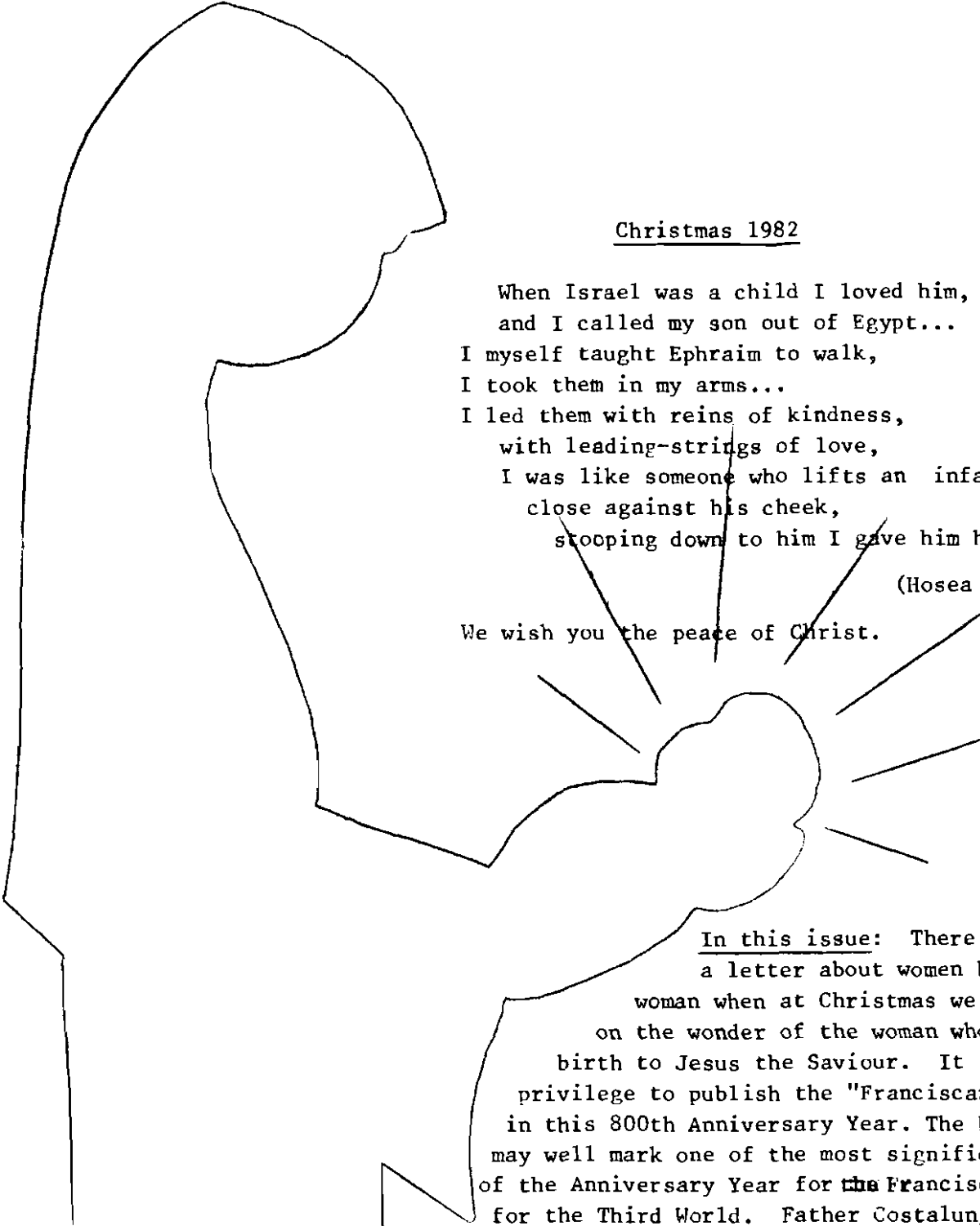


82/No.19

December 15th 1982

Christmas 1982


When Israel was a child I loved him,
and I called my son out of Egypt...
I myself taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them in my arms...
I led them with reins of kindness,
with leading-strings of love,
I was like someone who lifts an infant
close against his cheek,
stooping down to him I gave him his food...

(Hosea 11: 1-4)

We wish you the peace of Christ.

In this issue: There is a letter about women by a woman when at Christmas we meditate on the wonder of the woman who gave birth to Jesus the Saviour. It is a privilege to publish the "Franciscan Message" in this 800th Anniversary Year. The Message may well mark one of the most significant events of the Anniversary Year for the Franciscans and for the Third World. Father Costalunga's account of the situation in Mozambique continues.

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Coming Events:

Sedos Residential Seminar:
Villa Cavalletti,
1 - 5 March 1982
"Criteria for Dialogue in Mission".

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News: Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies (CIIS)

Dr. Rev. Xavier Hirudayaraj, SJ., will speak on the theme:
Guru in the Religious Tradition at 5.00 p.m. Thursday, December,
16th in the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Piazza S. Maria Maggiore,
Rome.
All Welcome.

Funding Agencies: How to Apply. Agrimissio "Notes and Comments" of
December, 1982 contains useful information on the requirements to be met when seeking aid for projects
from MISEREOR, Germany, and Trocaire, Ireland.

Documentation et Informations Africaines (DIA) have completed 25 years
of publishing. Congratulations and thanks. The address of this information service
which is published in French is: B.P.2598 Kinshasa, Zaire. (Tel.30082
Ext.26 Telex 21008 DIA ZR).

Sedos Bulletin Index 1982 - will be enclosed with the January 15th,
Issue.

Sedos Office will be closed as from Thursday 23rd 1982 and will re-
open Tuesday 4th January 1983.

MARXISMO E MISSIONE IN MOZAMBICO

Part II

Natale Costalunga, SCJ

(This is the continuation of the address given by Fr. Natale Costalunga, SCJ. in Italian at the Sedos Seminar held on 29th October and 2nd November 1982 in Rome).

