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SEDOS Seminar, November 1991

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## In this issue . . . . .

We begin with the text of the conference given by PETER HEBBLETHWAITE at the November SEDOS seminar on the two encyclicals *RERUM NOVARUM* and *CENTESIMUS ANNUS* and their implications for mission. Encyclicals don't just drop down from the papal pen readymade. Neither are they abstract principles, timeless truths. *RERUM NOVARUM* came out of an Imperial Europe; *CENTESIMUS ANNUS* comes from a time when the Pope, the "voice of the voiceless," addresses a wider world and proposes a social teaching for the post-communist and post-unbridled-capitalist era. Already there are efforts to interpret the teaching to suit vested interests - Michael Novak being the most vocal example.

The Pope called for a recognition of human needs in the work place and stressed the importance of a sense of community in the new economic order. He values the democratic system - a move away from previous Church preferences. His encyclical for the first time includes social teaching of the Church as an essential part of the Christian message.

There are many signs that preparations for the African Synod are increasing. In this shortened version of his article, RODRIGO MEJIA SJ examines the lack of a special section on the laity in the *Lineamenta*. He

makes a number of proposals in the hope these may be incorporated in the final stages of the preparation for the Synod.

"It is necessary to distinguish a specific role in the social ministry for what I would call the prophetic style" (Bryan Hehir at the Cavalletti 1991 SEDOS Seminar). PEDRO CASALDALIGA is in the prophetic style. We publish the letter which he wrote to his friends following his most recent visit to Central America. We accept with Fr. Hehir that the prophets do not exhaust the substance or the style of the Church's ministry, but they will always have to be present in the Church.

MARIA CLARA BINGEMER foresaw the significance of the Centenary of *RERUM NOVARUM*. She examines the possibility of dialogue between Catholic social teaching and liberation theology. She sees solidarity and conflict as the inescapable parameters of this debate and finds in Jesus Christ the place par excellence where the two approaches meet. This is a significant contribution to the Church's social teaching as it is received and reflected in a Latin American context, all the more significant in that it appeared before *CENTESIMUS ANNUS*.

There are notices of important coming events.

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### SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 11, 9.30 - 17.30

at Divine Word College, Via dei Verbiti, 1

Morning: Mission Europe

Afternoon: Annual General meeting

Eucharist

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## RERUM NOVARUM TO CENTESIMUS ANNUS IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION

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Peter Hebblethwaite

### I. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Let us begin by comparing the world of Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* and the world of John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*.

#### Leo XIII'S World

Pope Leo XIII was a European who never left Europe. He was born and brought up in the Campania to the south of Rome. The main industry - banditry. As Nuncio to Belgium from 1843 to 1846, he had his only experience of "abroad," and made quick trips to London, Paris and Cologne. He must have had some knowledge of the harshness and squalor of life in the early phase of the industrial revolution. He was Bishop of Perugia in central Italy 1846-78: the main industry - chocolate-making. Elected Pope in 1878, he became "the prisoner of the Vatican," and kept the papal court in being so that it would be ready to resume its old ways once sovereignty over the Papal States was restored.

Leo was the author of *Rerum Novarum*. It sees the whole world through European spectacles. For Leo and his advisors social problems were European problems - though they had some inkling about labor problems in the U.S. Yet the debate about trade unions was a European debate; it made little sense to talk of freedom of association in Hong Kong or the right to strike in the Belgian Congo. Leo's vision is of a semi-feudal world in which "the simple workman, surrounded by his numerous family, settles down to his fru-

gal but sufficient meal, the just reward of his labour." (E.E.Y Hales in his, *Pope John and his Revolution*, p.45)

#### Imperial Europe

It is clear that *Centesimus Annus* is written from a very different perspective. In 1891 Europe dominated the world, and this is not just a figure of speech. European nations exercised direct rule over French Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, German New Guinea, while the British Raj reigned in India, Burma and Malaya. Africa was almost entirely divided between seven European nations, the above four with Belgium, Portugal, and Spain. Italy, so to speak, did not acquire international virility, until it too had a colony in Africa.

Even where there was not direct rule there was cultural domination through language throughout the Americas, and it was combined with economic domination throughout the world. Even the Empire of Japan was a slavish imitation of Western technology. It was an imperial Europe, ruled by inter-related monarchies. The only republic was in France. It was a Europe prosperous and at peace, with a mission in the world for which the world was expected to be grateful. The 1900 World Fair in Paris was a celebration of European civilization and progress: the two terms were identical. A brochure for the Fair explained:

An entire pavilion has been taken to illustrate the work of moral and material improvement undertaken in the colonies. The results so far obtained amply justify the

necessity of colonial expansion so pressingly felt by the civilized nations.

Our grandparents or great grandparents would have taken this for granted.

### Today's World

I will not attempt to describe the world today: it would take too long. But I think *Centesimus Annus* makes a good effort at describing it. It recognizes that the "business economy" of which it speaks - a natural synonym of capitalism - is simply irrelevant to most of the world's population, which is "marginalized," cut off from the mainstream of progress. Of course, having stated this, it is always possible to forget about it. And if you ask, *d'ou parle l'encyclique?*, the answer has to be from the "First World." The margins are defined from the centre. I do not see how it is possible to avoid this in a *magisterium* that aims to be universal.

Even so, many different readings of *Centesimus Annus* are possible. I recently took part in a panel on *Centesimus Annus* in Canada. One participant was a New York feminist called Janet L. Conway who complained that the encyclical made no mention of wife-battering; the sexual, physical and mental abuse of women, totally ignored the single-parent family and omitted entirely the experience of childbirth and child-rearing. She concluded defiantly: "I'm glad I read it. I'll shelve it." This may seem a rather absurd way of approaching a papal document. Yet you could argue that it is only because we have a male-dominated Church that we do not see the significance of these universal social problems. But leaving that aside, this feminist approach illustrates a very widespread attitude. People look to papal documents for support and confirmation of their own views. Take Michael Novak, head of the American Enterprise Inc.

### Michael Novak's World

In his youth, Novak wrote a fine book on the session of the Vatican Council called *The Open Church*. It was an important work because instead of talking about the clash of "conservatives" and liberals at the Council he distinguished between non-historical orthodoxy, which held the neo-Thomist view that truths floated somewhere out of time, and historically-minded orthodoxy, which allowed for the dimension of time, and therefore development. John Henry Newman or Lord Acton's "Look at the process, not the result" come to mind.

Late Novak believes in the beneficence and efficiency of market forces. Operating in an almost magical way, the prosperity of the rich nations will trickle down to the developing nations. Novak is the complete Thatcherite, the complete Reaganomics man. Naturally he believed that the U.S. model was going to triumph and be adopted by the whole world. He is a great "Communism-is-dead" man. He tells the story of Pope John Paul saying to a Latin American prelate that "the last Marxist in the world would probably be an American nun." (*The Spirit of Capitalism*, p.420)

Novak was very pleased by *Centesimus Annus*. This is because he saw it as a corrective to *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, which came out in 1987. This upset him greatly, for the Pope apparently presented two "imperialisms," the one socialist founded on the desire for power, the other capitalist and founded on the desire for profit, and said in effect that there was not much to choose between them. This provoked a scandal in the U.S. Novak and his friends refused to believe the Pope really meant what he appeared to be saying. Surely there must be some mistake. Capitalism and Communism could not be put on the same level.

So they went to Rome to check this out.

They did not see the Pope. They saw Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger at length, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray for five minutes. What they learned was there was no mistake. Neither communism nor capitalism as system escaped a whipping. They should have realised that the first move in Catholic social doctrine is always to cry a "plague on both of your houses." Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* starts the tradition in 1891. He condemns "socialism" (and makes it easier for himself by defining it as advocating the abolition of private property and state ownership of everything) and unrestricted, unregulated, uncurbed capitalism or "liberalism" as it was called. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* was in that tradition of seeking a middle way between unbridled socialism and unbridled capitalism.

In the four years between *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus* momentous events took place in Central and Eastern Europe. Novak reads this as the final victory of liberal capitalism and claims that the Pope in *Centesimus Annus* has at last "seen the light." The Pope has finally decided to bless capitalism. Is this true? Certainly, paragraph 32 strikes a new note. "The modern business economy has positive aspects. Its basis is human freedom exercised in the economic field, just as it is exercised in many other fields."

### A Market Economy

There is a link between the freedom to vote for one person rather than another, and the freedom to choose. In Polish terms, communism systematically eliminated freedom of choice - and therefore risk and responsibility. The transition to a market economy, prudently called here a business economy, will not be easy, and nobody has thought about it very much - the problem never having arisen. So, entirely forgotten, unexercised virtues are brought into play in Poland such as: "diligence, industriousness, prudence in

undertaking reasonable risks, reliability and fidelity in interpersonal relationships as well as courage in carrying out decisions which are difficult and painful." (§32). These are the virtues needed for the "business economy." How do you get them? They are the result of tradition, the code of practice, which is largely self-regulating and has many loopholes.

The practical problem in Poland and elsewhere, is that many think "privatisation" means deregulation; that there are no rules in the market-place. This is far from being so: the state still has a regulating function and in Poland they had to revive the 1934 Company Law to plug the gap. However, Michael Novak can produce this part of the encyclical and say, "There you are; I was right all along." This is rather hasty. Read on to paragraph 33: "However, the risks and problems connected with this kind of process should be pointed out." These are the risks connected with the free play of market forces.

### The 'Excluded'

The chief problem is that most people in the world cannot get to the starting-line of freedom. The majority, says the Pope, have "no-way of acquiring the basic knowledge which would enable them to express their creativity and develop their potential." We put this in a series of metaphors. 'The playing field is sloped not level.' 'They don't have the chips to play the game.' 'They don't have the micro-chips.' This is one of the most interesting features of the encyclical.

