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(GOLDBE, ROSEMARIE, ED. FIRST ASIAN MEETING FOR THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY (ROME: TIP. SAN GIUSIPPE, 1956), PP. 281-287.)

THE PHILIPPINES

INTRODUCTION

CATHOLIC ACTION IN THE PHILIPPINES WAS FIRST ORGANIZED BEFORE THE LAST WAR UNDER THE UNITARY SYSTEM, WHEN THE FOUR MAIN DIVISIONS OF CATHOLIC ACTION, AS CONCEIVED BY POPE PIOUS XI, WERE STARTED IN SEVERAL DIOCESES.

BEFORE LONG, THE WAR BROKE OUT AND WITH THE WAR, IT WAS DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR THE MOVEMENT TO CONTINUE.

ON JUNE 12, 1950, AFTER THE LIBERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, HIS EXCELLENCY, MSGR. EGIDIO VAGNOZZI, APOSTOLIC NUNCIO (THEN APOSTOLIC DELEGATE) OFFICIALLY BEGAN THE REVIVAL OF CATHOLIC ACTION. THE UNITARY PATTERN OF THE CATHOLIC ACTION WAS FOLLOWED UNTIL 1951, WHEN THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION SOUGHT TO ADOPT THE FEDERATIVE SYSTEM OF CATHOLIC ACTION, IN VIEW OF THE NUMEROUS CATHOLIC ASSOCIATIONS EXISTING ALREADY, A FEW OF WHICH WERE AFFILIATED TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS CATHOLIC ACTION.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SUPREME AUTHORITY FOR CATHOLIC ACTION IN THE PHILIPPINES EMANATES FROM HIS HOLINESS, THE POPE. THIS AUTHORITY IS RADIATED TO THIS COUNTRY THROUGH THE PAPAL NUNCIO AND THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION ON CATHOLIC ACTION.

THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION REPRESENTS THE HIERARCHY OF THE PHILIPPINES. IT IS COMPOSED OF FOUR BISHOPS.

DIRECTLY UNDER THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION IS THE NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHICH IS SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR.

THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR IS NECESSARILY AN ECCLESIASTIC WHO IS APPOINTED BY THE HOLY SEE, IF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR IS ONE VESTED WITH EPISCOPAL CHARACTER, HE BECOMES DE OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION. HE ACTS AS THE LINK BETWEEN THE HIERARCHY AND THE LAY DIRECTORATE OF CATHOLIC ACTION. THERE IS AN ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR, ALSO AN ECCLESIASTIC, WHO IS APPOINTED BY THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR.

THE NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS COMPOSED OF THE PRESIDENTS OF ALL THE NATIONAL MANDATED CATHOLIC ACTION ORGANIZATIONS. ITS OFFICERS ARE, A PRESIDENT, A SECRETARY, AND A TREASURER, WHO ARE APPOINTED BY THE EPISCOPAL COMMISSION. THE VICE PRESIDENT IS ELECTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

THIS COMMITTEE IS THE HIGHEST LAY DIRECTORATE OF CATHOLIC ACTION IN THE PHILIPPINES. IT COORDINATES THE WORK OF ALL THE MANDATED ORGANIZATIONS AND OFTEN TAKES THE LEAD IN THE PRESENTATION OF THE CATHOLIC SOLUTION TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, OR EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. IT ALSO ACTS AS INFORMATION CENTER WHEN PUBLIC ISSUES AFFECT THE COUNTRY IN GENERAL.

THE AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS OF CATHOLIC ACTION ARE ALSO FEDERATED IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL BOARD OF AUXILIARIES. THE OFFICERS OF THE BOARD ARE A PRESIDENT, A VICE-PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, AND A TREASURER WHO ARE SELECTED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE.



THE PARISH PRIESTS HAVE IN MANY CASES ORGANIZED PARISH COUNCILS. THESE PARISH COUNCILS, IN COORDINATION WITH THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, WORKING UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF THE PARISH PRIESTS, HAVE CONDUCTED CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE PARISH, AND HAVE ORGANIZED CATECHETICAL CENTERS IN THE REMOTE VILLAGES.