Anno 1980

1 5 Lanciando una nuova "offensiva" per la riorganizzazione economica, il Presidente si pronuncia con un celebre discorso-fiume (18 marzo) contro l'incompetenza e negligenza, la corruzione e il sabotaggio economico. Dirige personalmente la campagna recandosi nei vari centri di produzione della capitale e determina la ristrutturazione dei servizi nazionalizzati (edilizia, trasporti, commercio).

- Invita i paesi occidentali all'investimento nel paese;
- abolisce le "lojas do povo" (negozi del popolo) che vengono affittate o venduti a privati;
- procede a una rimodellazione degli incarichi nel governo, relegando nell'ambito del partito due ministri, ideologi leninisti e esonerando il ministro della sanità.

1 6 Il 18 aprile è proclamata l'indipendenza dello Zimbabwe sostenuta con l'appoggio del Mozambico. Ciò significa l'uscita del Mozambico dei guerriglieri zimbabwiani e la riapertura del porto di Beira.

1 7 Il Mozambico conia la propria moneta, il METICAL (giugno); e fa il censimento (mese di agosto).

1 8 L'esercito popolare ufficializza i vari gradi gerarchici con titoli, uniformi e relativi stipendi, in contraddizione con le precedenti affermazioni del '75 secondo cui l'esercito, braccio armato del popolo, doveva provvedere alla propria sussistenza con il lavoro dei campi, senza stipendio e senza gradi.

- 1 9 Continua la campagna per riattivare la produzione che è in calo. Si introducono nella capitale le tessere per generi alimentari di prima necessità, che sono sempre insufficienti.
- 2 0 All'inizio della presente decade (1980-90), destinata ufficialmente a vincere il sottosviluppo, si firmano contratti con numerosi governi occidentali e si incominciano lavori colossali come lo sfruttamento delle miniere di carbone e minerali, estensione della rete elettrica al paese, costruzione di strade, sviluppo delle fonti di energia, fabbriche tessili, ricerche del sottosuolo.

Entrano dai paesi occidentali numerosi cooperanti, pagati con valuta straniera e si aprono negozi speciali, as lojas francas de Moçambique, per chi dispone di moneta straniera.

Anno 1981

- 2 1 I SAAR passano dal ministero degli Interni alla competenza del ministero di Giustizia (gennaio 1981).

Esce la legge che raziona il combustibile (2 aprile).

Rincrediscono le azioni di guerriglia e di sabotaggio economico da parte della Resistenza Nazionale Mozambicana (M.N.R.). Il governo stipula un accordo con lo Zimbabwe per combattere la resistenza.

Prosegue lo sforzo per raggruppare la popolazione in villaggi collettivi (aldeias comunais), usando la forza. La gente è obbligata dai soldati armati a lasciare la loro casa e a costruire le nuove case nel luogo fissato dal governo. Gli stessi soldati bruciano le vecchie case della gente, prima ancora di edificare le case nuove.

Il Mozambico entra a far parte del COMECON, la comunità economica dei paesi del blocco sovietico "come processo naturale dello sviluppo economico e sociale dell' R.P.M. (Marcelino dos Santos, ministro do Plano, giugno 1981). La decisione segna l'inserimento definitivo del paese nell'orbita sovietica (1).

- 2 2 Il governo inizia (19 giugno 1981) i contatti con la chiesa cattolica in vista di una collaborazione, in personale e mezzi, per opere sociali. L'incontro sembra determinare una svolta nelle relazioni mutue. Gli attacchi alla chiesa si fanno più rari e meno virulenti.

Si delinea uno spiraglio di tolleranza: Alcuni religiosi sono lasciati entrare nel paese come cooperanti, contrattati e stipendiati dal governo e per la formazione dei quadri della chiesa. L'attività religiosa continua ad essere limitata dall'obbligo delle "guias de çarcha", attacchi alla religione continuano nelle provincie del Niassa e di Pemba.

2 3 Si apre la seconda fase della "campagna organizzativa" contro l'illegalità, con un nuovo discorso-fiume del Presidente (5 novembre). Si riconosce che il popolo è stato emarginato dal processo rivoluzionario, con il cattivo trattamento, tortura, battiture, prigionie arbitrarie, processi differiti ...

Anno 1982

2 4 E' proclamato l'anno decisivo per raggruppare tutto il popolo nei villaggi comunali. Si evidenzia sempre di più che il motivo di questa strategia non è più legato allo sviluppo, bensì alla difesa, alla vigilanza, alla identificazione di coloro che collaborano con il MNR (Movimento Nazionale Resistenza).

2 5 In agosto si fanno "Rastrellamenti" di giovani per arruolarli nell'esercito, e si affidano armi ad altri organismi di vigilanza per difendersi da tutti gli infiltrati pericolosi che possono far parte della resistenza. Aumentano le fucilazioni ufficiali (in giugno e il 2 ottobre); e non si contano le fucilazioni illegali. Si commettono genocidi contro la popolazione civile, come rappresaglia per sospettata collaborazione con la resistenza (2). E' la repressione.

2 6 In un clima di nervosismo per l'azione sempre più decisa e distruttrice della resistenza, il paese è impegnato nella preparazione del IV^o congresso del Frelimo, con il fine di riscoprire le radici della rivoluzione e salvare le conquiste rivoluzionarie, ridare un nome nuovo al partito, e portare avanti lo studio critico della religione.