For *Rerum Novarum* property meant land first of all and the resources that could be extracted from it. Today we have "intellectual property" and the decisive factor is "knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, the human capacity for interrelated and compact organization, as well as the ability to perceive the needs of others and to satisfy

them." "Most people are excluded from this process. If not actually exploited, they are to a great extent marginalized. Economic development takes place over against the goods which are produced in ways which are new. Allured by the dazzle of an opulence which is beyond their reach, and at the same time driven by necessity, these people crowd the cities of the 'Third World,' where they are often without cultural roots, and where they are exposed to situations of violent uncertainty without the possibility of being integrated (into the world system). (§ 33).

### Conclusions

1) Considered as a description of the modern world, *Centesimus Annus* is accurate. This is also very important, because if the description is not accurate, how can the prescriptions (if any) make sense?

2) The recognition that there are some virtues and some positive factors in the business economy does not entail a blessing on *laissez-faire* economics, still less a belief that, left to themselves, they can automatically produce justice. Novak is simply wrong.

3) This is not a Euro-centered view. The Pope, we are constantly told, is obsessed with Europe. He wrote the first encyclical ever on Europe, *Slavorum Apostolorum*. There will soon be a Synod of Europe, and so on. . . Constantly he manages to rise to a universal perspective and to speak in the name of those who cannot speak for themselves, to become in a famous phrase "the voice of the voiceless."

### A New Economic Order

Leonardo Boff complains that the Pope is not "writing from below," not writing from "down under." It is hard to know what that really means. Pretty well the only voice in the developed world calling for a new economic order and fairer terms of international trade with reduction or rescheduling of

crippling debts is the Pope. The next time GATT meets, the United States and the European Community will defend what they perceive as their own interests. The one dissenting international voice is the Holy See. The weakness of the Holy See, of course, is that it is not there on such occasions and that, not being an economic power, it can only contribute rhetorically and from the outside to the debate.

All this, one might object, enables the Holy See to cut a dashing figure at international conferences, but is it leading anywhere? Does a model of society emerge from this talk? Is there a third way between capitalism and communism, and does Catholic Social Teaching embrace it? Yes, is the only possible answer to that question. Paragraph 34 states: "It is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called 'real socialism' leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization." There is no point in saying that unless you have some other model in mind. I know *Centesimus Annus* denies that it is offering "models." But that merely means it is not offering a complete blueprint, ready for immediate use. If we do not have a description of a model, there are set down some of the criteria any model would have to meet.

### Human Needs in Work

"There are many needs that find no place in the market," says the Pope and yet those needs are the essential test of a human, civilized society. So we look for a form of economic organization in which, in the Pope's words, "profit is not the only indicator," he says, or condition "of a firm's health." In fact, the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a community of persons who in various ways are striving (endeavouring) to satisfy their basic needs and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society. (§ 35).

This is a very novel and very radical statement. It goes to the roots of what we mean by work and working together. Can it be realized? I think it means people go to work not just to earn enough to survive, because if that is all they are doing, they are merely wage-slaves. They go to work to meet people, to have a social life, and to do something useful, to make a contribution to society - in short, to fulfill themselves, while helping on the common good. You may think this is a far-fetched description, say, of working in a modern car factory. Yet one of the demoralising things for the unemployed is that not only are they short of cash but they feel cut off from society and useless. Human and moral factors in work do exist, more obviously in service industries but also in manufacturing and they should be encouraged.

### Community and the Economy

This whole question has been discussed by a Catholic political philosopher who is just emerging. His name is Jonathan Boswell. He is British and has written a masterly work: *Community and the Economy, the Theory of Public Co-operation* (Routledge, London and New York, 1980). Professor Bernard Crick of Edinburgh writes in his introduction:

At a time when a Prime Minister has declared that "there is no such thing as society" and actually tries to create disrespect for public, non-privatised spheres (except the police and the army), it is salutary as well as bold to have argued from an economic perspective that "fraternity" is the most respected moral value (and to him a more acceptable social value than equality). An economy with more fraternity would, in the long run, be more productive and more balanced.

It seems to me that Boswell has anticipated the Pope, which is not surprising, for both were brought up on Jacques Maritain and

Emmanuel Mounier, who dominated Catholic social thinking in the post-war period.

I quote Bernard Crick in this context because he is not a Christian, because as Editor of *The Political Quarterly* he is a powerful figure on the national stage in Britain, and because here we have a recognition that Catholic social thinking has something to contribute to secular political thinking. "Boswell has produced," says Crick, "the most convincing theory of a mixed economy that I have read in my lifetime." And the key point is philosophical: "The society/individual dichotomy is a false dichotomy both ethically and economically." That is the gist of Catholic social teaching: what is good ethical practice is good economic practice.

### II. THE DEMOCRATIC DIMENSION

Does *Centesimus Annus* imply political democracy? Is freedom to choose on the supermarket shelves linked to freedom to choose a member of Parliament? *Centesimus Annus* suggests there is a link. This is a novel idea.

"The Church values the democratic system." With that single six-word sentence Pope John Paul threw away a bad Victorian tradition: the Syllabus of Errors (1863) condemned the notion that the Church should or could be reconciled with democracy. A few theologians got hurt. In the inter-war period, when democracies needed all the help they could get, "Catholic Social Doctrine" as taught in the Roman Universities held that the Church was not tied to any one political system, and was not tied therefore to democracy. Indeed some said democracy was mob-rule, and that the majority was always wrong. At that point in history, this was not a doctrine which emboldened one to resist Fascism or Nacism. True, the right to assassinate tyrants was upheld, yet the

Church felt there was a long way to go to go before that point was reached and, meantime, we could get along reasonably with *Herr* Hitler and *Signor* Mussolini as The Tablet always referred to them.).

### Vatican II and democracy

What about the Council on democracy? Even *Gaudium et Spes* wavered before endorsing the democratic ticket. "The practical ways in which the political community structures itself and regulates public authority," it announces, "can vary according to the particular character of a people and its historical development" (§ 74). But *Gaudium et Spes* was noting a fact, not passing a judgement. In any case, the Church cannot make absolute judgements on political systems for then it would be led to discredit it, say, medieval kingship or the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay. Both had their day. Neither was democratic.

But I do not think that was the reason why the Council held back. In 1965 the majority of Spanish bishops could not have accepted too strong a pro-democracy statement lest it be used as a stick with which to beat their Generalissimo Franco. Likewise, however anti-Communist the Polish bishops may have been, they were reluctant to question the legitimacy of the regime under which they, alas, continued to live.

But if *Gaudium et Spes* did not bless democracy in so many words, it provided the criteria for so doing. "Men are voicing disapproval," it portentously observes, "of governments which impede civil or religious liberty .... and where the authorities rule for their own advantage instead of serving the common good." In case you thought they were talking about things happening somewhere over the rainbow, the Council Fathers gravely warned, "There are some such governments holding power."

But this boo! to totalitarianism is founded on an hurrah! for political arrangements which enable the people to participate in the decisions which affect them. Pope John Paul in *Centesimus Annus* builds on this principle. He is now "for democracy" because it is "our" system and it has worked. The whole sentence reads: "The Church values the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them by peaceful means where appropriate." (§ 46). What the Pope calls "authentic democracy" will not take root - (memo to Central Europe and Boris Yeltsin) - unless you also entrench the rule of law, equality of opportunity in education and the "creation of structures of participation and co-responsibility."

### Bogus democracy

Pope John Paul knows all about "inauthentic democracy," the bogus article. After all, the regimes of Eastern Europe called themselves "popular democracies," the DDR means the German Democratic Republic, and when criticised as undemocratic, they replied, striving to keep a straight face, that they were enjoying "socialist democracy." One of the ways the Papacy can contribute to the New World Order is to purify the international political vocabulary. We must stop calling things democratic when they are manifestly not.

Furthermore, far from being confined to Europe, papal praise for democracy-as-value will help Latin Americans picking themselves up from military rule and Africans who have finally 'rumbled' the one-party state. The idea that governments should be changed by the ballot-box rather than coups will come as a welcome shock in many places. Kenneth Kaunda faces this in Zambia. At the last meeting of the OAS Presi-

dent Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria said that the first generation of African leaders had devoted so much time to ridding Africa of colonialism that they had forgotten about the sovereignty of their peoples. It was time for change; the Hour has come.

But the Pope's words should disturb European complacency too. We cannot simply say: "We have democracy so we are OK." What are we doing about our own "structures of participation and shared responsibility"? There are questions to be asked about the erosion of local government, the accountability of our elected representatives, and the "democratic" deficit of the European parliament. The Polish elections of October 28 were a disaster, with only forty per cent bothering to turn out.

### Difficulties of Democracy

Pope John Paul has also thought about the difficulties of democracy. One is that since accepting majority opinions is a basic rule, some think Christians with their moral absolutes made bad democrats since the right philosophy for democracy is relativism, the philosophical sister of pluralism. This is no abstract problem. Questions about abortion and euthanasia can no longer be eluded. The encyclical has a key to the solution of this tricky problem. Step one is to reject "fanaticism and fundamentalism." Pope John Paul denounces those who "claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious."

"Scientific fundamentalism" is a novel concept, yet a neat one. It enables one to challenge Marxism's imposition of its worldview and also any genetic engineering which thinks that because something can be done, it may be done. "Scientific fundamentalism" is as bad as its religious version, and worse when it can palm itself off as medical orthodoxy, conventional wisdom or the

"latest scientific breakthrough." So in rejecting fundamentalism the Pope is saying his political model is not Calvin's Geneva which paternalistically tried to legislate its citizens into exemplary virtue. Christian faith is not an ideology to be imposed. Itself a free act, faith "does not presume to imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid schema; it recognizes that human life is realized in history in conditions that are diverse and imperfect."