DURING THE SUMMER VACATIONS, CATECHETICAL INSTITUTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE HELD IN THE DIOCESE.

CONCERNING EDUCATION, IT IS SAD TO STATE THAT FIFTY YEARS OF SECULAR INSTRUCTION HAS CONVERTED THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY INTO A BREEDING PLACE OF RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE AND ATHEISM. THE SO-CALLED "PROGRESSIVE" METHODS OF EDUCATION HAVE DONE MUCH TO DESTROY PHILIPPINE TRADITIONS. BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE PRODUCED MANY DISRESPECTFUL, ARROGANT, AND UTTERLY IRRELIGIOUS YOUNGSTERS WHO POSSESS AN ASSERTING ATTACHMENT TO RIGHTS BUT ARE UNMINDFUL OF THEIR DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS. THUS, IT MAY SAFELY BE ASSUMED THAT THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS IN LARGE MEASURE BECOME, WITTINGLY OR UNWITTINGLY, A DANGEROUS PREPARATION FOR COMMUNISM. THIS IS A PROBLEM NOT ONLY OF CATHOLIC ACTION BUT OF THE CHURCH HERSELF, WHICH IS BEING SOLVED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE PAROCHIAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS. A GOOD NUMBER OF THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS ARE BEING RUN BY RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS. THE YOUNG LADIES ASSOCIATION OF CHARITY (YLAC) AND THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE (CWL), HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED FREE SCHOOLS FOR THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY GRADES.

THE SECOND PROBLEM DEALS WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF CATHOLIC LAYMEN IN CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE. THE SECULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE SEPARATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE STATE HAS INCULCATED SUCH A WRONG IMPRESSION ON THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE THAT MERELY BEING A CATHOLIC HAS BECOME AN OBSTACLE TO THE EXERCISE OF ONE'S CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS. SMALL BUT ORGANIZED GROUPS OF MASONS AND PROTESTANTS, ARE EXERTING EFFORTS TO CONSTITUTE THEMSELVES AS A PRESSURE GROUP IN THE FORMULATION OF GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES TO THE PREJUDICE OF 83% OF THE POPULATION WHO ARE CATHOLICS. HOWEVER, SLOWLY, CATHOLIC ACTION IS TRYING ITS BEST TO BREAK THE STRANGLE HOLD OF HOSTILE PHILOSOPHIES ON THE MENTALITY OF THE PEOPLE. CATHOLIC LEADERS ARE AWAKENING TO THE NEED OF PARTICIPATING MORE ACTIVELY IN THE CIVIC AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY. CATHOLIC ACTIONISTS, AS CITIZENS HAVE BEGUN MARSHALLING INTO ACTION ALL CATHOLICS, REGARDLESS OF PARTIES, IN THE DEFENCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND IN SUPPORTING TRULY CATHOLIC CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.

THE THIRD MAJOR PROBLEM FOR CATHOLIC ACTION IS CONCERNED WITH RURAL LIFE. WHILE THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITIES HAVE ENJOYED ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR A GOOD EDUCATION, GOOD HOMES, GOOD FOOD, AND THE PRIVILEGE OF HAVING FACILITIES TO SEE THE LIGHT OF TRUTH AND FAITH, A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE RURAL AREAS REMAIN ILLITERATE, AND INDIFFERENT.

THE FEDERATION OF FREE FARMERS, THE HOLY NAME SOCIETY, THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY, AND THE LEGION OF MARY ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO HELP THESE RURAL FOLKS REALIZE THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY, AND TO SEEK FOR THEM THE MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR LOT THROUGH A BETTER AND MORE HUMANE LAND TENURE, AGRARIAN REFORM, BETTER FARMING METHODS, HOUSING AND MAINTENANCE, FACILITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL, AND A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF RELIGION. CATHOLIC ACTION IN GENERAL IS EXERTING EFFORTS TO UPLIFT THESE RURAL FOLKS THAT THEY MAY INTELLIGENTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE AND APPRECIATE THE BLESSINGS OF FREEDOM IN A DEMOCRACY.

