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IN THIS ISSUE

Mgr. Pires relates that shortly after his ordination as a bishop he was introduced to a well known and highly respected member of the Catholic Community as "the first Black bishop in Brazil". After a few moments embarrassed hesitation came the comment "Yes - of course - he is now no longer Black!" We include an extract from the first section of his address and the full text of the second section as part of the process of conscientisation for the 5th Centenary celebrations.

Our SEDOS seminar on November 7th will deal with the implications for mission of the recent encyclical letter CENTESIMUS ANNUS on the hundredth anniversary of RERUM NOVARUM. Here James Hug, SJ. comments on the implications of the letter for the "First World".

Discussion about dialogue with other religions is relatively easy. Here is an account of an actual effort at dialogue between Christians and

Buddhists. Entitled AN EARLY JOURNEY we include it as an encouragement and a sign of hope to all those in mission who grapple with the difficulty of getting started.

Last week's Herald Tribune reported a surprising deterioration in the ozone layer, the greatest apparently in the last 13 years. We live in the shelter of each other whether we like it or not. Evelyn Jegen, SND, reminds us again of the need to respect our common dwelling place. It is the only one we have.

We recommend A TIME OF TRANSITION AND CHANGE to all our readers. Archbishop Hunthausen's farewell to his people is a moving tribute to this man's sensitivity to his pastoral responsibility in response to the challenge of change.

There are mission moments, some important items of news and details of coming events in SEDOS.

NEWS

DECEMBER 1991 SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MISSION EUROPE will be the topic of the seminar section of our Annual Assembly in December 1991. This is a change from the advertised topic. The Synod of European Bishops will be in session at the time of our Assembly. A SEDOS group is reflecting on the challenge of mission particularly in Eastern Europe. The Cavalletti SEDOS Seminar last May reflected on Prophetic Mission with particular reference to North America. We considered it appropriate, for these

reasons, to retain the topic of Mission Europe for the Assembly Seminar.

Relations with the Orthodox Churches will be a significant part of the seminar.

FAX

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THE BLACK POPULATION IN BRAZIL

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Bishop José Maria Pires

(The Archbishop of Paraíba, Brazil spoke on this theme at the Symposium FIVE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE CONQUEST OF AMERICA, held at Florence, Italy in February 1989. We include part of his address as many of the issues raised by the Archbishop continue to surface with urgency in the preparations for the anniversary in 1992. The Archbishop notes in the first part of his address that the Latin American Bishops at their Puebla meeting admitted that the black people who came to Latin America from Africa as slaves were never evangelized. He then looks back to what slavery meant for those uprooted people, how it created the prejudice about Black inferiority and how the system of slavery was legalized and legitimated. He concludes the first part of his address with some pertinent examples of this legitimation.)

Apparent Mitigations

Apparent later mitigations of slavery were motivated by economic interests more than by humanitarian ones. The law of the Free Womb for example, was passed only in 1871, when it was clearly advantageous for a master to declare that the child of a slave was free. The master... maintained the right to keep "the rascal" working for him, until the age of majority in compensation for the costs incurred in raising the child. And since the newborn was not legally a slave anymore, the master had no obligations towards him, not even that of letting the mother take care of the child. The law of the Free Womb inaugurated in Brazil the sad institution of the abandoned minor.

The Law of the Sexagenarians was established in 1885 when a 60 year-old slave was more of an obstacle than a production factor. To offer him freedom was both nice and economically advantageous.

Finally the much praised Golden Law which immortalized Princess

Isabel came about at a moment in which it was more advantageous for the system to have salaried dependents than to maintain slavery. The law was "Golden" for the masters, not for the slaves. The slaves were declared free, but they received no compensation for their time of service, no right to a roof or to a piece of land to exploit. They were without any right. The majority of them had no choice but to remain at the service of their old masters; or to beg; or to become outlaws.

To complete this series of humiliations imposed on the Black people, the Brazilian government, shortly after abolition, forbade entry in Brazil to "...indigenous people from Asia and Africa" (Decree of 28 June 1890). At the same time, the harbours were opening up to European immigrants. The new immigrants received from the government land and other benefits which had been denied to the Black's who were coming out of slavery. This official marginality of the Black people lasted until the twentieth century. A decree-law, (No. 7.967 of 1946!) declares that "immigrants will be

admitted in accordance to the need to defend and develop in Brazil the composition of its European ascendancy".

