

11. 8. 69

TAPE (Vivaldi) Story he to the father - to the S. - to the H. Sp. : as it was in the beginning, so be it now - forever. Amen.

A few weeks ago the world was agog with the excitement of men exploring the face of the moon. They were, all of them I think, religious men in some degree at least; but their voyage and exploits had no direct religious purpose, but rather a scientific one (whatever about lesser purposes that have been attributed to the whole enterprise that took them there). One wonders what the world's reaction wd. have been had it been known that one of them was a Catholic priest? It is not so unlikely as all that - and why didn't there be a priest involved in this very human endeavour? Some years ago, in fact, there was a priest-scientist in the astronaut's training programme - though he doesn't seem to have made the grade to any of the mission teams. But in all the curiosity about the moon, how many people are aware that quite a number of the earthly names given to various features on the moon are actually the names of priests who were the astronomical scientists of their age? These thoughts were going through my mind one day recently when I took a visitor to HK up to the Peak. It was a fine, clear afternoon when you can see all the islands clearly on the horizon, and we fell to rousing about the old Portuguese galleons and sailing ships threading their way in towards the Pearl River and Macao, after very long voyages, carrying quite often priests and religious men coming to preach God's word in these parts of the world. And there were explorers and scientists among them too, highly cultured and educated men, who had an over-riding religious purpose - God was very much part of their lives, and their inspiration. It's a different world today, of course: many things have changed since that time, and we think differently now even of the way they went about their religious purposes whether in Asia or S. America.

Today, laypeople are expected to do many things for Christ - those days it was usually priests who were best qualified and prepared. But let's not forget there were in fact many laypeople associated with the missions of the church even then. The point I want to make is really about the zeal which urged these men to give their lives for other people, a zeal which quite often led them into being in the forefront of human endeavour and pioneers in various fields of human life, knowledge and discovery. That there is similar zeal, impelled by the love of Christ, in the world today cannot be denied: but on a more human plain, one may ask where is the evidence of it among Christians in general. We are a small minority in this city, but large enough to be a leaven such as Christ wants us to be in our society. But are we? How many, or few, of us profess our faith in Christ and our love for Him in our ordinary lives, of work and leisure, of dealing with other people? How much does it really matter, in practice, that you are a Christian? How often do ordinary Christians influence their surroundings, the opinions and outlook of their fellow-workers - friends by what their devotion to Christ demands of them in the routine of life? How many are willing and able to speak and act, to protest if necessary in the name of Christ in face of the ungodly, unchristian and inhuman features of our society? The zeal, not fanaticism, I'm concerned with shd. be evident in everyone who truly is in love with God. And this is sth. to reflect on and pray about, for without prayer there can be any <sup>of the</sup> vital contact with God which love supplies. Let us keep this in mind in our prayer now, and as we listen to this hymn for the feast of Assumption, later this week, music written in the new world to which the zeal of 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century Christians first brought the message of Christ's love and devotion to His Mother

"Salve Regina"  
RHK (ANG-U  
115)

MUSIC : PRAYERS.

These days there are all sorts of scientific surveys to find out how alive and active a body may be — and they're applied to the Church as well. They can't tell the whole story: neither can the impressions a brief visitor takes away with him of the life of the church, say, here in HK. So this too is ~~but~~ <sup>only</sup> a personal opinion; but I wonder how much real zeal we Catholics here have, when you look at the response so far to the open invitation the church has given to all of us to help in making the church in HK more alive, active, relevant, adapted to the needs of the society in which we live. I'm referring to the letters and submissions that have so far been received by the diocese in response to the coming Convention that has been called by the Bishop. There are not very many, even allowing for the reluctance or inability of people to write letters; what's more disturbing is perhaps the number of small, basically not very important matters that are raised. Everyone, of course, has his complaints, the things ~~we~~ <sup>one wd.</sup> like to see changed or improved. But over all, there shd. be also a vision of what Christ wants of us, individually and as a body, in this city and at this time ... the place where our zeal and readiness in the service of Christ and of our fellow-men in HK shd. make itself evident. Let us pray for such zeal, for ourselves and all our fellow Christians.