A FOURTH PROBLEM REVOLVES AROUND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CATHOLIC ACTION. THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR WOMEN, ESPECIALLY IN THE CITIES, TO BECOME TOO WESTERN IN THEIR MANNERS, SPEECH, AND WAY OF THINKING. MODERN IDEAS WHICH SUBVERT THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE ARE SLOWLY FINDING ACCEPTANCE AMONG SOCIETY MATRONS. YOUNG GIRLS TEND TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND TO IMITATE HOLLYWOOD LIFE AS DEPICTED IN THE MOVIES. THE SOLIDARITY OF THE

FILIPINO FAMILY IS SLOWLY BEING UNDERMINED BY IGNORANCE, IRRELIGION, AND MORAL LAXITY. CATHOLIC ACTION, THROUGH THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE, SODALITY OF OUR LADY, LEGION OF MARY, BARRANGAY SANG BIRHEN, STUDENT CATHOLIC ACTION, HOLY NAME SOCIETY, AND OTHER DIOCESAN AND PAROCHIAL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATIONS, IS EXERTING EFFORTS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEALS OF WOMAN AND THE FAMILY.

THE FIFTH PROBLEM IS OF IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE. IT EMBRACES THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF ENTERTAINMENT, RADIO, CINEMA, THE STAGE, AND TELEVISION. IT COVERS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESS IN THE MOULDING OF PUBLIC OPINION. THE WHOLE PROBLEM IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE IRRESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE OF THE JOURNALISTS, ARTISTS AND RADIO PERSONNEL. SENSATIONALISM AND COMMERCIALISM HAVE BECOME THE MAIN MOTIVES OF THE PRESS AND ENTERTAINMENT. THE APPEARANCE OF PORNOGRAPHIC JOURNALISM AND LEWD ENTERTAINMENT HAVE BEEN SO SUDDEN AND RAPID THAT CATHOLICS HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UNAWARES AND UNPREPARED.

FINALLY, THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL AND CHARITABLE WORKS DESERVES MENTION. AS IT IS, THERE IS A LACK OF COORDINATION AND SYSTEMATIC METHOD IN THIS IMPORTANT FIELD. THE ACTIVITY IS CONFINED TO THE EFFORTS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND CATHOLIC ASSOCIATIONS. THERE IS YET NO SYSTEM OF COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, OR WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS LIKE UNESCO AND WHO.

A STEP HAS BEEN MADE IN THIS DIRECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CATHOLIC CHARITIES BUREAU IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA. IN THE PARISH COUNCILS, A PARISH WELFARE COMMITTEE IS ALSO BEING ORGANIZED TO COORDINATE SOCIAL AND CHARITABLE WORKS.

ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL MANDATED ORGANIZATIONS

SODALITY OF OUR LADY

ACTIVITIES OF THIS ORGANIZATION INCLUDE A LEGION OF DECENCY CAMPAIGN, A CATHOLIC PRESS DRIVE, STUDY AND RESEARCH ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS, RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND CONDUCTING DISCUSSION CLUBS ON VARIOUS CATHOLIC SUBJECTS.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

THIS ORGANIZATION ENCOURAGES FRATERNAL ACTIVITIES; PROMOTES CHARITY, PATRIOTISM, COOPERATION WITH CATHOLIC AGENCIES, YOUTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE, RELIGIOUS AND LEADERSHIP SERVICES, ETC.

CONFERENCIA DE SAN VICENTE DE PAUL

MEMBERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION VISIT POOR FAMILIES IN THEIR HOMES, BRING CONSOLATION TO THE SICK AND PRISONERS, INSTRUCT POOR, ABANDONED OR IMPRISONED CHILDREN, LOOK FOR WORK FOR THE POOR, CAPITALIZE SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES WITHOUT CHARGING ANY INTEREST AND PERFORM OTHER WORKS OF CHARITY.