THE SECOND PART OF
THE ADDRESS FOLLOWS

THE BLACK RACE, MOULDER OF
"BRAZILIANESS"

I felt it necessary to make this excursion into the past before dealing directly with the theme at hand: the problem of the Black population one hundred years after the abolition of slavery in Brazil. One cannot understand the Black race in Brazil today, following the abolition of slavery without following the whole course of the struggles, the pain and humiliations of the past centuries. This historical vision needs to be completed by a reflection on the participation of the Black people in the moulding of "Brazilian-ness".

The Black people have left a heritage which is much higher than the baroque monuments which contain much sweat and blood of the Black people. They have given us works of art such as the Prophets of the Aleijadinho. They have given us the samba which fills the feasts with life, music and colours, and the *gingado* which makes the body participate in the joy of the heart. The Black woman has moulded the Brazilian identity. As *mae-preta*, nursing the little white child on her generous breast, rocking it to the sound of African lullabies, opening its eyes to make it discover nature in a vision backed with mysticism the *mae-preta* has transmitted to the white child her vision of God, of life, of the world, of society. Even in their way of showing affection, the Brazilians have drifted away from the Portuguese European, model to come close to the style of the African cultures.

Only the official Church insisted and managed to remain closed to the African culture thus creating a void between itself and the reality surrounding it. By refusing the expression of religiosity of Black people it incurred the *de facto* exclusion of these people. There were enormous difficulties in the way of their becoming a religious or being admitted to priesthood. These difficulties have not yet been completely overcome. That is the reason why the Black person who helped to build the nation has not been able to help build the Church which we are.

DIALOGUE OF THE CHURCH WITH
BLACK CULTURE

Is it possible for the Church of Brazil today to receive the rich contribution of the religious culture of Africa? There are some signs of hope. Since the end of the seventies it has organized or promoted meetings of reflection for agents of the black pastoral. The Campaign on Brotherhood devoted to the problem of Black people in Brazil represented in my opinion, the most eloquent testimony to sensitivity for the cause of the Black people today.

What needs to be established now, is whether the Church recognizes us simply as poor and marginal and thus feels compassion for us, or if it is ready to admit that the Black people have cultural riches to share with it. One needs to see whether the Church is committed only to announcing the good news of liberation to the Black people, or if it believes that through this effort, it too becomes evangelized by the Black people who possess religious values to share with the Church. The answer requires a rereading of the past and a critical analysis of the present, starting from the oppressed, and not from the point of view of the oppressor, as has always been the case.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEGRITUDE

Black culture has given Brazil two characteristic signs both of which are effective for evangelization. These are the "quilombo" and the "terreiro".

The *Quilombo*

The *quilombo* is a proof that the Black people never gave up fighting for their liberation and, in general, in a communitarian manner. The *quilombo* are not an isolated phenomenon, limited to a given time or geographic space; they are to be found dispersed all over Brazil throughout the whole period of slavery. They arise out of the immediate need to flee from slavery, but very soon become centers of communal life, in which social organization and division of labour is more advanced than with the Portuguese. When the invader destroyed a *quilombo*, fugitives from diverse plantations and their artisan products were recovered. Today's *boiassfrias* (casual labourers) and especially grassroots church communities can learn a lot from these *quilombos*.

The *quilombos* have written an heroic page in our history. They would have given a different physiognomy to Brazilian society if the forces of repression had not crushed them without pity. They are a challenge to the popular Christian communities and the much discussed popular Church today for they were not only communities for celebration. They assumed also and decisively the perspective of working communities, creating experiences of non-capitalistic working relations. They affected the social and party-political fields. They have something to teach to popular movements and to this Church which has taken a "preferential evangelical option for the poor". They deserve to be studied more thoroughly.

The *Terreiro*

The *terreiro* is the second large monument to Black culture in Brazil. This sacred place, meeting point of sky and earth, is usually made of something from mother Africa. One enters barefoot and assists at the arrival of the *Orixas* which take possession of their "sons and daughters" in an experience of deep communion between heaven and earth. This communion continues with a sacred banquet which takes place after parting from the *Orixas* and in which the devout receive the food which had been served to the teachers and to the spiritual guides. The service which takes place in the *terreiro* is filled with symbols which find a correspondence in biblical culture; symbols which, if they were accepted, could become values and teachings understanding in revelation and ecclesiastical tradition.

REACTION OF THE CHURCH

How did the Catholic Church in Brazil react to the religious culture of the Black people, and how is it reacting now? One can discern three periods.

