In this regard I also want to clarify the concern expressed by many people regarding the intervention made at the synod of bishops by Bishop Revelo, the delegate of the Salvadoran bishops.¹ As usual, the newspaper *El Mundo* highlights news that is convenient for them but places the church in a bad light.

I invite you to wait for the personal clarification of Bishop Revelo and not judge matters precipitously. But there is one thing we can say here. As the leader of the archdiocese, I want to tell our beloved priests and all the faithful, as well as the catechists who collaborate with us in the villages, that every priest and every catechist who is laboring for the spread of the kingdom of God in communion with the archbishop has the full support of the archbishop. Despite the defamatory campaign, there is no reason to doubt the orthodoxy and the fidelity to the church of the priests and catechists working with the bishop. We are not so naïve as to believe that the priests have become communists.

Bishop Chávez paid a heavy price for such a declaration! He put up with slander and ridicule. Even though I expose myself to the same, I want to exhort our beloved priests to be faithful to the church's teaching authority and to remain faithful to their bishops. Do not be afraid of the way your mission is misinterpreted as long as it is in accord with the Second Vatican Council and the documents of Medellín. We are sick and tired of being called communists when we defend those rights that the Council and Medellín call the true Christian labor of the church's pastors.

The Vatican Radio expressed its surprise at the statements of Bishop Revelo² and declared that they found it strange that a bishop of El Salvador was uninformed about the heroism and authenticity of the ministry of catechists in the rural areas. This is a difficult ministry, and it is precisely there in the rural areas where we find our victims, including priests who have been killed. The work of our rural catechists is admirable. I congratulate them. I want to take advantage of this opportunity also to express support for the rural communities. Do not allow yourselves to be overcome by fear. Be aware that as long as you study the word of God, which is precisely what creates a critical Christian conscience in people, you are forming the faithful and helping them to mature in the faith. With these criteria and this maturity of faith, people no longer swallow everything they are told; rather, they learn how to distinguish justice from injustice by the light of the Gospel. And if it is necessary to die for this cause, then theirs will be a martyr's death because they will die defending that faith. Do not allow yourselves to be

¹ Describing the catechetical situation in El Salvador during his intervention in the synod, Bishop Revelo said that rural catechists «were rapidly falling into the nets of the Communist Party and the extreme leftist groups of Marxist tendencies and would soon join their ranks. . . . And no less a problem, certainly the most serious, is the group of priests convinced that the only possible solution to the oppression that the great majority of our people suffer is cooperation with Marxism». See BROCKMAN J., *Romero, a Life*, Orbis Books, 92-93.

² Vatican Radio commented: «The words of Bishop Revelo are somewhat disconcerting, since they seem to contradict or not recognise the genuine, valiant, and even heroic apostolate that many priests and catechists are carrying out in El Salvador in the countryside, an apostolate that certainly does not seem so easy when there are threats of death, expulsions, and even martyrdom, like that of Father Rutilio Grande». See BROCKMAN, *Romero, a Life*, 94.

overcome by fear! If it is necessary to live as in the catacombs, as they say in one community, then live as in the catacombs! This is not clandestine activity; it is simply the church of silence that continues to follow her conscience and will not let herself be swayed, as I said before, by the political and economic conveniences of the moment. As Saint Paul tells us today, «Be faithful to Christ».

This week we have also seen a demonstration by the Masons, and I want to remind our Catholics of canon 2335. There are church laws still valid which state, «Those who join a Masonic sect or other societies of the same sort, which plot against the church or against legitimate civil authority incur ipso facto an excommunication reserved to the Holy See».³ («Ipso facto» means simply by signing up.) Be aware that the Masons and those who have joined this sect are excommunicated. I hope that the euphoria of those triumphal moments of the Masons do not deceive our Catholics. Remain faithful to the church for she will ipso facto stop recognizing you as her child if you give your name to that sect.

Also, sisters and brothers, I am sorry that the disappearance of Mrs. Chiurato still shows no signs of being clarified. Many communications have been received, but none from anyone identifiable. By agreement with the family, I want to ask those who have the woman in their power to identify themselves so that we can be sure that it is they who have her. The family is ready for any negotiation. Too much time has already passed, and we desire to see peace return to this home. Still, we want some demonstration of the truth and not some kind of trick.