In other words, in a democracy you have to settle for what you can get now. That is my interpretation. Later remarks of the Pope in Poland suggest I am wrong. But one can say with Tallyrand: "*Méfiez-vous de votre première pensée, c'est peut-être bonne.*"

### III. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

*Centesimus Annus* appears as a contribution to political philosophy, rather like an extended leader in *The Independent* or *The Guardian*. Both papers, incidentally, welcomed it and said there was nothing new here for anyone familiar with Christian Democracy in Europe. Which raises a wholly new question: how Christian is Christian democracy? And is Catholic Social Teaching, such as you get in encyclicals, the basis of Christian Democracy?

What are we dealing with when we speak of Catholic Social Doctrine? Is it simply political philosophy cosmetically decked out with Christian mascara and rouge? For an answer, I am going to report on a conflict of views in the Roman Curia involving Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Council for International Justice and Peace. This is reflected in *Centesimus Annus*, making it a Jekyll and Hyde document.

#### Origins of the Encyclical

In May 1990, one year before the centenary of *Rerum Novarum*, Cardinal Etchegaray

wrote to all episcopal conferences proposing that the centenary should avoid all inappropriate "triumphalism", and should focus not so much on praising Pope Leo XIII as on diagnosing "the signs of the times" today. In 1990-91 this task would certainly involve some reflection on the remarkable events in Central Europe but, again we should do this without saying "We told you so."

Pope John Paul II had instructed Etchegaray to gather a small drafting committee for an encyclical. Among its members were an Austrian Jesuit, Father George Schashing, who was on the point of retiring from the Gregorian University, and the economists Stefano Zamagni of Bologna, Italy and Louis Sabourin, of Montreal, Canada. By November 2, 1990, they had completed their work and submitted their draft. This was at the height of the Gulf crisis. It was almost the very day on which President Bush decided to double his forces in Saudi Arabia (thereby effectually declaring war).

### U.S. Conference of bishops

Cardinal Etchegaray arrived in Washington to give the keynote address to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (February 24-27) titled "A Century of Catholic Social Teaching: A Common Heritage, A Continuing Challenge." He already knew the contents of the forthcoming encyclical. Yet on that topic his lips were sealed. He could not divulge the contents of the encyclical before time, and in any case this would have been rash since he could not be sure that his version would be accepted.

Etchegaray solved this problem by presenting his own view of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). In calling it "his own" view, I do not mean anything idiosyncratic. Etchegaray has a typically "French" approach to CST which is aware of and incorporates criticisms of it made by Mari-Dominique Chenu O.P. and

others.

It also incorporates what Paul VI wrote in 1971 in *Octogesima Adveniens* on the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. He confessed that such was the complexity of the modern world that it was impossible to give a universal teaching on social matters, adding, with a touch of sadness, "such is not our intention, nor is it our mission." That meant the end for Catholic Social Doctrine as hitherto conceived, the end of papal social doctrine.

But the end of papal social doctrine meant the release of Catholic social teaching. The very fact that the task of applying the Gospel to social and political life is difficult on the universal level, did not mean that it could be dispensed with. *Octogesima Adveniens* stimulated the local Churches to do it for themselves. This became a powerful factor in the development of liberation theology. The very "subsidiarity" commended by CST - do not refer to a higher what can be done at a lower level - demanded the active involvement of the local Churches in the development and elaboration of social teaching.

### Local Traditions

Cardinal Etchegaray in Washington was respecting the local tradition, not just flattering his hosts when he said: "You can be proud to be the heirs of a Cardinal Gibbons, of an Archbishop Ireland, a John Courtney Murray, a Dorothy Day, to mention a few names among so many. It is to your honor that, with great lucidity, you founded the National Catholic Welfare Conference as early as 1919. It is to your honor that, with great courage, you published such documents as 'The Challenge of Peace' and 'Economic Justice for All'." There was no trace here of that mistrust of episcopal conferences found in Etchegaray's Curial colleague, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who seeks to downgrade episcopal conferences and

reduce them to a merely practical convenience, with no magisterial (or teaching) function.

It seems natural to Etchegaray (as it did to Paul VI) that CST is not something that springs wholly from the mind of the Pontiff but represents a summing-up of the best that has been said and thought by the Church including lay prophets like Dorothy Day and Jacques Maritain. And, I want to add, Jonathan Boswell. Said Etchegaray: "In applying one social encyclical, the laity prepares the next one, and thus spreads the leaven of the Gospel through society."

### Local Experience

A second feature of Etchegaray's view of CST is that it draws upon experience. When Paul VI at the United Nations in 1965 presented the Church as "an expert in humanity," he was first of all setting aside any claims to speak based on divine right. Montini was not Hildebrand, ordering emperors about. But this very "powerlessness" gave Paul VI the authority of the Church deriving from what Etchegaray calls its "centuries-long experience, an experience always being enriched, an experience always on the watch for the signs of the time."

In what sense can one speak seriously of "the experience of the Church"? Does collective experience exist? This was the most important point Etchegaray had to make? "Now is the hour of Christians," he says, "whose very vocation is to reveal the spiritual meaning of the history of humanity." It is the Christian "moment" because, with the failed collectivism of Communism on the one hand and the failed individualism of Reagan/Thatcher on the other, there is need of a political alternative that neither absorbs the individual in the state nor leaves the individual bewildered and alone.

At the heart of the Church's experience is

the Eucharist. *Ubi eucharistia, ibi ecclesia*. Where else can people "of all sizes and shapes and colors learn - not without difficulty - how to live together as brothers and sisters, and whose communities are able to engender, if not finished models, at least rough drafts of fresh and expanded social relationships"? Secular society does not offer models of this type. I find this approach persuasive and convincing.

### Universal Teaching

However, the encyclical has a somewhat different approach, and we must remember that Etchegaray was merely sketching a draft. Pope John Paul makes it clear from the outset that he believes that it is possible to offer universal teaching, what he calls, in a neologism, - the "social magisterium" (§ 2). By paragraph 3 magisterium has acquired a capital letter and the "social Magisterium" is said to have "spurred on the activity of many millions of people, who sought to make that teaching their inspiration for their involvement in the world." The Magisterium appears as the sole dynamic force in the process of social change.

That is why *Rerum Novarum* can be presented as superior to the international Conventions and Declarations and national legislation concerning "the employment of women and children, working hours, the hygienic condition of the work-place and fair pay." *Rerum Novarum* provides "the springboard for the principle of the right to religious freedom, enshrined in many solemn International Declarations." And it is the source of the social legislation of the welfare state. It would be difficult to justify, historically, all these statements. There does seem to be an over-estimation of the place of what is now called "the social Magisterium" in the scheme of things, an exaggeration of its influence outside the Catholic world, and a strong whiff of the "triumphalism" Etchegaray said should be avoided.

Credibility is not enhanced by this overselling.

Etchegaray, back in Rome after his U.S. trip, discovered what had been happening to his draft in his absence. In mid-March the Secretary of State, Cardinal-elect Angelo Sodano, said his draft would have to be radically changed. Why? Had it failed to convey the truth about CST? No. Etchegaray was missing the point. The Gulf War had changed the whole situation. The Pope's pleas for peace had been widely interpreted as "anti-American." In the post-war situation, the aim of Vatican diplomacy was to restore good relations with the U.S. administration and, though this was secondary, with Israel.

So the purpose of *Centesimus Annus* was subtly transformed. It still expounded CST but it also had to serve the diplomatic policies of the Holy See which required a gentler approach to capitalism. The wounds of *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* still rankled. Its even-handed condemnation of the twin imperialisms, communist and capitalist, had brought Michael Novak *et al.* to Rome, unable to believe their ears. With Communist imperialism now knocked out of the ring, the urgent need was to commend and control capitalism. Etchegaray reluctantly did his best to "incorporate" these new diplomatic requirements into the draft, but it was not good enough. A new committee was formed with Rocco Buttiglione, the

thinker of *Comunio e Liberazione* in charge and Swiss Dominican Georges Cottier to do the drafting. Encyclicals, Etchegaray remarked when presenting this one to the press, "ont toujours fait l'objet d'une preparation tourmentée." That is a Basque understatement.

### THREE CONCLUSIONS

1) Encyclicals don't just drop down from the papal pen readymade. They have a history. Input precedes their output. As Lord Acton said: "Look at the process as well as the result."

2) Encyclicals are not just abstract principles, out of time, timeless truths. In *Centesimus Annus* there is a chapter called "1989". It asks in effect: what was God doing in 1989? That is the question before the Synod on Europe, which will begin on November 28.

3) "What is Good for Europe is Good for the Third World." is a proposition dear to many in Europe. Though I do not think that Europe's prosperity is gained at the expense of the Third World, I believe we can reverse the proposition and say: "What is Good for the Third World is Good for Europe. It is when you really believe and act on that you have a magisterium that is truly effective, universal, and a contribution to international relations - with implications for mission.

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## CENTRAL AMERICA: THE GREAT CAUSES

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**Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga**

Between February and March of 1991 I visited Central America, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica for the sixth time. It was a journey of solidarity. I title this letter, *Central America and the Great Causes*, because it is there that these "great causes" are being played out with heightened forcefulness.

*I chose El Salvador in order to judge the world*, says God in the poem dedicated to the martyrs of the University of Central America. Central America, is, I believe, the axis of conflict, the geopolitical corridor, the opened side of the whole Great Homeland. After the complex fall of the Wall, after the cynical Gulf War, after the overbearing proclamation of a New World Order, never were inflation or the use force so great. Yet, these "great causes" become more universal, more unstoppable, more urgent.

In this sixth journey to Central America I have listened to words which hammered daily at my ears. They were a lexicon of death: external debt, inflation, recession, privatization, transnationalization, unemployment, migration, corruption and fraud, violence and misery. In contrast, our people of the unofficial world of Central America and indeed of the whole continent, cried out with ever increasing conviction the lexicon of life: justice, peace, demilitarization, popular democracy, human rights, self-determination, and solidarity.