B - LA RESISTENZA

2 7 Dal 1976 è andato dilagando il movimento armato controrivoluzionario denominato Movimento Nazionale Resistenza (MNR), conosciuto anche con il nome di Africa Livre, che ne sembra indicare l'espressione ideologica dello stesso movimento. Comunque sia, l'MNR, di tendenza filo-occidentale e di matrice sudafricana, raggruppa ex combattenti della Frelimo, portoghesi nostalgici ed mozambicani dissidenti politici. Furono i portoghesi nostalgici e i servizi di sicurezza rhodesiani a sostenerne gli inizi, poi sono subentrati i sudafricani che ne hanno delineato la strategia politico-militare (sequestri, sabotaggi, attentati). Dapprima l'MNR ha operato nelle regioni centrali di manica, Tete e Sofala. Ha allargato il suo raggio di azione raggiungendo le tre regioni del Sud: Maputo, Inhambane e Xai-xai. Nel 1982 ha aperto il fronte operativo della Zambezia e del Niassa. Si propone di aprire prossimamente il fronte di Nampula. Praticamente opera militarmente in 8 su 10 provincie del paese.

Nell'ultimo periodo sembra che il Movimento abbia raggiunto le 10.000 unità, riunendo sempre più nelle sue file i mozambicani troppo scontenti delle ingiustizie della Frelimo.

Il movimento non sembra avere un capo vero e proprio, ma sembra diretto da un gruppo di persone. Questi dirigenti hanno la sede centrale dentro lo stesso territorio mozambicano, e sedi secondarie in Sud-Africa e in Portogallo.

La lotta della guerriglia è portata avanti dai singoli comandanti senza un piano ben preciso. In senso generale il movimento si propone la conquista del potere e la costituzione di un governo di stile occidentale.

La resistenza agisce su due fronti:

- la coscientizzazione popolare per mezzo di trasmissioni radiofoniche, volantaggio, comizi con la gente;
- la distruzione del governo rovinando le sue basi economiche. Si moltiplicano gli attacchi alle aziende agricole cooperative, alle fabbriche, ai cantieri dove opera personale straniero, atti di sabotaggio alle linee ferroviarie, ai mezzi di trasporto pubblici e privati, ai ponti, ai porti, alle linee elettriche: I villaggi comunali vengono assaliti e devastati. Sono stati uccisi cooperanti stranieri perché, nel pensiero del movimento, sono solo le colonne dell'economia mozambicana; altri sono stati rapiti e poi rilasciati. Anche il rapimento di due missionari e 4 suore(3) va letto in questa chiave: suscitare una opinione internazionale, far conoscere il movimento, e scoraggiare ogni collaborazione all'economia del governo mozambicano.

Purtroppo questi mezzi rendono il MNR problematico per il popolo, anche se continua a rappresentare un rifugio e una speranza per gli oppressi del paese.

Il gruppo direttivo del MNR sta preparando il I° congresso con queste finalità: eleggersi un capo, preparare uno statuto e i programmi futuri, dare unità ai vari gruppi e purificare le file dai sabotatori.

2 8 Perché è nata la resistenza.

Il costante calo della produzione agricola e industriale, aggravato dalla inefficiente rete di distribuzione interna, ha indotto il governo a misure impopolari quali il razionamento e il tesseramento per l'acquisto dei generi di prima necessità, che scarseggiano paurosamente sul mercato. Persino il Presidente per vari mesi ha ispezionato personalmente i più grandi magazzini del Paese per controllare che venissero effettivamente messi in vendita tutti i prodotti, ma questo non ha evitato i tristi spettacoli delle code giornaliere ai negozi e soprattutto il diffondersi del malcontento popolare.

L'introduzione della pena di morte, la creazione della polizia di stato (SNASP) e i campi di rieducazione (vari campi di concentramento, dislocati nel nord del paese, in cui nei tempi di massimo rigore sono state internate, abusivamente e senza processi legali, fino a 250.000 persone) sono stati provvedimenti che hanno allargato la grave frattura tra governo e popolo.

Proprio questo popolo mozambicano, minacciato dalla polizia, condannato a portare i pesi della rivoluzione, umiliato e offeso dagli attacchi irriverenti del suo Presidente e dei suoi subalterni contro ogni forma di religiosità, obbligato con la forza delle armi a vivere nei villaggi comunali (aldeias comunais), dopo aver assistito inerte alla razzia delle sue cose da parte dei miliziani e alla distruzione delle case negli antichi luoghi di residenza, questo popolo ha reagito con la resistenza passiva e il silenzio nei confronti delle autorità statali, circa 140.000 sono fuggiti nel Malawi chiedendo asilo politico, e molti sono passati nelle file della resistenza armata.

2 9 Di fronte alla nuova situazione tanto complessa che si è venuta a creare con l'attività massiccia del MNR, Samora Moisés Mahcel ha dichiarato il paese in "Stato di vigilanza permanente": ha attenuato la socializzazione forzata aprendo a una certa libertà di commercio; ha lanciato una drastica campagna di moralizzazione epurando funzionari di polizia e amministrativi.

Il fatto più grave e denso di conseguenze tragiche è la rapida militarizzazione della popolazione. Machel vuol recuperare la fiducia del popolo e il senso di unità nazionale mobilitando nuovamente alla battaglia. "Bisogna ritrovare lo spirito della guerriglia", ha dichiarato un rappresentante del comitato centrale del Frelimo, "e ripartire alla conquista del paese". Per questo sono stati richiamati ex-combattenti e si procede a distribuire armi nei villaggi comunitari per combattere l'MNR.

L'URSS aumenta la sua presenza in armi, aerei e navi da guerra, promettendo di rispondere a chiunque attaccherà i suoi amici.

3 0 Nel momento presente la situazione del MNR presenta molte incognite: il sabotaggio dei mezzi di produzione, l'insicurezza creata ai cittadini, ai cooperanti e ai missionari, la scarsa unità di azione fra i vari gruppi, la mancanza di un progetto politico chiaro, gli appoggi che riceve dai portoghesi nostalgici e soprattutto dal Sud-Africa ... fanno dell'MNR un movimento ambiguo e immaturo a rappresentare una alternativa politica al già disgraziato paese.

3 1 La rivoluzione ha messo in causa la chiesa mozambicana perché legata al governo coloniale con privilegi e potere. La chiesa non si è lasciata sorprendere dalle accuse del passato; riconosce i suoi errori, ma, con altrettanto coraggio, chiarisce la sua posizione e accetta il cammino di purificazione come grazia dello Spirito che la rinnova dal di dentro.