From 1530 to 1950

This covers the whole time span of slavery and the first generations after its official abolition in Brazil. The behaviour of the Church in this long period was one of complete contempt for and condemnation of the cultural expressions of the Black people. Even the *quilombos* were condemned as refuges for disobedient slaves who had escaped from due submission to their legitimate masters. All religious assistance is therefore negated to them because 'they are living in mortal sin'.

From 1950 to 1968

The Church passes from contempt

and condemnation to a violent fight against all expressions of the religion of the *Orixas*, the pejorative name coined for Afro-Brazilian cults. The reason for this change of attitude is to be found in the fact that Black religious culture had started to expand. The urban population was growing while the rural one diminishes. In the periphery of the cities the *terreiros* appear and multiply. Gradually, they organize in "Federations" and in certain states manage to obtain legal recognition. The Church feels thus threatened at its popular roots, and decides to attack vigorously without however obtaining the desired effect: the *terreiros* keep on growing.

From 1968 Onwards

The first signs appear that the Catholic Church is willing to start a dialogue with African religious culture. Vatican II refers with sympathy to the various non-Christian religious cultures and recognizes that they also possess evangelical values: "All that is good and true and can be found within them, is seen by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel and as given by Him who enlightens all people, so that they may finally have life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 16).

In the decree *Ad Gentes*, Christians are encouraged to become deeply immersed in the values of society in order to give a testimony to Christ: "They must realize that they are members of the human group among which they live... they must learn to know well their national and religious traditions; they must discover with joy the seeds of the Word which are hidden in them" (*Ad Gentes*, 11).

The Episcopal Conference of Medellin completed this opening of Vatican II by confronting us with the reality of poverty and injustice in which people of such cultural and religious

richness, were living.

Puebla confessed the great sin of omission which the Latin American Church had committed towards the Black people. The slogan: "I have heard the cry of this people", which was chosen for the Brotherhood Campaign of 1988, creates a biblical link between the slavery of the Hebrew people in Egypt, and that of the Black people in Brazil.

PREMISES FOR A RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

What would be the "seeds of the Word" present in the African religious culture? In what way is the religiosity of the Black people an "evangelical preparation"?

Religious dialogue will only be possible if there is something in common between the two parts; if both parts will have something to give and something to receive; if both are willing to talk and listen. In the past we understood evangelization as a one-way activity: the Catholic Church had a lot to teach, but nothing to learn. One could not think that the religious culture of the Black slaves contained any value. Black persons were to listen in silence, give up their "superstitions" and convert.

All cultures are subject to ambiguity, limits and errors. There exist counter-values which derive from the heritage of ancestors or which have been introduced through contact with other cultures. But the Church would have been the expression of a marvelous evangelization effort if, at contact with the Black population deported from Africa as slaves, it had defended their dignity; if it had proposed the Gospel to them in its authentic simplicity; if it had not embedded the gospel in European culture as if that represented the only form of incarnation of the Word

of God.

It is clear to me that the African religious culture was better adapted than the Portuguese (European) one to transmit the evangelical message to the Black population of Brazil. And I say even more: the Black religious culture has more possibilities today to evangelize the Brazilian people than the official religious culture of the Latin Catholic Church. And I dare assert that either the Catholic Church accepts the dialogue which the Black people are offering, or it will continue to lose the humble classes which will feel more welcome in the *Candombles* and the Assemblies of God.

THE SEEDS OF THE WORD

Monotheism

The Black people who arrived from Africa were not polytheistic. They believed in one supreme Being, creator of everything. The names were different: Olorum for the Nago-Yoruba, Nzambi (He who says and does) or Kalunga (He who gathers) or Pamba or Maunda or Mungu in the Bantu cultures. God is always the inaccessible. The names are generic and express attributes of God rather than his essence which is what no one knows. In the Bantu conception, if someone knew the real name of God they would have power over God, they could "pronounce" God's name and arrive at knowledge of God's inner being.

Along with Pope Paul VI, we must confess that "the idea of God as the first and ultimate cause of all things is the most important common element in the spiritual life of the African tradition. This concept, perceived more than analyzed, experienced rather than thought, is expressed in many varied ways from culture to culture. In reality, the presence of God penetrates African life as supe-

rior being, personal and mysterious" (*Africae Terrarum*, 8).

The Orixas

The *Orixas* are not gods, but it is through them that *Olorum*, the unreachable, gets in contact with people, and we enter in communion with him. The *Orixas* have attributions and powers in the various parts of creation. Their communication with people does not manifest itself in doing them favours, but in transmitting the vital dynamics that they possess. They communicate these at the moment in which they become present in the *terreiro* and reveal themselves in the people who are consecrated to them usually the "daughters-of-the-saint". They are not identical with the saints of our Church.