We refuse to give up hope. We still believe in Utopia. We denounce the idolatry of the marketplace and neoliberal imperialism. We reject the new world order of the overlords and look to the alternative of worldwide

solidarity, of participative socialization and of human brotherhood. As we approach the fifth centenary of conquest and of ambiguous evangelization of this America, we associate ourselves with the continental campaign to remember 500 years of resistance; we undertake the New Evangelization.

I will develop the "great causes" under three aspects:

1. Emergent and alternative democracy
2. Antimilitarism
3. The New Evangelization

### 1. EMERGENT AND ALTERNATIVE DEMOCRACY

All the countries of Central America, with the variations proper to each local setting espouse popular participation as an alternative to the official policies which are usually supported by military or paramilitary oppression. Human rights organizations a growing voice. These, and allied organizations increasingly bring together the claims of a society that deserves to be called human. This is seen in respect for life, for ethnic diversity, for public discussion of opinions about life, education and health. There is a process of democratization coming from the grassroots. It is seen in calls for national dialogue; in community initiatives for repatriation, for social organization and better production.

*Repatriations, repopulations and occupations* are a collective expression of this emergent reality. The Empire's invasive presence will continue, but Central America, even after the revolutionary movement which apparently has failed and after the long martyrdom it

has heroically lived through, is already clearly choosing an alternative option for popular democratization and for basic social transformation. Certain significant experiences impressed me during my latest journey:

- The *Kuna* Indians, dispersed throughout Panama City and facing the loss of their identity, have founded four autonomous settlements outside the city. I greeted their representatives assembled in a gathering in *Kuna Nega*.

- In El Salvador and Guatemala, refugees had to flee by the hundreds of thousands from repression and war. In exile for some ten years, they are now returning to their respective homelands and creating *repopulations* or *communities of populations in resistance* (CPR'S). They defy governments' and armies, organize and form alternative living groups as advance waves of the other democracy.

- In Guatemala City I met with two men and two women, representatives of the *communities of the mountain and forest* for indigenous people. It was the first time that the CPRs appeared in public and officially claimed a stronger intervention of the UNO mission present in Guatemala at that time.

- In El Salvador I witnessed the rebirth Cinquera. Reduced to rubble by army bombardment, Cinquera was called, *the Salvadoran Guernica*. The first 15 families returned, after vain attempts by the army to halt and even turn them back along the roadway. Placards, hanging from the arms of the witnessing trees read "For the right to live in our places of origin, the displaced are once more repopulating these heroic lands." Throughout Central and Latin America, such *occupations* are being multiplied. In the capital of Costa Rica I visited a new neighborhood, already well organized, one of the 100 *occupations* that exist today in San Jose.

- On a wall in Guatemala, a painted sign asks "What has democracy done for us?" The neoliberal democracy that is being imposed on us is certainly not the kind of liberation that Latin America needs. Central America rejects it. Now the popular response to the new neo-liberal enemy of the last decade of this century is germinating like a seed beneath the soil."

## 2. ANTI-MILITARISM : ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Imperialism, militarism and death squads have combined to claim Central America. There will have to be simultaneous processes of anti-imperialism, demilitarization and social justice. It is not a matter of blind, a priori anti-anythings. Statistics alone cry out for the imperatives of life in Central America and throughout the world. According to the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent, since the Second World War casualties add up to some 25 million persons injured in about 200 conflicts. 90% of the wounded or killed were civilians. According to the latest report of the World Bank, the number of people living below the poverty line, an annual income under U.S. \$375 will reach 825 million in the year 2000. In 1985 it was 110 million.

According to the Center for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights of Abandoned Children of Latin America (CIP-DENAL), 80 million children are living sub-standard lives on the streets in our great Latin American homeland; 12 million are living as prostitutes; 120 million are living on the margin of any educational system.

More is needed than just "anti's".

People need a demilitarization that will bring justice and peace; an end to military or paramilitary impunity; security for persons and freedom of institutions; investment of money (currently being wasted on arms and repression) in agriculture, health, education

and living conditions; an anti-imperialism that will bring national autonomy; indigenous or *ladino* identity; recognition of equality among peoples; cooperation in solidarity. Also a new UNO.

Today the peoples of Central America have an obsession for regional demilitarization. This is seen in the conversations presently taking place in El Salvador and Guatemala. Even President Ender, a loyal subject of the Empire's Southern Command is calling for the demilitarization of Panama.

This trip of mine to Central America was inevitably colored by the war in the Persian Gulf, by the bellicose hegemony of Bush, by the fanaticism of Saddam. It was colored by Europe's humiliating submission to the dictates of the empire, by the cynicism with which this war was presented to us and hidden from us and by the immense new wound that has been opened between the Christian West and the Muslim East.

When I speak of the United States I am speaking of official policy. I am well acquainted with the other North America contesting these policies and in solidarity with the dominated. My friends in solidarity with me will understand quite well what I mean when I venture to assess the probable North American moral outcome of this war. The USA will go from the syndrome of the humiliating defeat in Vietnam to the syndrome of a humiliating victory in the Persian Gulf.

Salvadoran militarism, financed by the Reagan and Bush administrations, brought about another massacre this time in El Zapote, between January 21 and 22. On that night, 15 farmworkers from the same family were assassinated. Archbishop Rivera y Damas of El Salvador accepted without restrictions the conclusion reached by the Archdiocesan Office of Legal Protections: "...sufficient reasons exist for presuming

that the judicial system of the country should channel its investigations into the Armed Forces and especially into the First Infantry Brigade."

On December 1, Guatemalan militarism carried out another spectacular massacre in Santiago de Atitlan - 14 dead and 22 wounded. Ramiro de León Carpio, the defender of human rights in Guatemala, had no doubt that the army of Guatemala, as an institution, is responsible for the killing of the indigenous people of Atitlan. An elder of Atitlan who barely spoke Castilian told me the moving story of how the army had killed his 24-year-old son. Like an ancient Mayan Lorca, the old man kept repeating: "It was exactly 11 at night." My visit to Santiago de Atitlan moved me deeply. One of the people answered my comments on that Sunday morning by referring to the great rocks that undergird the place. "The rocks are the roots of the world," he said. These indigenous people are the roots of America."

### 3. NEW EVANGELIZATION

Evangelization has always been the Great Cause of the Church. Or at least it should have been. It is now our latest great cause. In spiritual retreats and other encounters during this latest journey to Central America, we meditated with our brothers and sisters of the churches there. Where would the new evangelization be for all of our Americas, particularly for all of Central America? It is good to remember that the expression was given birth here, in Medellin, where our Church was reborn.

At La Trinidad in Nicaragua we had a packed retreat with 140 participants in a great climate of prayer and friendship. Faced with the feelings of the "displaced", the "unencountered" people, we wanted to make this retreat an encounter with the God of the Gospel. Now more than ever, our bearings lost and our plans gone awry, we

must live the Mystery, with inexhaustible Christian hope; like the widow of Zarephath - in constant fidelity with the little people, sharing the last bit we have, the flour and the oil of every day.

Within the Church, the *comunidades de base* are becoming every day more adult and more participative. The laity can become an Emergent Church which may seem to be insurgent at times.

Santo Domingo and the New Evangelization are causes for both concern and stimulation. I was happy to hear from the lips of the bishops of the region who were returning from a meeting of CELAM, that most of the contributors insistently asked that the Santo Domingo meeting keep to the line of Medellin and Puebla.

This year, too, I saw the confusion caused by sects in Central America which is a chosen target for their great expansion. Their program, *Amanecer* (Dawning), not only of the sects properly so-called but also of other religious movements and even some mainline Christian confessions, promotes a very well financed and convincing proselytism. It is targeted at the world in general but in particular, at Latin America and the Philippines. The upset it causes is inevitable. But one keeps hoping in true ecumenism - the testament of Jesus- for another dawning that will be more clearly evangelical.

### Three Reference Points

1. The new context of domination, marginalization and death in Latin America, and throughout the Third World, in the confrontation of North/South;
2. The new awareness and experience of the Latin American Continent, arising from the liberation processes which we have lived through during the past four decades and

which call us to autonomy, to sharing and to an alternative lifestyle;

3. The new way of being and making Church - through the spirituality and theology of liberation, through basic ecclesial communities, through popular religiosity joined with socio-political commitment, through new attempts at inculturating the faith, through placing the Bible in the hands of the people.

### More Martyrs

Present, recent, known, they accompany us every day. During each new journey I make to Central America I encounter new martyrs whom I had embraced on earlier journeys. In the garden of UCA and in many lanes and pathways, the roses of Obdulio have been multiplied. The governments, the armies and the empire do not allow the truth about these martyrs to reach the public. It does not matter. We know it. We renew the paschal commitment: "No unspeakable special interest, no authoritarian pressure, no report submitted will separate us from their witness or bury it in oblivion."

### Religious Life

It is widespread in Central America and despite the situation in CLAR, it is responding in a serving, evangelical and new evangelizing way. Once again I was rejuvenated by contact with the flowering promise of vocations in Central America and with the persevering fidelity of so many men and women religious, witnesses of witnesses. I confessed to my companions in our Claretian Congregation in Panama, in Honduras and in Guatemala that because of them I felt more a Claretian religious.

### The Poor

The New Evangelization will only be an evangelization and only be new with the subversive newness of the beatitudes if it starts

from within the poor and with the poor. This option, which is essentially evangelical and historically so Latin American, cannot be diluted with other options as one among many others. This would be a betrayal of the Gospel, of the people and of the Church. I lament the fact the the message of John Paul II for Lent of 1991 went largely unperceived, for it was a message about the "attitude of total identification of the Lord Jesus Christ with the poor." The message spoke of the "chilling poverty" that is afflicting the world; of "fratricidal blindness"; of the urgency for "a concrete charity and solidarity".