Perdute le opere di promozione sociale (senza indennizzo) e le sicurezze materiali, si trova ora di fronte a un impegno più profondo di testimonianza, di povertà e di fede.

Non tutti erano preparati per resistere all'uragano e molti missionari, specialmente portoghesi, se ne sono andati. Altri, spinti dall'incertezza e scossi psicologicamente hanno dovuto lasciare il paese (4).

Quelli che sono rimasti hanno accettato in silenzio molti soprusi, arbitri, calunnie, espulsioni, prigionie, per salvare una presenza evangelizzatrice.

3 2 La chiesa prende un altro volto con la consacrazione dei nuovi vescovi mozambicani che con spirito nuovo rimettono in cammino la vita e l'attività ecclesiale. La conferenza episcopale è composta da 7 vescovi africani e 2 portoghesi.

Le difficoltà sono molte: missionari dimezzati dall'esodo, clero e religiosi locali pochissimi, cristiani impauriti da vento rivoluzionario, senza seminari minori, mezzi di comunicazione sociale e risorse finanziarie.

Iniziano con una forte unità fra di loro, con i missionari e con le comunità cristiane, ridando alla chiesa animo, senso di gioia e fiducia.

3 3 Numerosi gli interventi dei vescovi presso le autorità dello stato in una ricerca di un dialogo diretto e leale. Hanno cercato di chiarire la posizione della chiesa in uno stato laico, denunciando allo stesso tempo con delicatezza e con coraggio le ingiustizie che si verificano qua e là, nei campi di rieducazione, nella violazione dei diritti, negli arresti arbitrari, nel non rispetto della libertà religiosa.

Prudenti nelle prese di posizione pubbliche, parlano chiaramente delle "grandi speranze" e delle "non poche preoccupazioni" per la chiesa. Invitano soprattutto il popolo a conoscere i propri diritti e a

lavorare per ottenere il pieno riconoscimento, rifacendosi proprio alla Costituzione del paese che garantisce le libertà fondamentali. Riguardo alla libertà religiosa di "praticare una religione", sancita dalla Costituzione, i vescovi appuntano una serie di attività inerenti alla pratica religiosa che lo stato rende sempre più difficili.

Infine invitano ancora una volta i fedeli a operare nelle strutture del paese, mantenendosi collegati con le loro comunità di fede e incoraggiando la crescita delle comunità cristiane.

Queste prese di posizione, se hanno frenato momentaneamente la lotta antireligiosa, ultimamente ne hanno provocato un rincrudimento. (5)

34 Il risveglio ecclesiale si è manifestato soprattutto più profondo nelle comunità di base, dove la responsabilità della chiesa è sentita da tutti e l'attività distribuita nei vari ministeri.

La scelta pastorale della formazione e animazione delle comunità autonome a ministeriali costituisce la preoccupazione di fondo di tutta la chiesa mozambicana, e se ne constata l'attualità principalmente in contesto marxista.

Tale scelta fatta già prima della rivoluzione dalla diocesi di Quelimane (Cfr. : Comunità Autonoma e Compartecipazione dei ministeri, risultato del lavoro del 73,74 e 75), viene confermata a livello nazionale dall'Assemblea nazionale di pastorale (Beira, sett. 77).

In questo cammino la chiesa è veramente viva: i vescovi continuano a riunirsi nonostante le difficoltà per ottenerne il permesso, le comunità cristiane sono coinvolte nella preparazione delle assemblee diocesane, gli incontri per la formazione dei responsabili si susseguono in tutti i distretti.

(segue)

INTER - FRANCISCAN MESSAGE
MATTLI, SWITZERLAND; 1982

"Peace and all that is Good" to all people in the world who rejoice in the Lord, to all men and women who seek the Lord, and to all who long for justice and peace!

True peace from God and genuine love in Jesus Christ to all the poor and abandoned, and to all who take seriously their responsibilities within the human family!

For the first time in 800 years of Franciscan History, we ... Franciscan sisters and brothers of our various branches ... have gathered in the name of Christ in Mattli, Morachach in Switzerland to consider the challenge of Francis from the perspective of the Third World and shared our experiences. We have truly felt the joy of being one family.

We have also sensed a joyful and hopeful youthfulness among us followers of Francis who live in the Third World. We are a part of the hope and fears of the people we serve. Having opened ourselves to each other and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have discovered once again new life through the Charism of Francis who is both "Brother of the Universe", and a living symbol of true humanity among the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. We have attempted to seek a genuine Franciscan Vision for the Third World in the following areas.

1. In favour of the poor ... against poverty: We are dismayed by the fact that the majority of the population in the Third World are extremely poor. Poverty has many faces: Humankind crying from hunger, suffering from endemic diseases, not knowing how to read and write, submerged in the filth of slums. This poverty is a reality caused neither by nature nor decreed by fate. It is caused by internal exploitation and by unjust international relations. In faith we denounce this rapidly increasing impoverishment as the social sin of our time.

This situation has led many of the Third World Churches to act in solidarity by making a preferential option for the poor and against poverty. In these churches the Poverello of Assisi stands out as the Patron of the Church of the poor. From his youth, Francis acted in "generous mercy for the poor" (Bona. Leg. Maj. 1:1). His conversion was first of all a conversion towards the poorest of the poor: "living with the lepers" (Cel. 1:17).

In this process he became ever more aware of the Man of the Cross turning to him and inviting him to live as the poor. Thus we see in Francis a process from being FOR to being WITH the poor and finally to

living AS the poor. In so doing Francis' option for the poor is an expression of the following of Christ. Evangelical poverty does not have meaning in itself, but rather is directed toward fraternity, toward new and life-giving relationships among persons.

Therefore poverty and misery in the Third World in a very special way represent a challenge to the Franciscan Family. We have to confess that we often live far from the poor and we rarely experience their insecurity and fears.

