16 March 1997 - Sunday I'm sitting in the court and samounding the RC shurch. I Our Lucy of Low des Parish Shrene in Celocoon City, Nearila-On the and of the seat where I'm sitting a beggar woman comes to join me. One of money beggars reaming the church The time in 1100 hours and the short of yet another Sunday Service which seem to go an Houghow the day - all of which one well attended Another, then another begar woman comes to sit on our, by now, crowded sent. They char to each other, then two ter noe togo leaving the one angunal in charge of their bearing pots. A few groots in portof me a non in selling beautiful hopical birds from a witter cape. Henging fan He cage and from a yard long shiek are mini creases made fin bamboo strips to enable his dient take the birds away with Hem. The church in full and the sounds of the service ere passintled into the courtened through the open doorways. Af Small jumber of vendors ply their wares in the counterpared, rangoes, Balloonstande Litle service is conducted in Eggligh. outside, there is bedlom on the streets. Howking car horse . blowing whitles and the bustle of people, People energistere in this consider city. Eventhe duch 3 in crossded - a nice little earner for the RC Church

Hanging on be church opatus are capies of Voque, Go, Vanity Fair, In Shyle, Good House toping being braded by the vendor. All of them one porhaying a way of life that is like being on another planet as far as the average Filipino is concerned. Survival in what counts here. The luxum otens considered normal by western formilies do notexist in the vast magazity of Filipino homes. Getting mough to estand wear and and maintaining a not oner their heads in the norn privrity here. -And helping technich increase it's already observe -many of the nungaganan 3 2 The yellow bikinic lad girl junaed out of the sea on the coner of Vogue towards me; fit for summer - bikinis are back -the 30 best - getting the body you wont - living Par free, were some of the temptahing offered in the free edition. I don't know which year it was form estime seens por to matter in this combon Ord unarte 2 d a a 2 seens not to mother in this country. Old magazite sell for almost as much as New editions. Gurrent editions of UK computer magazines sell for about 18 instead of the \$2.50 in the UK, than half dis argunial cast. 3 .

with their parities, others with themprinds. Two little with begged a few coins from me. So many chitchen here lure on the streets and yet the Folipinas keep producing more & more. So many pregnant ladies - almost energuture you go there are bulges jostling for space in the covas. I One lody I met, Zenith, in the youngest of 14 - most of whom go a beproduce even more. No wonder the RC chish is against contraception, all these happy smiling, people -provide yet more funds to go into the coffees 9 3 these wonderful people are under nourisfed and 2 month line inter adequite housing of shanky towns 2 2 In another a gate of the church hang cordboard display cards of charp children's toop to here the kids amused in the service, the church 20 29 in full with many a warshippers standing to ball 3 not juit employ, shakes & bangs it intil apolit 20 cogetrette and fall out. Then he lobs it in the sir, merajuly not hitting 3 anyae or bonding. Turing of this to has a do af bearing hell out of a coraboard drink contine temps) then shaking a small citrus tree tops 3 nots between drapping, then chusing other ha 3 preción Coke con - almost decopitation me with one of kin aimless lobs. 2

It is now 1200. The service ends precisely on time & another shorts, One lot of people out-another in, hile goes on.

My Diary of Sunday 16 March 1997

I'm sitting in the courtyard surrounding the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Shrine in Caloocan City, Manila.

On the end of the seat where I'm sitting, a beggar woman comes to join me. One of many beggars roaming the church.

The time is 1100 hrs and the start of yet another Sunday service which seem to go on throughout the day - all of which are well attended.

Another, then another beggar woman comes to sit on our, now crowded seat. They chat to each other, then two rise and go leaving the one original in charge of their begging pots.

A few yards in front of me is a man selling beautiful tropical birds from a wire cage. Hanging from the cage and from a yard-long stick are mini-cages made from bamboo strips to enable his clients to take the birds away with them.

The church is full and the sounds of the service are transmitted into the courtyard through the open doorways and outside PA system. The service is conducted in English. A small number of vendors ply their wares in the courtyard; mangoes, balloons, candles, magazines, Margareta blossom as well as the birds.

Outside, there is bedlam on the streets; honking car horns, blowing whistles and the bustle of people. People everywhere in this overcrowded city. Even the church is crowded -a nice little earner for the RC church.

Hanging on the church gates are copies of Vogue, Go, Vanity Fair, In Style, Good Housekeeping, being traded by the vendor. All of them portraying a way of life that is like being on another planet as far as the average Filipino is concerned. Survival is what counts here. The luxury items considered normal by western families do not exist in the vast majority of Filipino homes. Getting enough to eat and wear and maintaining a roof over their heads is the main priority here. And helping the church increase its already obscene wealth!

The yellow bikini clad girl jumped out of the sea on the cover of Vogue towards me; fit for summer – bikinis are back – the 30 best – getting the body you want – living fat-free, were some of the temptations offered in the May edition. I don't know which year it was from as time seems not to matter in this country. Old magazines sell for almost as much as new editions. Current editions of UK computer magazines sell for about £8 instead of the £2.50 in the UK (1997 prices). I was offered a 3-year old diving magazine for more than half its original cost.

Children ran around everywhere, some with their families, other with their friends. Two little waifs begged a few coins from me. So many children here live on the streets and yet the Filipinas keep producing more and more. So many pregnant ladies – almost everywhere you go there are bulges jostling for space in the crowds. One lady I met, Zenith, is the youngest of 14 – most of whom go on to produce even more. No wonder the RC church is against contraception; all these happy smiling people provide yet more funds to go into the coffers of

the church, even though almost half of these wonderful people are undernourished and live in the inadequate housing of shanty towns.

On another gate of the church hang cardboard display cards of cheap children's toys to keep the kids amused in the service. The church is full with many worshippers standing. A little boy clad only in shorts plays football with an old Coke can then, finding it to be not quite empty, shakes it and bangs it until about 20 cigarette ends fall out. Then, he lobs it into the air, mercifully not hitting on landing. Tiring of this he has a go at beating hell out of a cardboard drink container (empty), then shaking a small citrus tree to its root between dropping, then chasing after, his precious Coke can – almost decapitating me with one of his aimless lobs.

It is now 1200 hrs. The service ends precisely on time and another starts. One lot of people out; another in. Life goes on.