### A New People

In one of our encounters we tried to formulate 7 attitudes of a new people by linking the new evangelization with a new spirituality:

- To contemplate on the march
- To decode reality
- To com-passionate with all suffering
- To share poverty
- To structure solidarity
- To organize struggles, victories, hope
- To announce, witness, and celebrate and to hope for the Kingdom

That beautiful black hope called Haiti, now emerging as a people, offered us a sure password: "Separated we are weak; together we are strong; all together we are invincible." From Panama, I sent President Aristide a book dedicated to "The Kairos in Central America". The *New Cultural Dawn* of Nicaragua, described the popular uprising of its neighbor in the Caribbean thus: "Haiti, from misery to hope, charging ahead into dignity."

### The Fifth Centenary

The "Continental Campaign of 500 Years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance" must be

lived by Christians of the new evangelization in the light of the gospel as a prophecy coming to us from the collective Suffering Servant, the "witnessing people of our America." To celebrate the Fifth Centenary festively, ignoring the truth of personal and institutional history and without the solidarity of conversion, would simply add another historically unforgivable sin to a certain "old" evangelization. It would mean joining the game of continuing, permanent, colonizing imperialism - yesterday, supposedly Christian, - today, modernly neo-liberal and capitalistically idolatrous or atheistic.

### Solidarity

Our international solidarity must be effective, efficacious and structural. This solidarity is the revolution the world is looking for, not just almsgiving or antiseptic compassion. In Honduras, poorer than ever this year under its neo-liberal government, I visited a settlement of those scourged by the flood. As we were leaving, after attempting to console those settlers, a woman reminded us: "You are going off and leaving us with the problem." She was as unanswerable as an angel of God.

In Panama with Teofilo Cabestrero, we completed a book, *En lucha por la paz* (Battling for Peace), on the circumstances connected with our *Great Causes*. It was all too up-to-date because of the Gulf War. Its index unfolds as follows:

- The peace to be desired does not now exist on the planet.
- There will be no peace on earth as long as the North/South imbalance lasts.
- When solidarity and justice topple the North/South wall, then peace will begin.
- The Churches for the gospel of peace and justice.
- With the poor of the earth toward world peace.

## **I was the Other**

When I got back to Brazil I sent a little message to my friends who were gathering in Spain for a third day of solidarity at Catalonia, "I was the other and you welcomed me." And I wrote to them, perhaps in rather harsh words:

"You have reached the conclusion that peace is the great historical task, the challenge, the calling, the realization of humanity, a gift of God, the total shalom. If you want peace, make war on war, make peace. You have come to the conviction that peace is either universal, for all the sons and daughters of God, for all peoples on earth, or there will be no peace."

"Your Europe - my Europe, too! - has just played the woeful role of a postmodern colony of the imperial United States. It, too, has just won the cynical war; it, too, has just lost the peace. It must turn in on itself now, cast out those coming from the other world, renege on its evangelical neighbor, impose an apartheid law of forgiveness. The allies of the holy alliance of lucre and of hegemony must be able to live on their own: without children, putting their old folks in a corner, ignoring the poor, cursing the people of the "Third World", consuming themselves by their consuming."

"Forgive me for the blood of these words. It is the blood of missions that shouts them out. I have reached the conviction - both pastoral and political - that the Third World -

my world too! - and the Third Church have the most urgent fraternal obligation to help the First World develop a "bad conscience" because of its selfish peace, its narcissistic, genocidal, and ultimately suicidal role."

"Your human sensibility, your faith as Christians and the hard-learned lesson of history have made you understand that the Kingdom of God, already here on earth, belongs only to the poor and to those who effectively join in solidarity with them. You have understood that the neighbor is the excommunicated Samaritan, North African, Latin American, Asian, 'the other.' You do not want a united Europe to turn into a ghetto-continent, into a capitalist bunker, into a UTI of contamination."

"On judgment day, when only love counts, the Rejected One now glorified, native son of a Roman colony, must be able to say to us, as He welcomes us for ever: "I was 'the other' and you sheltered me. Come, blessed of my Father, enter into the house of everybody!"

"I am not bidding you farewell. Let us not bid farewell to Central America. Let us not bid farewell to solidarity. For a long time now it has been time for us to take up these *GREAT CAUSES* which are the real life of humanity and the realization of the Kingdom."

Your brother and companion along the way, in the Poor of the Earth and in the Risen Christ.

+ Pedro Casaldàliga

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## **WOMEN'S CONCERNS : WOMEN BELIEVING**

Theological reflection group

December 30, 3.30 p.m. at SEDOS

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## SOLIDARITY OR CONFLICT

### Possibilities of dialogue between Catholic Social Thought and Liberation Theology

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Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer

As we approach the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the 100th birthday, so to speak of Catholic social thought, some reflections come to mind. Catholic social thought carries the official seal of the Church and proposes structured principles and teachings of permanent validity about Christian social action. In Latin America, it is less known at the grassroots level of the church. Here liberation theology has provided the inspiration for pastoral action in the social arena.

Because of differences in origin and purpose, the relationship between them has been strained. Some individuals even accuse liberation theology of not taking into account the specific teachings of Catholic social thought and of trying to propose an ethic apart or beyond the magisterium of the church. Others attempt to put forward the position that the only legitimate liberation theology is one which develops as a contextualized application of Catholic social thought.

The present article proposes to study the possibility for dialogue between these two ways of thinking and knowing, a dialogue that begins with two key concepts: *solidarity* and *conflict*. The process begins with reflection, examines the grounds for dialogue, and tries to demonstrate how Jesus Christ, Catholic social thought's paradigm and liberation theology's primordial content, shows us how to realize an integration between the

two concepts within a framework of dialogue.

#### **Solidarity: Goal and Definition of the Person**

Since the beginning of the Christian era the concept of solidarity has been of central importance to ethics and life. The parables and other gospel texts speak about justice, almsgiving and direct material assistance to the neighbor. Concrete expressions of solidarity are proposed by the Fathers of the church and ecclesiastical writers of church history as an unavoidable parameter for salvation or condemnation. Eternal judgment, as Matthew reveals in chapter 25, depends not so much on evil acts that are done, but on good acts not done - on the lack of solidarity.

It is not enough then to avoid physically attacking the neighbour. It is essential for the Christian to choose to be in solidarity with the neighbor by concrete actions. This is expressed by theologians as great as Clement of Rome, Ambrose, Chrsostum, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa. It was not necessary to wait for the Industrial Revolution and Marxism, or the promulgation of *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 so that the concept of solidarity could be expressed. In fact, it was always part of our tradition.

The centrality of solidarity in the life of a Christian comes from the most basic

convictions of faith. It comes from the fact that the individual is the image of God - the God of all holiness - and from the central, redemptive event of God, in the person of the Word, assuming humanity. God's intimate life and salvific action expresses God in solidarity with human beings. Women and men, created in God's image, are themselves called to be in solidarity as the only possibility for realizing themselves as human persons whose lives have meaning. To grow in solidarity is to live an ethic which recognizes the personal dignity of others as equal to oneself. To grow in solidarity is to commit oneself to others, particularly the poor and the enemy.

### Christian Social Thought and Solidarity

Christian social thought has during these almost 100 years repeated continually the theme of *the person in solidarity* as the core of its teaching. *Rerum Novarum* and later *Quadragesimo Anno* expressed this theme while acknowledging the difficulty of formulating a universal understanding within concrete and transitory situations.

This constant tension between the universal and the particular was clearly expressed by Pope Paul VI in 1971 in *Octogesima Adveniens*. He affirmed that "in the face of such widely varying situations, it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity." The question being raised then is of the difficulty of expressing solidarity in ever more complex situations.

The political consequences of solidarity have often been a problem for Catholic social thought. In his relatively recent and important encyclical on human work, *Laborem Exercens* 1981, Pope John Paul II expresses the concept of solidarity in terms of an ethic with a political dimension. He treats the exploitation of workers not as a problem of class, but as an ethical problem which gives

birth to solidarity among workers.

To approach the serious and urgent problems of injustice which devastate and victimize a large segment of humankind makes us realize that the concept of solidarity is, by itself, an insufficient response. To do justice asks us to accept the necessity of struggling for justice. Catholic social teaching has always been attentive to this necessity. But its way of confronting conflict in society is to propose an ethical solution which is more appropriate to a simpler time and a less complex society.

### Liberation Theology and Solidarity

Liberation theology officially appeared in Latin America at the end of the 1960s. It proposed a new way of doing theology. An unavoidable part of this method is the element of conflict as characteristic of the dynamism of human participation in social processes. Only by facing conflict, recognizing it honestly, confronting it with courage and lucidity, is it possible to speak and think about solidarity. This is the approach of liberation theology. This is the juncture for dialogue with Catholic social teaching. As Christians, we believe that it is not possible to deal with conflict without solidarity, because the seeds of solidarity are already present within conflict and within the process for overcoming it.

### Conflict : Key for Reading Reality

In *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII describes the causes which generate societal conflict. Forty years later, Pius XI, in *Quadragesimo Anno* confirmed the existence of conflict in his own time.

According to Catholic social teaching, the conflict which divides society, unlike the Marxist concept of class conflict, does not derive from private ownership of the means of production, but from the incorrect use of

the means of production connected to the lack of legitimate means to guarantee the right of workers. The form in which private property exists in liberal capitalism is seen as a generator of conflict. The condemnation of this form of inequality is found in Pope John Paul II's recent encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* which follows in the footsteps of *Populorum Progressio* by Pope Paul VI.

Liberation theology, on the other hand, considers conflict as a central element in human society. By doing so, it intends to find the origin of conflict not in Marxism, but in an historical moment antecedent to it. That is to say, the evidence of conflict as a constitutive element of economic, political and social relationships is identified by Christian Patristics and the Johanine and Augustinian traditions.