HOLY NAME SOCIETY

THE HOLY NAME SOCIETY IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT HONORING AND GLORIFYING ALMIGHTY GOD AND AT THE PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION OF ITS MEMBERS BY ACTS OF LOVE AND DEVOTION TO THE MOST HOLY NAME ASIDE FROM PROMOTING APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS RETREATS, CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY, AND OTHERS.

LEGION OF MARY

VISITING THE SICK, ASSISTING IN PARISH CENSUS, VISITING THE POORER DISTRICTS OF CITIES AND TOWNS, ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE AT MASS, TEACHING CATECHISM TO CHILDREN IN NON-CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, AND CONDUCTING OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUBS, ARE AMONG THE MANY ACTIVITIES OF THIS ORGANIZATION.



YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS

BETTER KNOWN AS THE YCW, THIS ORGANIZATION ORGANIZES RELIGIOUS STUDY CLUBS, RECOLLECTIONS, AND RETREATS FOR YOUNG WORKERS. ITS ACTIVITIES ALSO INCLUDE PREPARATION OF SCHOOL BOYS FOR THEIR WORKING LIFE, PREPARATION OF ITS MEMBERS FOR SERVICE IN THE FORCES, ASSISTING THOSE OUT OF WORK TO FIND JOBS, ETC..

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

CWL, AS THE ORGANIZATION IS KNOWN FOR SHORT, UNITES ALL CATHOLIC WOMEN IN A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS AND SOCIAL WELFARE, AND PROVIDES A MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH CATHOLIC WOMEN MAY UPHOLD THE FAITH AND ACT AS A UNIT IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST AFFECTING THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN, SANCTITY OF THE HOME AND EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH.

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF CYO IS THE SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT OF ITS MEMBERS, THROUGH ASSISTANCE OF MEMBERS IN THEIR NORMAL DEVELOPMENT, SPIRITUALLY, INTELLECTUALLY, EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY AND VOCATIONALLY. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP INCLUDE LECTURES, CONFERENCES, STUDY CLUBS, AND OPEN FORUMS AMONG YOUNG BOYS WITH ELDER MEMBERS.

STUDENT CATHOLIC ACTION:

SCA ACTIVITIES ARE VARIED AND INCLUDE RELIGIOUS AND CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION, STUDY CLUBS, SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES, DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SACRAMENT AND OUR LADY, PROMOTION OF MISSIONS AND RETREATS, ORGANIZATION OF RADIO PROGRAMS, CONFERENCES, STUDENT ALLIES, AND MANY OTHERS.

YOUNG LADIES ASSOCIATION OF CHARITY

ACTIVITIES OF THIS ORGANIZATION INCLUDE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF FREE SCHOOLS AND CLINICS FOR THE POOR AND MONTHLY MASS AND COMMUNION FOR ITS MEMBERS.

BARANGAY SANG BIRHEN

BARANGAY SANG BIRHEN HAS RELIGIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS. ITS ACTIVITIES INCLUDE INSTILLING THE SPIRIT AND HABIT OF PRAYER AMONG THE MASSES AND THE PROMOTION IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY; ESTABLISHMENT OF READING CENTERS AND CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION; ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVE HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRIES AND INSTRUCTION ON NEW TECHNIQUES IN FARMING AND INDUSTRIES.

THE NATIONAL AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

APOSTOLADO DE LA ORACION
ADORACION NOCTURNA FILIPINA
ASOCIACION DE LA MEDALLA MILAGROSA
DON BOSCO BOYS ASSOCIATION
HIJAS DE MARIA
HOLY ROSARY CRUSADE
ORDEN TERCERA DE STO. DOMINGO
ORDEN TERCERA DE SAN FRANCISCO
ORDEN TERCERA DEL CARMELO
PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH.



ENRIQUE M. ZAFRA
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