We are convinced that evangelical poverty (openness toward God and disponibility for others) is an essential element of the following of Christ, and a basic attitude for all Christians. We are convinced that no one can be truly in solidarity with the poor if he or she is not prepared to eliminate the subhuman conditions in which they live.

If as Franciscans, faced with world-wide poverty, we want to actualize our option for the poor, it will imply three things:

1. We should see history and reality from the point of view of the poor. Only then can we see clearly that each of us and society as a whole must be transformed, because society does not rightly meet the basic needs of the poor.
2. Faced with the consumer-society, which is fundamentally unjust, we should give a prophetic protest, and refuse all goods which glaringly conflict with the criteria of justice, health and environment.
3. Together with the poor we should stand up for social justice. The goal of the Christian-Franciscan project is neither a poor nor a rich society, but a just community of brothers and sisters.

2. For the woman ... against discrimination: We are dismayed by the situation of the woman in the Third World. She is the poorest of the poor. She is sometimes looked down upon because she is a woman. She is treated as an object or as merchandise, often exploited sexually (sex tourism, prostitution, new kinds of slavery centers, especially in the First World), used as cheap labour and kept illiterate.

As Franciscans, concerned about discrimination against women, we are reminded that St. Francis discovered and highly esteemed the Feminine in creation. He had a special love and devotion for the Mother of God who gave Christ to the world. He saw himself as a mother conceiving life and protecting it (II Cel. 16). He also tried to interpret inter-human relations in terms of motherhood. In his wider love of God, friendship flowered with St. Clare of Assisi and Jacoba of Rome. In his Canticle of Brother Sun he called everything "sister and brother", thus bringing them into a harmonious unity.

Therefore we, brothers and sisters in the Franciscan Family, believe that we must make a special option for the oppressed woman within our option for the poor. We are convinced that only in mutual giving and receiving will we be able to realize our Franciscan vocation. In a special way the sisters of our Franciscan Family can prove their solidarity by efforts against the discrimination against women. Thus they will be a sign of St. Francis' liberating stance within their various cultures. St. Francis' example stimulates us to assure women their rightful place, participating in the decision-making processes of Church and society.

3. The Rights of the Poor as the Rights of God: We are ashamed of the continued violation of human rights through institutionalized violence of both right and leftist governments, e.g., kidnapping, torturing, disappearance of people, mock trials, etc.

In recent years the Church has understood herself as the advocate of the oppressed. We are pleased to see that bishops and cardinals and also many simple brothers and sisters of our Franciscan Family are engaged in the struggle for human rights. All human rights must be asserted and defended (basic individual rights, personal rights, social rights and international rights), but the rights of the poor must come first, since they comprise the majority of the world's population.

In the Bible the rights of the poor are understood as the rights of God. God, as a living God, is engaged in a very special way in favour of those whose lives are threatened (Lk.4: 16-21). Francis had a special esteem for the poor: he lived together with them, he respected them as brothers and sisters. He did not allow anyone to speak evil of them, nor to do evil to them, Francis spoke of "an inheritance and the right which is due to the poor because our Lord Jesus Christ acquired this inheritance and right for us" (Reg. non bullata IX. 8). Because of this we Franciscans are committed to continue struggling for human rights. In this context we want to emphasize especially the right to life, access to food, employment, housing, health, education and recreation.

4. Striving for Justice and Peace: We find it disheartening that the largest physical and financial investment of humankind (in science, technology and production) is directed towards its possible annihilation. We are concerned because an increasing amount of the arms produced are destined for the Third World. The use of money for arms is robbery of the poor.

Due to the injustices of the existing international economic system the poor countries grow continually poorer. They witness the exploitation of their irreplaceable natural resources. The value of the raw materials they produce does not increase at the same rate as the value of the

industrialized products they import. The products of their few industries are often highly taxed in the First World. Their efforts to industrialize are often blocked. Therefore, we urgently recommend the approval of the "New International Economic Order" as requested by 130 of the 150 countries of the United Nations.

In the face of these realities we recall the peace mission of St. Francis; his greeting "Peace and all Good"; his total commitment to peace, his constant readiness for reconciliation, and his confidence in the power of the Cross. Therefore we desire to work together so that every human being and every creature receive his/her just share, and can live in peace with all creation. From this Mission Congress we addressed a letter to various governments asking them to make greater efforts to disarmament and for the abolition of all weapons of war, especially nuclear arms. We plead that no weapons be exported to Third World countries: through them military dictatorships are strengthened and the rights of the poor are despised. We urge that arms production be stopped also in the Third World. It is an assault on life, a manipulation of the sufferings and fears of humankind. As Franciscans we believe that we must learn once again to trust "not in chariots and horses, but in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 19:8). Without violence, but with enduring inner strength, we want to be committed to the cause of justice and peace:

5. Instruments of Reconciliation: We are conscious of conflicts and tensions all over the world... in the Church and among ourselves.

St. Francis lived intensely the mystery of reconciliation between God and man brought about by the Cross of Jesus Christ. That is why he prayed and taught his brothers to pray: "We bow in adoration before you, Lord Jesus Christ, and before all your churches in the whole world because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world" (Cf. The Testament). Full of conviction and strength he tried to make himself an instrument of reconciliation. We remember how he reconciled the feuding civil and ecclesiastical authorities of Assisi. He often pacified his own friars in conflict. And, in the Canticle of the Sun, he sang "All praise be yours my Lord, through those who grant pardon for love of you."

As his professed followers, we Franciscans shall consider it our unique privilege to be the instruments of reconciliation. We shall strive to be worthy of this legacy of his and remain faithful to it. In our determination to serve the poor and to live poor, we make ourselves totally free to promote understanding and mutual acceptance among men which will bring about full reconciliation. We need to do this in our midst, in the society and in the great family of the children of God.