What is happening today is that the complexity of this state of conflict, in which each of us plays a part, is intensified when decisions are made in favor of self-interest. Liberation theology brings an original answer from church tradition to the understanding of the nature of conflict inherent in our social reality. The use of a socio-analytical approach reveals not only evidence of the existence of conflict, but also the mechanisms which generate it. It also reveals the fact that a simple conversion of heart as proposed by Catholic social teaching will not, by itself, end social conflict if there is not also an effective intervention into the mechanisms which generate oppression.

### **Catholic Social Thought and Liberation Theology: Possibility for Dialogue**

Dialogue is possible on condition that each takes into account the specific nature of the other and the distinct place which each occupies within the development of Catholic thought. Catholic social thought is linked to natural right and social philosophy, biblical elements and the tradition of the Church. Its

statements arise out of concrete historical commitments, and submit to the appreciation of principles rooted in human reason and an evangelical ecclesial tradition. Catholic social teaching upholds the validity of these principles, not the transitoriness and contextualization of specific situations.

Liberation theology is a theology, not a doctrine. It doesn't come with magisterial authority; it is a reflection by theologians within the Church. Since it is a global theology, liberation theology proposes itself, to the whole Church, as a new way of doing theology. The specific *episteme* is the whole faith tradition of the Church from a determined context of oppression and socio-political liberation. The context for reflection is Latin America, marked by injustice and oppression, where the distance between rich and poor grows day by day.

From this description it is evident that liberation theology cannot be considered only as a contextualized application of Catholic social teaching. Being part of the developing tradition of catholic theology, liberation theology claims for itself a theological status different from traditional Catholic social teaching.

Dialogue happens in the sense that liberation theology does not consider magisterial formulations as the point of departure of its methodology. The point of departure comes from the reality itself in dialogue with scripture. It is scripture which enlightens social reality, conflict and injustice and cries for liberation. Magisterial formulations, including those of Catholic social teaching must be accepted as part of church tradition. However, dialogue is not restricted to the repetition of the traditional social teaching of the church. A new critical and systematic interpretation makes truths revealed in the Bible and tradition more accessible by faith and by praxis in concrete human situations.

In some countries of the Third World and

concretely in Latin America at the Base Community level, liberation theology has practically assumed the place of traditional social teaching and provides the *ethos* which inspires and stimulates the pastoral action of the church in the social field. The term *liberation* has been incorporated into the vocabulary and life of the majority of ecclesial sectors as the motivating key and element for understanding Christian commitment in the transformation of history and society.

On the other hand, we can't forget that the concept of "integral development" as presented in the social encyclicals of Paul VI and John Paul II can offer to the "liberator ethos" an invitation to maintain a constant openness, in the process of socio-economical and political liberation, to specific Christian values, not always reducible to the economic or social justice levels.

### Jesus Christ : Living Solidarity in Conflict

The person of Jesus Christ is the *place par excellence* where these two approaches can find not only the point of departure for their identity, but also the real possibility for dialogue. It is because of and in the name of Jesus Christ, "who took upon himself the form of a servant. . . humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:5-11), proclaiming blessed the poor (Lk.6:1), declaring himself as being sent to liberate them (Lk.4:16-21), and finally identifying himself personally with them that both the ecclesial magisterium and Latin-American theologians elaborate their principles and share their reflections.

The Medellin document is very explicit when it says that "it is not simply a question of loving the poor as Jesus loved them, but of following Jesus' example who, being rich, made himself poor, lived in poverty, centralized his mission in the announcement of liberation to the poor and founded his

Church as a sign of this poverty among the people." The Puebla document ratifies and radicalizes this statement in the sense of bringing the bishops to call attention to the cry of the poor.

Gustavo Gutiérrez reminds us that liberation theology has the same point of departure:

*"In meeting human beings the encounter with the Lord happens, above all, with those whose human face has been disfigured by oppression, exploitation and alienation, who have neither appearance nor presence and are the remains of human life (Is 53:2-3). Salvation passes them by; they are the bearers of a sense of history and the inheritors of the Kingdom (Tg 2:5). On this basis, it is necessary to build a theology of the neighbor."*

Christ the Word of God guarantees the relationship of continuity between *this world* and the *new world* through the Incarnation. The eternal Word of God redeems and raises *this world* in such a way that it continues to move towards the *new heaven and the new earth*. The historical action of human beings perfects creation and contributes to the coming of the kingdom.

All Jesus' praxis, his way of analysing and intervening into reality, although it brings the seal of solidarity and the desire to establish justice, peace and reconciliation, is realized within conflict, which is the permanent seal of his life and death. Jesus assumes as his own the contradiction and the conflict of human history, learning in history to live before or in the presence of the poor as he has always lived before or in the presence of the Father. Even more deeply, the Son learns in history to live in the flesh of the poor and to suffer till the end the conflictive consequences of this learning: the praxis of impotence and humiliation, cruel destiny, persecution and death, without running

away, and without responding to violence. And the Father suffers the death of the Son while bearing the price of consenting to Jesus' Incarnation. The price the Father pays is the impotence of love, the violent murder of the Son without rescuing him magically. And only at the end of all these acts of fidelity is the enlightening Word of the Resurrection pronounced.

### Conclusion: Solidarity In Conflict

Christology provides the parameter and the paradigm for liberation theology and Catholic social thought. Liberation Theology is called to make - and effectively has made - its reflection from a social standpoint. The place of the theologian in liberation theology is not simply the office, the classroom or the library, but also the slums, the *mocambos*, the meetings of the ecclesial base communities, diocesan assemblies, popular movements, all those levels of meetings in a popular milieu where the poor express their cry, their pain and their struggle for liberation. From within this very concrete commitment, from within this belonging, the theologian is not just a spectator but a participant in a cruelly conflictive situation. The theologian thinks the faith of the church and translates it in a challenging way. From within this conflict, she/he begins to outline the shape of the true following of Jesus,

inseparable from the continuation of his cause and his project of true liberation.

On the other hand, Catholic social teaching proposes a universal ethic - based on solidarity which focuses on human growth as it relates to the growth and development of society. This leads to a recognition of the personal dignity of others, a dignity which the individual claims. It leads to the understanding that one is not a person in solidarity without a commitment to the life of every person, particularly those who are more deprived of life: the poor and the oppressed of all sorts. This commitment does not happen apart from the conflict which intersects all reality.

The reality of such conflict is reflected in the Papal encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* to *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and both instructions about liberation theology, *Liberatis Conscientia* and *Liberatis Nuntius*.

Finally, while the way of perceiving conflict and reflecting on it may differ, both Catholic social thought and liberation theology find and will find their place of dialogue in the person of Jesus Christ, whose Incarnation, life, death and Resurrection constitute the paradigm par excellence of the attempt of a praxis of solidarity inside the painful conflict state of history.

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### 5th CENTENARY : A NEW AGENDA

Speakers: Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer,  
Gustavo Gutiérrez

19-23 May 1991 at Villa Cavalletti

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## THE AFRICAN SYNOD: LAY CHRISTIANS

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Rodrigo Mejía, S.J.

### Introduction

If one compares the headings of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* of Vatican II with the *Lineamenta*, one realizes that, unlike that *Constitution*, the *Lineamenta* did not devote any special chapter or group of questions to lay Christians.

Lay Catholics constitute 99% of the members of the Catholic Church. They were the object of the Synod of Bishops (1987) resulting in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. The obvious question is why they are not present in the *Lineamenta* as an *Outline* for the preparation of the Synod on Africa?

This apparent lack of a special chapter devoted to the laity in the *Lineamenta* does not, however, mean that lay Catholics and their concerns are not taken into account. The first *Outline* of the Synod on Africa did take them into account. They are present throughout all the chapters as they "not only belong to the Church but, being the Church," they are concerned with all aspects of the Church's Mission.

### CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TEXT OF THE *LINEAMENTA* AND THE QUESTIONS

There is a clear contrast between the text and the questions as far as the treatment of lay Christians is concerned. In both there is a gap between theory and praxis. In the text the lay faithful are mentioned 28 times under various expressions; in the questionnaire they appear only 10 times. Nevertheless, the con-

trast is not just a quantitative one; there is also a contrast in the approach used when dealing with lay faithful and their concerns.

The text clearly affirms that the laity are called "to play an active, conscientious and responsible role in the Church's evangelizing mission". Furthermore the whole of paragraph 37 is devoted to the formation of the lay faithful, mainly as lay catechists. In paragraph 42 the co-responsibility of the laity is further acknowledged in the words: "it should constitute one of the principal tasks in the evangelizing mission of the Church in Africa". The same emphasis is repeated in paragraphs 84 and 85 concerning the duty and responsibility of the laity in the realms of development, economics, social and political life. In spite of these clear references in the text, there is a rather vague presentation of the co-responsibility of the laity and their concerns in the questionnaire. Some examples can help illustrate this contrast.

### Small Christian Communities

In paragraph 42 there is an explicit mention of Small Christian Communities as true expressions of ecclesial communion and centres of evangelization for lay people. Building them up is a pastoral priority for the AMECEA countries in particular and other African countries in general. In his recent Encyclical Letter on *The Mission of the Church*, Pope John Paul II stressed the importance of these communities as "a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a *civilization of love*". In the questionnaire,

however, these Small Christian Communities are just mentioned once along with other groups and movements.

### **Inculturation**

Paragraph 24 clearly states that Christ's *lay faithful* can and ought to fulfill the task of inculturation of the gospel in the life of society, the family and other fields, but in question 18, inculturation is presented as an exclusive project to be undertaken by pastors. Whether or not they explain what they are doing to the laity is left to each pastor's discretion.

### **Laity or Bishops**

The real targets of the questionnaire are the bishops. The laity are present more as subjects to be discussed rather than significant partners in dialogue. The questionnaire is clearly aimed at the Bishops' Conferences. This makes the participation of the laity very difficult, especially of those who are poor and less educated, even when the questions are translated into their mother tongues. The Preface states that "it is the questions and not the *Lineamenta* text that is the basis of all responses". This is further confirmed by the omission in the questionnaire of the most crucial issues concerning lay Catholics in Africa today.