Finally, I recommend that everyone read the article published in the magazine of the Central American University (UCA).⁴ I am grateful for this article which comments on the attitude of the archbishop, claiming that he has no intention of provoking conflict but is simply fulfilling his duties. Quite sincerely, I try to live in such a way that everyone understands my actions. We give no credence to the ongoing defamatory campaign. I receive many anonymous letters that are truly vulgar. I want you to know, sisters and brothers, that my position is rooted in my conscience. It is not based on pressures, as some claim, but simply on my duty as a pastor who feels the joy, and at the same time the anguish, of living with his people and of walking with his people in fidelity to the will of God along ways that are truly the ways of the Lord. Remain faithful, my sisters and brothers! Let us remain united! This solidarity will give us not some fleeting earthly victory, which we do not seek, but the triumph of God's kingdom.

In such a context we live these realities that continue without letup week after week: the wrong interpretations, the cruel realities, and all the rest. If our conscience is not formed by clear criteria, then we live according to circumstances, and when the circumstances change, we find Catholics who turn their back on the church and are ashamed of her. I am motivated to preach not because I like to talk on the radio, as one anonymous letter writer said, nor because I want to bore people. Those who are bored by listening to me have an easy solution: turn off your radio, or don't come to the cathedral. But I feel an obligation to be preaching what must be preached. Today, for example, using not my own criteria but God's word as a starting point, I would title my

³ *Code of Canon Law*, 2335. Archbishop Romero quotes from the Code of 1917, valid until the promulgation of the new one in 1983.

⁴ «The Prophetic Word of the Archdiocese», ECA 346 (1977), 605-608.

homily «The Church of Integral Development». What does that mean? I have taken a text of Pope Paul VI, specifically his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, the development of peoples. The pope says that economic development is not enough; the development that the church encourages must take into consideration the whole person. Thus we have the famous expression of Paul VI, «the development of the whole person and of all persons» (PP 14). That is why I title today's homily «The Church of Integral Development», which means the development of the whole person and of all persons. In this way I give some unity to today's beautiful readings.

The development of the whole person

The first reading and the gospel situate us in the sad world of illness and in one of its most painful expressions, leprosy. In the face of leprosy, which was then thought to be a consequence of sin, the prophet Elisha and Christ himself adopt an attitude of liberation. If the illness is a sad consequence of sin, then people must be freed from sin and its consequences. This is the church's norm regarding human development. The bishops in Medellín stated, «The masses who live in misery are a sin, an injustice that cries out to heaven» (M 1,1). Marginalization, hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition, and so many other terrible realities that enter into all the pores of our being are the consequences of sin, both the sin of those who accumulate everything without any regard for others and the sin of those who have nothing but still do not struggle for their own development. They are lazy conformists who do not struggle to develop themselves.

But often the poor are not at fault for their failure to struggle. There is a series of conditions and structures that do not allow them to advance. Thus, there is a whole complex of mutual sin which Medellín calls «institutionalized injustice» (M 2,16). This enveloping injustice produces situations such as those placed before us in today's readings: the Syrian leper Naaman seeking redemption from the prophet of God and the anguish of the ten lepers who cry out to Jesus, «Master, have pity on us!» (Luke 17:13).

In these ill persons we can see the languishing multitude that today cries out from their situation of marginalization. They are seeking, as the Medellín documents tell us, «a liberation that reaches them from nowhere else» (M 14,2). The church, faithful to Jesus Christ, would be cruel if she, like the priests in the gospel, turned her back and walked away without caring for the poor wounded man on the road (Luke 10:29-37). Both Christ and the prophet Elisha confronted this situation directly. Leprosy had inspired some terrible laws in the people of God. Read the book of Leviticus: those marked by this terrible illness must leave the human community and live in the wasteland, and anytime they approach a person they must cry out «Unclean! Unclean!» (Lev 13:45-46). The voice of the poor lepers on the road would sound like a cry from the tomb as they shouted to those approaching to beware and stay clear: «Unclean! Dirty! Do not come near us! We will contaminate you!» This anguish obliged the lepers to come together as a community in pain. People have the right to come together even if they are lepers, *campesinos*, or workers. People need to rise up from their prostration and find support in one another. Why should we condemn organizations? Christ sees an organization of lepers approaching him. It is true that one of them was a Samaritan, and Samaritans and Jews did not get along well together. This could be compared, though perhaps not exactly, to Hondurans and Salvadorans who are politically at odds but who feel the need to unite in their pain; the borders disappear, and only the pain is felt. This