The *Orixas* are not invoked: They come and reveal themselves in the "horse", that is in the person who receives them. At the end, they are bid good-bye and return to their home in Africa. The relationship between the devout - the "sons" - and the *Orixa* is deeper and more intimate than that of Christians with their saints: it is a family relationship. The Holy Trinity, which is a mystery of communion with God and of God with mankind, would have helped the Black people a lot to come closer to Christ as they do to the main *Orixa*.

The Ancestors

Here we find the strongest resemblance to the saints of the Church. The religion of the *Orixas* has a real cult of the ancestors, similar to that which popular Catholicism shows for the saints, the dead and the souls in purgatory. The ancestors continue to guide the families. Although they are invisible they are still alive and remain among their families with which they communicate essentially through dreams. The cult of the

ancestors is a valid instrument of dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Black people. This cult certainly has a much deeper biblical content than devotion to the souls in purgatory. God said: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Mat. 22,32)

Magic and *Curandeirismo*

Even though these words have taken on a pejorative meaning for Christians, they represent significant elements of African religious culture. Magicians and *curandeiros* are people who can attract beneficial fluids on people and cast away baleful spirits. The *pai-de-santo* is a counselor who inspires trust. To help those who seek him, he performs rituals, uses herbs, roots and infusions. To protect one from possible enemies, he casts *despachos* (spells) and prepares *feiticos* which will defend the "believer" and send away or destroy the opponent. We could make the link here with the role of counseling which we, catholic priests, should practice. Our very rich ritual of benedictions, our prayers and exorcisms could help our brothers and sisters of the Black race to feel Christian, while remaining sons and daughters of mother Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

What would have happened in Brazil, if the Gospel had been presented in respect of these cultural values? Maybe we would not have a clergy made up of very erudite people with diplomas in philosophy and theology. But we would have thousands of "fathers-of-the-saint", and of "mothers-of-the-saint", who would be able to preserve the real

faith, within the people at the head of millions of *terreiros*, which are the real centers of brother/sisterhood

There was little hope that this could happen given the rigidity of the structures which the Roman world imposed on the Church since the IV Century. But today we can dream of the possibility of wider dialogue in this direction. It is not a case of syncretism nor is it a question of introducing Afro-Brazilian rites in the Catholic celebrations. It is much more. A rite is a symbolic and meaningful language. We must arrive at the meaning, the cosmic vision, the human values with which the African religious culture is imbued. This does not contradict the message of Revelation or the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church. The truths of faith remain untouchable. The Church would simply admit that these truths would be dressed in non-European clothings when communicating with the popular classes. All this would imply acceptance of values such as the cult of the ancestors, magic and *curandeirismo*, as explained above, and above all a major presence of women in the liturgy.

We are reminded again of Pope Paul VI's words in *Africae Terrarum* mentioned above with which we conclude: "The Church considers with high respect the moral and religious values of African tradition, not only for their meaning, but also because one can discern in them the providential basis through which it can transmit the evangelical message and begin the construction of the new society".

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CENTESIMUS ANNUS

DRAMATIC CALL FOR EPOCHAL CHANGE

James E. Hug, SJ

(Rev. James Hug, S.J. is Executive Director of the Center of Concern which is based in Washington, D.C. The Center engages in social analysis, theological reflection, policy advocacy and public education on the issues of peace, justice and ecology.)

Centesimus Annus provides a devastating critique of the U.S. and other First World industrial democracies and a ringing challenge to radical global change.

This is a somewhat surprising discovery since the first wave of public response has heralded the encyclical as an affirmation of Western market economies. After all, Pope John Paul II strongly affirms human dignity and freedom, private property, democratic participation and markets.

A more rigorous reading, however, must attend to his criticisms of the deficiencies of market capitalism. They reveal a glaring gap between the ideals the encyclical sketches and current Western political/economic realities. Indeed, the Pope explicitly warns:

"Western countries, in turn, run the risk of seeing this collapse (of Eastern European socialism) as a one-sided victory of their own economic system, and thereby failing to make necessary corrections in that system." [#56]

Centesimus Annus, then, cannot in justice be interpreted as a confirmation of any actually existing economy.

It is a reflection on principles of Christian social thought that demand a major transformation of the contemporary global economic and political order.

Let us look more closely at the fundamental challenging message of the encyclical, beginning with the theme of private property.