6. A Liberating Solidarity: We are encouraged by the fact that the poor in certain countries are organizing themselves for full liberation. They develop a critical consciousness of

the historical causes of their misery and mobilize themselves in peoples' organizations, free labour unions, and workers' parties. The Church itself is becoming more involved in human promotion by means of Bible groups, base communities and various social programs.

We confess, that due to the service-station model and large institutions that we have not been sufficiently engaged in the liberation of people. However the number of those among us who are committed to changing society in favour of the poor has reached a significant level in many parts of the world. In other sectors of the world this consciousness is just beginning to emerge.

We are reminded of the Testament of St. Francis, in which he defines his conversion as a change of positions: he left the social and economic structure of the rich and powerful and accepted that of the poor and the little ones. Living with them freed both him and them from the consequences of misery, scorn, and isolation and laid the foundation for an alternative society. In the struggle with the powerful he saw the good in them and believed that they could be converted.

Thus in our commitment for liberation together with the oppressed we want to trust more in humankind's innate values and sincerity rather than the illusion that violence can effect change.

7. Dialogue with other Religions: We believe that religions are a great source of enrichment for the understanding of the dignity of man in his relationship to God. The Asian and African scenes in particular are also characterized by the presence of major religions. We should therefore, treasure their wisdom and accept their existence with gratitude and joy.

Francis' contact with these religions was limited to Islam. But, while Christianity at that time was at war with Islam, Francis, following Jesus in his poverty and humility, did not go to the Muslims as a Crusader, as part of a power structure with all its might, but as a real "minor", poor and defenseless. Francis entered a learning process in which he discovered God's presence and work in the life and religion of the Muslims. After dialogue with Islam Francis' appreciation of the transcendence and majesty of God was truly deepened and he found a common ground where he and the Muslims could meet in peace, i.e., faith in a transcendental God. As a result he could write in his Rule 1221 "that those going among the Saracens should be subject to every human creature for God's sake" (Regula non Bullata, 16).

This positive appreciation should also characterize the followers of Francis today. We should not act as majores with regard to other religions, but as minores: we should not judge them, but "be subject to them for God's sake". This is dialogue in the spirit of Francis.

8. The Word must become Flesh: Inculturation: We observe a growing awareness among all peoples of the desire and the right to express their faith in their own way. After centuries of European Colonial Christianity an African, Asian and Latin American Church is springing up, thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit. In their own theology, liturgy, spirituality, art, architecture, pastoral ministry and Christian style of life we see the Word of God becoming flesh today.

As an African Franciscan sister expressed it: "The Gospel challenges are the same for all cultures. Please let me be an African in all aspects of life except those which are in conflict with the Gospel and the ideals of Francis and Clare".

Though the whole movement of inculturation as such did not exist at the time of St. Francis, we are reminded of St. Francis as a man who was fully open to the goodness and positive values existing in the whole of creation. He did want that we take delight in and be pleased with the world because it was the place where the creating, the redeeming and the saving work of God is being accomplished (Cf. Regula non Bullata 23: 9-11).

Hence, inspired by this great freedom of St. Francis, we want to root ourselves in the culture of the peoples in every land. We wish to develop the local churches and thereby bring about a genuine enrichment of the whole Church of Christ.

9. Overcoming Clericalism through Fraternity: We observe that in many instances where the activities and initiatives within the Christian community are centered around the priest or his substitute, the people of God do not grow in responsibility for their life and action. There are also living communities without priests, which have demonstrated an emergence of many ministries and charisms, and an awakening of fraternity. There are churches with priests who have taken care to develop this new sense of fraternity among their people.

This makes us remember St. Francis who was experienced by his companions as the brother (il fratello). He would not establish his community on a hierarchical basis. Neither should power, domination and privileges have any place in it. His brothers should mutually respect and serve each other. They should listen to one another and seek the good of all. Francis wanted his brothers to remain on the level of the people, and not to strive for higher positions.

We have a special task to fulfill within the Church, namely, to build a living community of brothers and sisters on their way together toward making God's goodness a reality for all humankind. Therefore we want to seek out the people and love them, living not only for the people, but also with the people. To live up to this vocation it would

be necessary to distinguish clearly between formation for priesthood and preparation for life in the franciscan fraternal community, which would be given a clear priority both in the initial and in on-going formation.

10. To learn by living and doing: Formation. We observe that Church and world change at an ever faster rate. There is a danger that traditional ideas and models will be inadequate for a continual process of learning and on-going formation.

We remember Francis of Assisi who was always open to the signs of the times. He did not confront situations with preconceived notions. Up to the very end of his life he was prepared to learn from the youngest novice. He wished that formation be done first, not at Universities but in lepers' homes (Comp. Assisiensis,9). He was convinced that a friar could not understand what he had not experienced. Even theological formation should serve primarily the conversion of the friar and only then the proclamation of the Gospel.

Therefore, we brothers and sisters should learn from each other by sharing experiences, by reading the Gospel, by praying together, by breaking the Bread together and by evaluating our real life situations. Fraternal correction is an important part of this process. We Franciscans should take seriously the words of Gregory the Great: "The poor are our teachers, the humble our learned".

11. Reaching out to the Transcendent ... Prayer & Contemplation:

We observe with joy that in the Third World God is a reality who is experienced; in Asia we learn that meditation and silent presence before God are interwoven in the life of the people; in Africa the presence and experience of the living God is exteriorized and celebrated in song, rhythm and dance; in Latin America popular religion and the veneration of the saints are meaningful realities which also generate life.

We remember Francis of Assisi who wanted to adore God everywhere, at every moment, and wanted to love him in all his creatures. He sought the silence of caves, forests and churches. He translated his own experience of God into pictures, gestures and play. He played-out the mysteries of Jesus (Christmas, Easter, Eucharist). He identified himself with the needs of the people, seeing their eyes and touching with their hands. In the world, in all his action, he was totally one with God: before God he was filled with the concerns of the world.