Samaritan did not feel out of place; rather, he felt like a brother to his political enemies, the Jews, and with them he goes out to meet the Lord.

Naaman was a foreigner, but a young Jewish slave girl told him, «In my land there is a prophet who could cure you» (2 Kgs 5:3). Naaman is very proud of his position in society, but he finally heeds the voice of the young woman. He goes to Israel, and there occur the events that we heard today. Arriving before the prophet Elisha, he is told, «Go and wash seven times in the Jordan» (2 Kgs 5:10). The immediate reaction of Naaman is one of arrogance: «I have traveled such a long distance for this? Are there not better rivers in my own land? And now this prophet simply asks me to do one thing, and he will not even accompany me» (2 Kgs 5:11-12). But Naaman's servant tells him, «If the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now, since he said to wash seven times in the river. Obey him!» (2 Kgs 5:13). So Naaman obeys, and when he comes out of the river, he is cleansed of his leprosy. This man then runs to the prophet Elisha and speaks to him these words of faith, «Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant» (2 Kgs 5:15). But Elisha does not want to receive anything.

Elisha is a very interesting figure. He has a role in the book of Kings, before the prophets became the protagonists of the history of Israel. At this time the protagonists were the kings, especially Solomon and David, who politically established the kingdom of Israel. But these kings were always accompanied by confessors such as the preachers who advised the Catholic kings. One of these men was Elisha, a type of confessor to the king. The breath of the divine word influenced the politics of the king through the prophets. The rulers who adhered to the word of the prophets were blessed, while those who despised their words were cursed. The pages of the book of Kings are filled with examples of this. Elisha was one of those prophets who divided his time between the royal court, where he counseled King Jeroboam, and the community life of his brother prophets. The prophets formed communities where they prayed, meditated, and listened to the word of God so as to be able to communicate it to the world. Elisha realized from his meditation that his role in the royal court was to be simply God's instrument. He had such a humble concept of himself that when Naaman wanted to offer him a large sum of money as a reward for his being cured, he refused it, telling him, «As the Lord lives whom I serve, I shall not take it» (2 Kgs 5:16). What a beautiful gesture! My sisters and brothers, at times the church has fallen short and committed grave sins because she has converted her role as God's instrument into a business, and this is reprehensible. Any priest who uses his priestly power to obtain money is abusing that power. In this cathedral where injustice and disorder are denounced, we also are willing to be criticized whenever we do not act correctly. Like Elisha, the priest today must feel: «Everything I give is from God». The word that I am sharing with you today is from God. If people praise and applaud me and I think the applause is for me, then I am robbing God. My sisters and brothers, I offer to God all your appreciation of my words because they are not mine, but God's. We priests are human, and we need money to eat and clothe ourselves and to provide for the offices and churches where we attend to your needs, but that is different. What is sacrilegious is when someone wants to become selfishly rich through his priestly ministry. The Bible tells us, «What you have received as gift, give to others as a gift» (Matt 10:8). And the people know how to respond. I say this because I have experienced your generosity as you help us in our works, in our

requests, and in our personal needs. We cannot complain. Like Saint Paul we say that as long as we have food, clothes, and a place to live, that is enough.