## **MAIN OMISSIONS**

The *Lineamenta* is just an *Outline*, a tool to foster a common reflection. But some concerns, because of their human and ecclesial nature, cannot be omitted lest the agenda for the Synod on Africa appears to be just a general agenda valid for a Synod in any other part of the world. This is a Synod of the Bishops of all the world and not simply of African Bishops, still this Special Assembly is on Africa and should take into consideration the main concerns of local African churches.

In this spirit I raise the following major issues so that they are included in the working paper or the agenda for the Synod on Africa.

### **1. The Inculturation of Christian Marriage**

The most important sector of human life for lay Catholics is the family and the institution of marriage. Pope John Paul II acknowledged this: "The laity's duty to society primarily begins in marriage and in the family". Therefore, marriage should be the first area of inculturation for lay Christians. This is particularly true and urgent in Africa, because the present canonical form in which Catholic marriage is celebrated is quite alien and opposed to the traditional African conception of marriage. Bishop P. Dery of Tamale, Ghana exhorted the Synod of Bishops on the Family (1980):

"Most Catholics feel no need for a Church marriage. Customary marriage, in the minds of most Ghanaians, including Catholics, is the real marriage. The ceremony in the Church is seen not as a celebration of marriage but rather a condition for the reception of the sacraments: a rule of the clergy, a simple blessing, a foreign import."

His is not an isolated voice. The African bishops as a body asked for an inculturation of the canonical form of Christian marriage in Africa during that same Synod of Bishops on the Family. (AFER, Vol. 23, 1981, No. 1-2). The AMECEA Bishops in their message to Catholic families, said in 1986:

"On this matter we observe that African traditional marriage is a process which takes various stages before finalization. With this in mind, we recommend that each Episcopal conference in AMECEA undertakes a research into traditional customary marriage in order to determine how the Catholic Church should be involved."

Linked to the issue of marriage is the cultural phenomenon of *polygamy*. Though a Synod of Bishops is not expected to produce a new doctrine on Faith and Sacraments, some pastoral guidelines on this situation should be produced. This would help the process of evangelization in Africa much more than a prudent but sterile silence on the matter. Yet Christian marriage does not seem to pose any special problem for the *Lineamenta* and there is no question on it in the questionnaire. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the permanence and the future of the Catholic church in Africa will depend very much on the right inculturation of christian marriage to African values. Without this inculturation other forms of inculturation will seem like an alibi and a purely external folklore. The episode of the rejection of the Chinese rites could happen again in history with analogous consequences.

## 2. Lay Ministries

In the *Lineamenta* text we read: "In Africa, pastoral workers fall into the following categories: bishops, priests, permanent deacons, brothers, sisters and catechists" (No. 37). This statement implies that the lay faithful who are not catechists are not to be considered as pastoral workers in the Church in Africa. This is a rather restricted vision of the mission of the laity in the Church, contrasting very much with the openness of Pope John Paul II in his recent Encyclical Letter *On the Mission of the Church*:

"Besides catechists, mention must also be made of other ways of serving the Church and her mission; namely, other Church personnel: leaders of prayer, song and liturgy; leaders of basic ecclesial communities and Bible study groups; those in charge of charitable works; administrators of Church resources; leaders in the various forms of the apostolate; religion teachers in schools. All the members of the laity ought to devote a

part of their time to the Church, living their faith authentically."

To the above lay faithful we should add, following the guidelines provided by *Christifideles Laici*, the Lay Catholics participating in the Diocesan Pastoral Councils and Diocesan Synods (cf. No.25) and the members of the Parish Pastoral Councils (cf. No.27) who are the closest collaborators of the parish priest.

The ministries of Readers and Acolytes newly installed by Pope Paul VI in his *Motu Propri, Ministeria Quaedam* (1972) and fully integrated in the new Canon Law (can. 230) are not mentioned in the *Lineamenta*, nor is there any openness to new forms of lay ministries much as we find in Paul VI's *Ministeria Quaedam*.

## 3. Women and Youth

Pope John XXIII saw women's greater consciousness of their dignity and their participation in public life as signs of our times. The Bishops gathered for the Synod on the Laity affirmed the urgency to promote and defend the personal dignity of women and their equality with men (Prop. 47 and 47). Pope John Paul II in *Christifideles Laici* quoting Vatican II, affirmed:

"Since in our days women are taking an increasingly active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church's apostolate" (Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People).

If this attention to the dignity and active role of women in the Church is important everywhere in the world it is indeed of special urgency in the African continent where the condition of social inferiority of women is well known and does not need to be analysed here. On the other hand their faithful

presence in liturgical celebrations, in movements and small Christian communities is far superior to that of men. All the same they are the outstanding absentees in the *Lineamenta* document; they are mentioned just once together with millions of men, children and the aged (No. 83).

Their place in the Church should be considered under the headings of *Justice and Peace* and *Proclamation of the Good News of Salvation*.

Youth constitute more than 60% of the entire African population. They also require particular pastoral treatment since their problems constitute a serious challenge to evangelization. They are mentioned together with the adults as subjects of Catechesis (No.52) and in questions 74 and 75 as targets of mass media. It is not difficult to imagine their disappointment when they read the *Lineamenta*. The Church in Africa can rightly be called a "young Church", not so much because of its historical age, but because it is a Church made up of a majority of young people. How is the Catholic Church going to respond to the challenges of drugs, sex abuse, lack of employment, political manipulation and AIDS which are threatening the youth in a particular way? In the present *Outline*, nothing leads us to think that the Synod on Africa will make a "preferential option for the youth" as the Latin American Bishops did in their *Third General Assembly in Puebla* (1979).

#### 4. Refugees and the Poor

Last but not least, among the human problems absent in the *Lineamenta* is the distressful reality of political refugees. The problem is acknowledged once in the text of the *Lineamenta*: "What can be said concerning the serious problem of refugees? Africa with its five million (50% of the world total) holds the record" (No. 83). It is unfortunate that this question is not articulated in the

questionnaire where it really belongs. It would have enriched, together with the issue of women and youth, the section of *Justice and Peace*, which is the shortest and poorest section of the questionnaire.

The social concern of the Church today is expressed in terms of an integral liberation of personal and structural sin and a preferential love for the poor:

Today furthermore, given the world wide dimension which the social question has assumed, this love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. It is impossible not to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the "rich man" who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate. (John Paul II: *Social Concern of the Church*, No. 42).

Though some of the questions under the heading of *Justice and Peace* are connected with the "structures of sin", producing poverty in Africa, the main economic issues like unfair distribution of land, insufficient salaries, exploitation by multinational corporations are not mentioned.

One of the main concerns of the Bishops of Kenya in their Pastoral Letter *On the Present Situation in our Country* (20 June 1990) was precisely:

"the widening gap between the rich and the poor" resulting in two opposed economic tribes, namely, the tribe of the rich who have amassed their fortune by dubious means, and the tribe of the poor. While the former do not constitute more than a quarter of the population, the latter are the majority of our people. Most of them live in slums or as squatters in semi-desert areas, or surviving

as permanent casual workers" (No.12).

The situation of Kenya is far from being an exception in Africa. Even if the Synod and the Church are not able to provide the solution to this drama of the poor, a clear stance inspired by a preferential love for them, an invitation to an examination of conscience on the lifestyle and financial accountancy of all the members of the Church and their commitment to the cause of the poor should not be omitted in the agenda of the Synod on Africa.

### CONCLUSION

It might appear as though our analysis of the *Lineamenta* from the point of the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world is quite negative. The intention, however, is a very positive one, namely, to contribute to the composition of a relevant working paper for the Synod on Africa. The *Lineamenta* is, after all, just "a tool in this period of prayer and discussion on the Synod in view of the Special Assembly" (Preface, p. viii). It is expected that many observations and suggestions may come from every local church in Africa. "A rich response will assure that the Synod Fathers gathered in Special Assembly will have the material needed for a more in-depth treatment of a topic of great importance for the Church in Africa" (*Ibidem*).

Since the questions and not the *Lineamenta* text should be the basis of all contributions, we want to conclude this reflection by suggesting, in a positive way, how the laity could be integrated into the questionnaire. Some hints have already been provided, but here we want to provide some criteria that could help in this integration.

A first criterion concerns the way of approaching lay people in the Church. Since they are the Church, together with their pastors, instead of having a special chapter on them, they should be present in all the five chapters of the questionnaire and this at two different levels, actively and passively: actively, as evangelizers in the Church, especially in Africa; passively, by being helped by the Church in their needs and expectations. In keeping this double perspective, two extremes can be avoided, namely, to treat them as just a subject matter of concern for the pastors or to invite them to involve themselves in the mission of evangelization while ignoring their concrete problems.

A second criterion is, not to consider the lay faithful only globally, as if they were a homogeneous social group. Within the category of the lay faithful there are special categories that deserve particular pastoral attention: women, youth, refugees and the vast crowd of the poor. A global approach to the laity would remain very much abstract and general.

By and large, it is our impression that the laity should be present as agents of evangelization mainly under the heading of Proclamation of the Good News, while the headings of *justice and peace* and *inculturation* will be more appropriate to deal with their problems and expectations.

The attention to *persons* more than to projects and institutions is a distinctive character of African cultures. In this respect the questionnaire, as it is, appears to be more *for* Africa than *made in* Africa. It is our hope that the working paper for the Synod of Bishops, by directing more attention to the different categories of the laity will offer a more human, more African and more ecclesial agenda.



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## mission moments

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### THE CYCLONE AND TIDAL WAVE

(Bangladesh)

The cyclone and tidal wave that smashed through the Bay of Bengal several months ago transpired 160 miles south of my Netrakona home. Thus I joined a relief team formed by Caritas Bangladesh to assist the people of Sandwip.