For that reason we want to give back to prayer, liturgy and silence the place they deserve. Without fear we want to encounter the outburst of the people's and we want to participate creatively in it. When we stand before God with our people, all of our conflicts and sufferings our expectations and hopes take on a dimension which transcends all and, at the same time fulfills.

12. Conclusion: We observe that Francis gives direction and support to the search of men and women for a new humanity. In Francis we have a living witness that such a renewed humanity is possible today. We believe that all who follow him and put these things into practice will be "filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father, and on earth with that of his beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter." (Tlst. 40).

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PLANNING FOR THE 6th ASIAN MEETING
MAJOR RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS OF WOMEN

In the preparation for the coming Asian Meeting of the Major Religious Superiors of Women to be held in Taiwan next April (1983) a committee has been set up by the AMRSWC.

Appointed to be responsible for organizing and planning the activity called "Exposure Programme" were Sisters Ruth King and Emma Lee. The first Seminar of the Exposure Programme was held in Taipei last month for four full days, attended by the future facilitators of the Programme - ten Sisters from various communities and two Catholic Social Workers. The theme was "WOMEN'S LIFE IN TAIWAN TODAY." Fr. L. Gutheinz, S.J. and Fr. J. Ellacuria, S.J. were our resource persons for social analysis and theological reflection.

After dividing into five groups, the participants spent the first two days in experiencing the real life of women:

Group 1: Women Religious - Buddhist Nuns; wives of Protestant Ministers, Catholic Sisters.

Group 2: Women workers in the coal mines.

Group 3: Women workers in factories.

Group 4: Business women, women in industry.

Group 5: Women among the aborigines.

During the second part of the Seminar, participants shared their live-in experiences along with their personal reflections under the guidance of the two resource experts in order to see clearly our responsibility to society as Christians.

All participants said it was an enriching Seminar

Ref. One Spirit (Taiwan) Vol.15 No.4 Nov. 1982.

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 IMAGO DEI

Ana de Garcia of Costa Rica is a member of the CWME at Geneva. Before coming to Geneva she directed a Cultural extension programme in the northeast province of Guanacarte, and engaged in numerous ministries related to the evangelical churches of Costa Rica. In the Spirit of ecumenical respect so dramatically underlined by Pope John Paul II's visit to ~~Canterbury~~ we publish Ana's letter taken from the CWME's monthly letter on Evangelism as a Christmas meditation on Mary the IMAGO DEI, the mother of our Saviour. "The lack of recognition of women and their inherent value as equal partakers of the Imago Dei is a very subtle blindness".

Dear Friends,

Since coming to Geneva, I've had the unique experience of living in four different neighbourhoods in four months. In keeping with my custom of taking walks to "size up" a new neighbourhood, I took a walk in the neighbourhood that is now my home, Meyrin, Geneva. What I discovered has impacted me enough to motivate this letter.

A complex of apartment buildings close to us has striking entrances that contain enormous murals. These colourful paintings depict various continents and regions of the world. There are murals dedicated to Asia, Africa, the Pacific, the Andian region of South America, Europe and the United States. The artist had given careful attention to the inclusion of details that would immediately identify the region. The Andian painting had a llama, an indigenous man playing flute, majestic mountains, etc. After a detailed look at each of the paintings, I was left with a restless feeling. Where and who were the women depicted here?

I'm not usually on the look-out for an anti-female bias. But what I saw in these murals made my heart sink. The very few women included here were either extremely stylized or exotic.

In the painting representing Africa, I found a scarcely clad woman with elongated neck, staring into space. In the mural of the Pacific, I saw a flower-laden maiden, equally idle. In fact, this Tahitian maiden seemed to have been projected out of the painter Gaugin's head. Gaugin was prominently painted. He was the real subject of the Pacific mural. The mural representing Europe doesn't include a woman at all, depicting as it does, only the "giants" of European culture. The same or worse is true of the U.S. mural, only a woman's legs are painted.

The message that came across from these murals couldn't be more eloquent: women don't exist significantly. Women are incidental to historical processes. Women are idle. They are objects of adventurous

or exotic fantasy. They are abstract. The African woman is like no African's mother, sister or cousin. The Tahitian maiden hasn't had a hard day in her life.

I thought of flesh-and-blood sisters in Latin America: the young women at the university who give themselves generously to solidarity actions, often organizing events on a national scale; my sisters in the churches who are the very life-blood of their communities; the women who made possible the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution; the women of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, whose silent weekly march is a protest so loud that the whole world had heard it; my sisters who raise families and at the same time work in factories, offices, laboratories, classrooms, or in plantations. The paintings betrayed them. The paintings betrayed all women everywhere.

Though I feel tempted, I will not take it upon myself to elaborate, from a theological point of view, the errors of this distorted message. Many others have done so or are doing so at present. The most useful works have been done by women themselves: Marianne Katoppo of Asia, Elsa Tamex of Latin America, Maria de Groot of Europe (to name only a few). Stretching themselves to full length and gloryfying God (Luke 13:10-13), these Christian women are helping the churches to recover such fundamental concepts as God as male and female, Mary as the pre-eminent model of humanity (compassionate and free), the revolutionary way in which Jesus related to women and the radicality of Paul's affirmation that there is no opposition between male and female in Christ. The efforts of these women ought to be gratefully received by the churches.

Because this is a letter on evangelism, the question that I should address is "what do your murals have to do with evangelism"? I see a great relationship. In the first place, if we look for a reason for the unfairness of the murals, a benevolent (male) reader may argue that the distortion is simply unconscious. That no evil is intended. That, of course, women "hold up half the sky". It is an oversight by the artist. But for those of us concerned about evangelism, this is precisely the point. We know that unconsciousness and oversight play an important part in personal and structural sin. We remember the biblical warnings against hardness of heart (unconsciousness) and recall Christ's encounter with the Pharisees about their blindness (oversight), as recorded in John 9:39-41

The lack of recognition of women and their inherent value as equal parttakers of the IMAGIO DEI is a very subtle blindness. It is subtle enough to have become one of the most resilient. It is as rampant in the church as in society. In the Christian community, we are in disgrace because half of our members are marginalized both in theory and in practice. This blindness and hardness of heart stands under judgement as a sin that impoverishes the gospel.