The prophet Elisha then heard a more humble confession from that Syrian: «Let me, your servant, have two mule-loads of earth, for I will no longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any other god except to the Lord» (2 Kgs 5:17). Here we have a convert, a pagan who did not know about the God of Israel, but through the prophet he came to know the true God and became a worshiper of him. This is one of my greatest satisfactions in these days, sisters and brothers. So many hearts have been converted, and not just those of those of the humble folk. I hear confessions that fill me with great satisfaction. Wealthy people tell me, «Yes, you are right. Those who do not want to understand are acting out of selfishness. We are willing to do whatever we can». I have great hope, sisters and brothers, that the church, which has offered to enter into sincere dialogue without betraying the truth of the Gospel, will find a response not only among poor people but also in the powerful class. Those who hear the truth are very blind if they do not want to follow it.

In this world of illness and conversion we find the ten lepers of the gospel. What sad figures! This Sunday we have all encountered human pain, and I want all of us to think about the unhappiness of humanity. Let our hearts turn to the hospitals. I live in a hospital, and I truly feel very close to the pain. I hear the moans of patients at night; I sense the sadness of those who must leave their families behind when they are hospitalized. Think of the long lines of sick people who wait in our hospitals, seeking a small remedy that they do not find. Think also of those sick relatives at home who are perhaps listening to me now by radio. Hopefully this word will bring them some consolation. Dear sisters and brothers who are ill, we are thinking of you.

In one of his recent lessons⁵ the pope stated that it does not matter that civil society has organized itself to displace the church in providing welfare. The church will always have a very special spirit with regard to suffering, a spirit that cannot be provided by the technical expertise of doctors or nurses or by well-equipped hospitals. Often those medical centers with their modern techniques reduce the sick person to an object to be treated. The patient hardly has a name, just a number, as if he or she were something less than human. They forget that the sick person is above all a person, someone who needs love, who needs charity, who needs tenderness of heart. It is not right that a nurse, however skilled in giving injections or transfusions, should treat a sick person impersonally. This sick person's need for compassion summons doctors and nurses and the whole hospital to humanize their mission and endow it with ever greater gentleness. Let them remember that they are not treating animals or things, but human beings who are grieved at being separated from their families. They need the affection of people who know how to treat them as if they were in their homes.

This is the environment in which sick people find themselves, but they must also understand that their suffering is not in vain even though we might treat them as people who are useless. When we treat them so, sisters and brothers, we are approaching the system Hitler proposed in Germany of eliminating everyone considered useless. An old person or a sick person who was no longer useful was eliminated. How inhuman! We

⁵ PAUL VI, General Audience of 21 September 1977, *L'Osservatore Romano* (25 September 1977).

can also arrive at this situation when we no longer take care of life at its beginning stages. If the embryo of a human being in the womb of a pregnant woman is aborted, then it is murder, and it is worse when the mother kills her own child. From that step of lack of love for a child already conceived there is only a small step to considering the elderly or the infirm as useless. If a fetus, which is already a human life in the mother's womb, is a bother, then an elderly person is also a bother when there is no sense of love in the home. The process is quite logical. If abortion is logical, then the process of eliminating people is logical also.

It is necessary to humanize our relationships with those who suffer and with those who appear useless. Christ leaves us with a great mystery: on the day of judgment we will be judged by the way we have treated the needy because «whatever you did for one of these, you did for me» (Matt 25:40). For this reason, as I said before, the political, medical, and technical considerations of society should be subordinate to Christian considerations, for Christians know that whatever they do for those who are ill or poor or in misery, they are doing for the very person of Christ.

From this world of sick people, sisters and brothers, I want to draw the following conclusion. Pope Paul VI said that it is necessary to «develop the whole person» (PP 14). Thus, when Jesus is concerned about those physically sick, he is not just saving their souls. At our time there is a dangerous spirituality abroad; it is a reaction against the new language of the church which speaks of liberation and human rights, which protests against the abuses committed by political power, and which decries the lack of respect for the human person. Some people react against this loyal attitude of the church, saying that the church should preach only about spirituality, only about God and the kingdom of heaven, and should not be concerned about earthly matters. These critics are unaware that they are leaving the Gospel disjointed; after all, Christ who came to save people also took care of their bodies. As Elisha cured Naaman, so Jesus cured the ten lepers using the ministry of the priests: «Go and show yourselves to the priests» (Luke 17:14). Read in Leviticus the beautiful ceremony in which a priest reincorporates a leper who has been cleansed; it is a special consecration for restoring a person to the people of God (Lev 14:1-32). Christ respected the ecclesiastical laws of his time just as we should respect them. If today's priests were to fall into the same defects as the priests in the time of Christ, then we have the example of Christ showing respect for the laws regarding priests: «Go and show yourselves to the priests» (Luke 17:14). And when the lepers were on their way, they were cleansed because of their obedience, but certainly they continued on so that the priest would place his hands on them and restore them, now cured, to the people of God.