Sandwip is an island, 75 square miles in area, that lies barely above sea level. High tides menace the island, depending on the strength of the wind. Nevertheless, 300,000 persons, farmers and fisherfolk mostly, Muslims and Hindus, all brave the dangerous environment and trust in the Merciful One to save them from harm.

Local people claim 36 cyclones have slammed across the island during the past 31 years. This year the cyclone's velocity was higher than ever: 145 miles per hour. Thus, water at high tide during the terrible night of April 29-30 was whipped up into waves that reached 20 feet in height. Between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. people clung to tree tops or, if lucky, found safety atop buildings or in concrete storm shelters. Some parents tied their children high up on the trunks of coconut trees only to discover afterwards they had failed to tie them high enough. Stories

abound that make me feel I have not yet really been tested.

From this single island 6,200 deaths were accounted for. Yet, during 21 days on Sandwip I saw no grieving among the stunned survivors.

Sanitation and hygiene had been rendered abysmal by the cyclone and tidal surge. As predicted, a cholera epidemic broke out. More than 1700 new cases of diarrhoea were being reported daily. The relief team's health contingent, Sister Judy Walter and myself, decided that the best way to help would be to offer intravenous cholera fluid to doctors in 18 health centers throughout the island. Interaction with Bengali health personnel who were wearing themselves down for their people edified us. We were grateful to find bicycles for rent available locally without which our coverage of the entire island would have been impossible.

Gigantic surges of the agitated sea obliterated 11.5 miles of embankment that had been built painstakingly, by hand labor, to repel just such an invasion. Rebuilding and repairing 40 miles of embankment is the islanders' most pressing current task.

A sympathetic person might ask; Why don't the people of Sandwip abandon that perilous place? The answer: Please do suggest another spot to them. People do not stay on Sandwip because they welcome the challenge. There

simply is no more unoccupied space in Bangladesh.

Ref: Extract from a letter received from Bob Cahill M.M., P.O. Box 2399; Dhaka, 1000 Bangladesh.

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### LIFE AFTER THE BOMB

(South Africa)

On 28 April 1990, just days before the African National Congress and the De Klerk government met for the first round of 'talks about talks' a letter bomb exploded in the hands of Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest based in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare.

Miraculously, Fr. Lapsley, an ANC member, survived the blast. But he lost both hands and an eye and his eardrums were shattered. He feels no bitterness at the attack, however. His mental and physical recovery, he told CIIR, is a victory for the forces of life over the destructiveness of apartheid.

'It was miraculous to survive physically. But perhaps the deeper miracle was to be unscarred by hatred, bitterness or self-pity,' says Lapsley, whose recovery amazed his doctors, for despite the physical loss, the bomb attack has been a positive, life-giving experience.

'We were able to make the bombing redemptive, to bring

life out of something fundamentally evil, to make the bomb a mobilising bomb. There were people in the international community who had not been totally convinced that apartheid was evil. They became convinced because of what happened to me.

'My ministry is heightened, not diminished,' he adds. 'I emphasise what I have lost, for which I grieve, but also what I still have and what I have gained. I have gained in immeasurable ways through what has happened.'

He sees his personal injuries as part of the broader damage inflicted by apartheid on the whole region. 'To be a priest who doesn't have hands, who is physically disabled, is a sign of Southern Africa, where apartheid has broken, disabled and scarred peoples both black and white.'

His recovery, meanwhile, is 'part of the healing process that we all, all the peoples of Southern Africa, need to undergo on the road to greater wholeness.'

Ref: CIIR News, September 1991

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### THREATS TO SUPPORTERS OF ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

(Philippines)

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Fr. Nery Lito Satur, aged 30, was a parish priest of Barangay Guinoyoran, a town of Valencia, Diocese of Malaybalay in Mindanao. He was killed on October 14, 1991 by three men identified as an army soldier and two others who have criminal

records, members of a mountain cultist group, engaged in illegal logging in the area. The incident took place when Fr. Satur was on his way back from celebrating mass at Sitio Tambulan, Barangay Guinoyoran. His companion, Jacqueline Lunzaga, a university student, was also injured in the right leg.

According to Lunzaga, Fr. Satur's motorcycle was fired upon and overturned due to the first shotgun blast. Although Fr. Satur's stomach was severely wounded, one of the masked gunmen hit his head repeatedly with the butt of a shotgun until the handle broke. They killed him with two more shotgun blasts and took from him P500 (US\$19) cash, a handheld radio and his mass kit. Both the governor of the province and the police believe that illegal loggers were behind the attack on Fr. Satur.

Nuns, priests and church workers, who are in the forefront in the fight against illegal loggers in Mindanao, have been harassed, threatened and even killed by armed men suspected of being hired by logging concessionaries. Among those killed were Fr. Mario Estorba, SVD, a parish priest in Agusan del Sur who was gunned down on July 1, 1988. He was active in the anti-illegal logging campaign at the time he was murdered. His case remains unsolved.

In 1987, another priest, Fr. Patrick Kelly in Bukidnon, was arrested by the military after he led a human barricade to stop the passage of logging trucks. However, he and the residents succeeded in preventing the logging companies from operating

in their town. In another case, Fr. Bernando Amoroso, a parish priest of Malabag, Davao city, also received death threats last July after he spearheaded a campaign to stop a logging firm from operating in his parish.

Ref: HOT LINE ASIA, Novembr 7, 1991.

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### WOMEN PREPARING FOR THE SYNOD

(Tanzania)

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WAWATA unites all Catholic Women in Tanzania for the promotion of their contribution towards development in the society. Through its programmes and projects, WAWATA enables women to meet the challenges of their world, in which their contribution is essential.

WAWATA makes its contribution in the various development activities from the grassroots, parish, diocesan and national levels. These activities include spiritual formation in small Christian communities, family life Christian education, health and nutrition, socio-economic programmes and projects geared to answer the needs of women, leadership training courses, vocational training for girls, income generating activities, answering the needs of society and environmental programmes and projects.

The Catholic Women of Tanzania look forward to the African Synod with hope and expectation. We feel that our contribution towards the preparation for

the African Synod will help the African Church to respond to the needs of the African women in the Church. The Church has called all the people of God to contribute towards the preparation of the African Synod, an important way being through answering the *Lineamenta*.

We have taken this challenge very seriously and organized workshops in five different

centres in our country. These centres are Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Songea, Mwanza and Tabora. The workshops took place in the months of June and July.

At the end of the workshops we came up with our reflections on the *Lineamenta*. We are now organising this work into one document, which we shall forward for reflection to the

Catholic Bishops of Tanzania, as our contribution to the African Synod.

Ref. New People, November 1991. Wanawake Wakatoliki Tanzania (WAWATA) is a Catholic Women's Organization which was established in 1972. It is affiliated to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations. □

**"In Africa,  
we think  
that the root of all evils  
is the cultural problem".  
says Fr. Mveng.**

Jesuit priest Engelbert Mveng is a Cameroonian, one of the most profound African theologians. He is a man of vast learning, a poet, a university professor, a renowned artist and the founder of a research centre for the liturgy.

He has clear ideas about the role African theologians are called upon to play in Africa today.

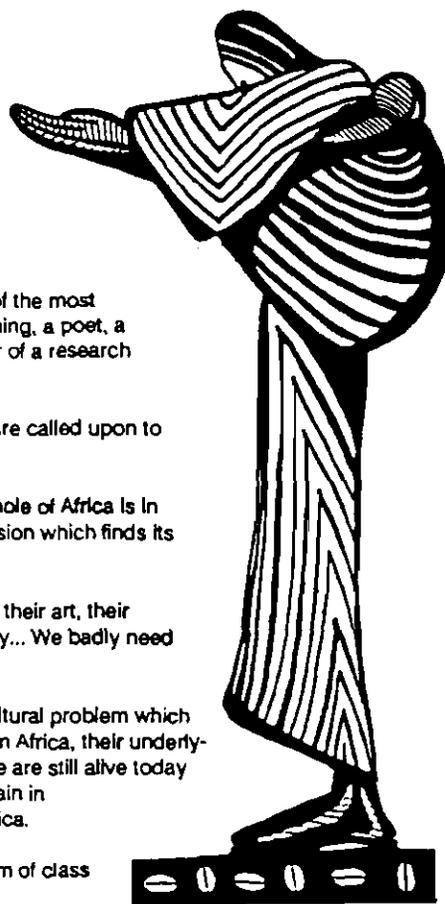
Father Mveng argues that the social situation in the whole of Africa is in need of liberation... but liberation from cultural oppression which finds its roots in racism.

"Many a people have lost their language, their history, their art, their culture... they have lost their very soul, their personality... We badly need to regain them. And this is liberation!" he says.

He holds that the root of all our evils in Africa is the cultural problem which originated as a result of the arrival of colonial powers in Africa, their underlying and persistent racist attitudes and concepts. These are still alive today because of the economical and financial ties that remain in place with the same powers that came to colonise Africa.

"South Africa's racism" he points out "is not a problem of class struggle, but of understanding the human person."

"What needs to be changed in order to bring about a more just situation (in Africa) is the present concept which emvisions one human category as superior to another" he says.



Drawing by Fr. Mveng

## COMING EVENTS IN SEDOS

### **HAITI GROUP - UP-DATE**

December 9, 3.30 p.m. at SEDOS

### **SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

December 11, 9.30 - 17.30

at Divine Word College, Via dei Verbiti, 1

Morning: Mission Europe

Afternoon: Annual General meeting

Eucharist

### **WOMEN'S CONCERNS : WOMEN BELIEVING**

Theological reflection group

December 30, 3.30 p.m. at SEDOS

### **5th CENTENARY : A NEW AGENDA**

Speakers: Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer,  
Gustavo Gutiérrez

19-23 May 1991 at Villa Cavalletti