How many potentialities for evangelism are lost because of the

marginalization of women? A few days ago I received a letter from a friend who edits a Christian bulletin for women in Central America. She requested me to write an article (yes, from Geneva) because her appeals for articles from women in the region had all been answered with "No, I can't", meaning "No, because I am not capable." Here we have a sad example of how the oppressed take on the value judgements of their oppressors. Clearly, the slighting over of women is a diminishing and oppressive sin from which we need to be set free. There's one other point I'd like to make. Christ shares with women in our lack of recognition. He himself was unrecognized: "He was in the world: but the world, though it owed its being to him, did not recognize him." (John 1:10) It is a general Christian understanding that God, in Christ, is the central victim of sin. Such terms as "the crucified God" and "the suffering God" have helped us rediscover this dimension of God. It is present in Isaiah 53, where the distinction between the suffering of the Servant and the suffering of his people is unclear. We are led to see that the Servant is precisely the Passionate One who suffers in solidarity with his people. This understanding of God, in Christ, far from hallowing an attitude of resignation on the part of women should inspire us in our daily struggles, hopes and aspirations.

What impresses me about the WCC "Community of Women and Men in the Church" study is its positive emphasis on the full expression of God-given humanity of every member of a community. It avoids the pitfalls of both the vengeful anti-male feminism espoused by significant groups and the near-sighted reduction of women's predicament frequently heard among activists for social change.

Having said this, I should add that I don't believe there's a shortcut to the recognition of full personhood of women. I think the road ahead is a long one. It'll take many Sheffields* and many "community studies" to awaken the churches and the world to the necessity for full community. But this struggle is grounded and guaranteed in Christ through whom God chose to reconcile all things and the whole universe to himself.

Yours sincerely,

Ana L. de Garcia

* Sheffield, the city in England where the International Consultation on the Study of the Community of Women and Men took place in July 1981. As is often the case, the name of the city is used to refer to the meeting held there.

Ref: A Monthly Letter on Evangelism, Geneva, No.9 Sept. 1982

SOCIAL SIN

" sin is less a private affair than a public fact, a communal experience, something men share willy-nilly, and our worst sins and those we least worry about are just those sins we ingloriously share. We keep each other in sin by a mutual complicity. One has to make an effort to commit sins alone. The sins we share with others, we inherit, breathe in, swim around in, like fish in a bowl. They are invisible, intangible, unweighable. They don't prick our consciences because they have no point. Our supreme astuce is to canonise theme as virtues.

Take, for instance, the disunity of the Churches: this is grave ecclesial sin but it has been made for centuries to appear as fidelity to Tradition. The sins of our Western civilisation as pollution, waste, excess consumption, gross materialism, iniquitous trade terms in dealing with the Third World, our piracy of resources and of the defenseless poor are sins crying to heaven for vengeance and very precisely shared in by all of us"

Frank Culhane CSSp.

Ref. Parish Bulletin, English Speaking Community, Lausanne.

LA THÉOLOGIE NOIRE

La théologie noire n'a pas souvent les honneurs du communiqué. Elle représente un coin d'ombre que les faisceaux de l'actualité se gardent bien de scruter. Les intellectuels chrétiens ne veulent pas travailler à la "lumière noire"! Quand le sujet des théologies de la libération vient dans la conversation, la référence dominante, pour ne pas dire exclusive, est l'Amérique Latine. Ne seraient théologies de la libération authentiques, "orthodoxes" (mais qui discerne le label?), que les réflexions venues du sous-continent latino-américain. Tout se passe en milieu chrétien comme si l'on continuait à l'égard de la théologie noire, le racisme que celle-ci dénonce.

Bruno Chenu

Ref. Spiritus; 89. Décembre 1982.

 BOOK NOTES

Buhlmann, Walbert, OFM Cap.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLES.

London, St. Paul Publications, 1982. Pp. 294. Hardbound, £10.00

Also published as GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLES. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1982 and I POPOLI ELETTI. Roma, Edizione Paoline, 1982.

In *The Coming of the Third Church*, Walbert Buhlmann drew attention to a profound change, the quiet, unobtrusive shift in the centre of gravity of the Church from the western to the southern world. In this book he draws attention to another momentous change. This time it is something that calls not so much for an outward, structural change, as for an inward change, a change in attitude. He challenges us to abandon the categories of egocentrism and ethnocentrism, that pervade the patterns of our daily living and to take a look at humanity in the light of biblical theology. There is but one "People of God" - humankind. It has existed in the order of intentionality from the creation covenant onwards; to-day it is crossing the frontier from tendency to actuality.

Angelo S. Lazzarotto

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POST-MAO CHINA

Hong Kong, Holy Spirit Study Centre. Pp. 194, Paper back.

This is a welcome English translation of Father Lazzarotto's Italian *La Chiesa Cattolica in Cina. La politica di libertà religiosa dopo Mao*. It is a balanced and well informed account of recent development in the Church in China which we recommend to all those interested in the Changing situation in China today.

Orlando E. Costas.

CHRIST OUTSIDE THE GATE: Mission Beyond Christendom.

New York; Orbis Books, 1982. Pp. 238. Paperback. \$12.95

Otto Maduro

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS. Translated by Robert R. Barr.

New York, Orbis Books, 1982. Pp. 161, \$8.95. First published as

Religion Y Lucha de clases.

Caracas, Editorial Ateneo de Caracas, 1979.

John Walsh.

EVANGELIZATION AND JUSTICE. New Insights for Christian Ministry.

New York, Orbis Books, 1982. Pp. 107. Paperback, \$ 5.95.

Ron O'Grady

TOURISM IN THE THIRD WORLD. Christian Reflections.

New York, Orbis Books, 1982. Pp. 61. Paperback, \$4.95.

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