It was this Samaritan, however, a political enemy of the people of Jesus, who returns to Jesus, the Jew who is also God. Kneeling before Jesus, he bows low, sings glory to God, and gives thanks because Jesus has cured him. This is a man who realizes that the church provides not simply forgiveness of sins but also health of body. Just recently the Holy See issued a document that I will have published in *Orientación*; it states that the church today cannot separate human development, which has to do with bodily cares and human rights on earth, from this work of evangelization. There is no reason to create a dichotomy between the rights of God and the rights of humans, as if speaking about the right of God means forgetting human rights or vice versa. When we speak

about human rights, we are seeing the human person as the image of God; we are defending God.

Therefore, I repeat that the perspective of the church is religious; it is focused on God, not on political convenience. This is the significance of those words of Paul VI: «the development of the whole person» means soul and body, heart and mind and social relations. It means realizing this equality that God wants for all his children; it means organizing a world that conforms to the integral development of the whole person; it means allowing all men and women to develop to the best of their ability, to be cured from illness, to find hospitals for health care, to find schools for all their children so there is no more illiteracy. In a word, it means providing in every way for the integral development of the whole person.

The development of all persons

In the second place, the pope speaks of «the development of all persons» (PP 14). Since this is the month of the missions, I want to stress that this leper who was cured by Elisha came from a foreign land. Christ refers to this once in the gospel when he says, «There were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian» (Luke 4:27). Naaman was a Syrian, a pagan who lived beyond the borders of Israel, and at that time non-Jews were considered strange beasts. If this strange beast comes to a prophet inspired by God, it is because he knows that God is the Father of all persons and that for God there are not those who sit at table and those who are like dogs who receive crumbs from the table. He knows that for God every person is invited to the great banquet of life that God himself serves up. Therefore God thinks of development for everybody, for all persons; this is the meaning of mission. The encyclical *Populorum Progressio* states that the church in every age has been concerned about the development of all the peoples of the earth (PP 12), but she is not interested in acquiring power (PP 13). Let this be very clear to politicians.

The church does not seek earthly power, but she does seek to implant God's kingdom in the midst of earthly power to make this power more just and more considerate of the people being governed. Earthly power will thus be illuminated with a sense of justice and true development, and it will understand that the political participation of all citizens is a right to be respected. The church preaches to one and all that they should participate in society as children of God with the talents that each person has received for the welfare of all. We all have the right to contribute to the common good of the whole country.

The church promotes this development everywhere. If this is said to be subversion, the church knows that it is not; it is the development of all persons, and it respects the idiosyncrasies of each country. But sometimes, the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* states, «the missionaries intermingled the thought patterns and behavior patterns of their native land with the authentic message of Christ» (PP 12). The church is now trying to correct this attitude, realizing that this was a mistake. The missionaries try to identify themselves with the people to whom they are sent so that they are not so much interested in their own country as they are in the people's art, their science, their

peculiarities, their race, and their way of being, so as to promote them and divinize them.

We are doing this here in El Salvador. We are not a foreign power; we are the soul of the people; we are the life of the nation. That is why the church preaches and feels she has the right to preach a Gospel that does not bring in some foreign power but rather invigorates our own national life so that Salvadorans become more Salvadoran and love their homeland and strive to make it better. This is what the church is doing among the people, and that is why many refuse to understand her even though her mission is clear.

Development of the Spirit

Finally, dear sisters and brothers, my third point. I will conclude by saying that this development of the whole person and of all persons is not aimed only at healing the flesh of Naaman the Syrian or at giving the joy of bodily health to the ten lepers. The greatest thing about all this is that through development of the body, Christ has also brought about development of the spirit. You have seen how both miracles conclude. The cure of Naaman ends with these beautiful words: «Now I recognize that there is no God on all the earth except in Israel. Allow me to carry earth from this kingdom so as to adore from now on no one but the true God» (2 Kgs 5:15-18). This is the goal of development: to unite human beings with God. You also saw how the curing of the grateful leper concludes: he returns giving glory to God in a loud voice; he throws himself on the ground before Jesus and thanks him (Luke 17:15). This is the goal of the church's development: having people bow down before Christ.

Let us listen to Saint Paul in these trying moments in the history of the nation and in the history of the family. When he writes to Timothy, Paul is a prisoner in chains, but even in such a state he can declare this morning: «The word of God is not chained!» (2 Tim 2:9). What freedom is produced by this Christian faith! The church persecuted, tortured, and slaughtered can say with Saint Paul, «But the word of God is not bound!» The fact is that when they wanted to silence the voice of Father Grande and instill fear in the priests so that they would no longer speak, they simply awakened the prophetic spirit in our church. The church is unchained because she knows that they cannot kill the word on her lips, for this word will continue to resound through a church that bears the promise of Christ until the end of time. And what is the preaching of the proclaimer of that word that cannot be bound? Fidelity to God, says Saint Paul. This is the certain doctrine: that Christ was born of the line of David. As a man, he belongs to royal stock, but that is not his greatest attribute. What is greatest is that he has risen from the dead.

My sisters and brothers, what fear can people experience if they believe in the One who, after he was killed, rose up again forever? Many are fearful because they have lost hope in this resurrection. But this hope has been reawakened in those who are willing to be killed so that they will share with Christ in his martyrdom and rise with Christ in his unending glory. That is why Saint Paul ends with that saying, «If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we persevere, we shall reign with him». But note also: «If we deny him, he will also deny us» (2 Tim 2:11-12). The denial of Christ will be most terrible when the definitive time is at hand. Some will say, «Lord, I had fear

of you, and so I became a Mason; I joined up with ORDEN;⁶ I entered into the political arena». Jesus will respond: «You denied me». And then there is the sentence, «If we deny him, he will also deny us». But there is something else: «If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful» (2 Tim 2:13a). What a great consolation! Even when we betray him, if we seek him once again, we will find him with open arms. All is forgotten, as with Peter on the morning of the resurrection. Even though Christ witnessed Peter's cowardly negotiations on Holy Thursday night, he simply asks him, «Do you love me?» (John 21:15). Peter, ashamed and repentant, responds, «Yes, Lord, I love you. What occurred the other night was pure weakness. I deserve to be punished». And Christ does not reproach him for his sin. He remains faithful. Every sinner and every traitor who has drawn away from Christ should remember this: «If we have been unfaithful, he remains faithful». This is consoling, sisters and brothers, for me as a sinner and for each of you as sinners! Despite all our weaknesses and defects, we have found him; he has forgiven us; he loves us; all is forgotten «for he cannot deny himself» (2 Tim 2:13b). This is a truly profound reason, for otherwise he would cease to be God, he would cease to be Redeemer.

With this, then, sisters and brothers, we conclude our humble explanation of the church of integral development, of the church that is concerned about saving souls but is also concerned about saving bodies and defending the historical rights of humankind. This mission of the church does not confine itself just to worldly political affairs but gives primacy to the absolute relations of humanity with God. The church seeks the conversion of every heart because there would be no sense in an economic liberation in which the poor possessed houses and wealth but were all sinners. What good is a heart estranged from God? At the present time there are nations that are economically and socially quite advanced, such as those of northern Europe, but how much vice and disorder is found there! The church will always have one word to say: conversion. Human development is never complete, not even when the economy and the political and social order of our people are ideally organized. It is still not finished, and that incompleteness provides the basis for accomplishing what the church proclaims and pursues: God adored by all people, Christ acknowledged as the only Savior, and profound joy of spirit in being at peace with God and with our sisters and brothers.

⁶ The National Democratic Organization (ORDEN) was created by the Armed Forces of El Salvador in 1967; under the direction of general José Alberto Medrano, it became a weapon of control and repression of rural people.