Traditional Catholic Principles

Centesimus Annus reaffirms the traditional Catholic principles concerning private property: it is a universal right, but one that is not absolute. It is limited by the fact that God gave the goods of the earth to all peoples. The Pope insists that there must be social control over private property precisely so that the rights of all may be protected. [19]

The right to private property includes the right to the basic needs which guarantee personal and family autonomy. [30] These needs include such things as: food, shelter, healthcare, rest, education and job training to enable participation in the modern economy, and the ability of a family to set something aside in saving. [31-2, 47]

A system not providing these basics - through adequate wages or social programmes of some kind - suppresses freedom as surely as the "Real Socialist" regimes of Eastern Europe and can expect the same results: alienation, erosion of individual dignity, disorganization and decline of community, decrease in political participation. [25, 42] The rights indicated are fundamental human rights which belong to people on the basis of their dignity as persons, children of God, not on the basis of their work. They must not be subjected to market forces.

...there are many human needs which find no place on the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied, and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish. [34]

It is the role of the State to see that society provides for those needs for all people - or to provide for them itself. [15,40] This responsibility falls on each of us not only for our neighbours or the citizens of our nation but for every other human person on the face of the earth - especially the weakest. [51]

The Gap between Wealthy and Poor

In reality, the gap between wealthy and poor individuals and nations has grown dramatically over the last decade. The massive poverty and debt burdens of individuals and nations has achieved the suppression of freedom and initiative that the encyclical decries. The Pope notes that perhaps a majority of people alive today - certainly the vast majority of those in the Third World along with many in the First World - lack the minimal private property demanded by human dignity. [33]

The challenge to Western capitalist societies such as the U.S. should be

painfully clear. The Pope points out that it will take major sacrifices of the positions of income and power enjoyed by the more developed economies to mount a serious effort to provide realistic opportunities to the poor individuals and nations of the world. This will entail "important changes in established lifestyles." [52] Even more, it will require a change "of models of production and consumption, and of the established structures of power which today govern societies." [58]

The Radical Change

There are no signs, however, that the West is prepared to take up this radical challenge. We have just come through a decade or more in which social controls on private property have been severely weakened and social programmes for the weakest in society cut. The result has not been the promised stimulation of economic initiative and growth trickling down to profit all. It has been a massive consolidation of wealth and power in the hands of fewer people nationally and worldwide. More and more people lack the basic essentials.

Domestic Arena

In the domestic arena consumerism still reigns in major segments of U.S. culture. [35,41] And, as the U.S. bishops pointed out in their pastoral letter on the economy in 1986 [Economic Justice For All, ##22-23], the nation is vulnerable to the criticism that it is losing its sense of the common good. Governing decisions are being made "on the basis of the electoral or financial power of the groups promoting them" rather than "in accordance with the criteria of justice and morality." [47]

Over the last decade, we have seen massive military spending - reflecting a militarism which John Paul claims is rooted in the same atheism as communism. [14,17] Coupled with that, we have watched a million people a

year lose healthcare protection until we now have between thirty and forty million uninsured and vulnerable, with at least 20 million more in danger. The number of those below the poverty line has grown markedly, with children now the fastest growing group of poor. We are experiencing social and economic division and racial/ethnic polarization - with government officials fostering it for political gain.

For twenty years or more, U.S. communities have been devastated by the flight of corporations escaping unions and environmental regulation - both considered essential by the Pope [15-16,19,37,40,43,52] - and exploiting Third World labor - which the Pope condemns. [35-41] Neither government nor society have shown serious, sustained commitment to social controls on such practices or to re-training programmes for vulnerable displaced workers and their families. The encyclical considers these to be essentials of human dignity to which every person has a right in this age. [32-33]

In the International Arena,

U.S. backed Structural Adjustment Programmes (which in many ways mirror U.S. domestic policies over the last ten years) have been pressed upon Third World debtor nations by the international lending organizations and have proven to be instruments "leading to hunger and despair for entire peoples." As such, they are totally unacceptable. [35]

Also, most of the newly industrialized economies that have broken into the world market successfully have done so with the help of highly

restrictive and oppressive labour policies. Indeed, where labour unions have gained a little strength in these nations - as in South Korea - corporations have begun another stage in the process of capital flight, moving on to the cheap, unorganized labour of poorer nations. The encyclical alludes to the destructive power that such corporations too often wield in poor nations. [20]

A New World Order

Centesimus Annus does not, then, anoint any existing system. Developing traditional principles of Catholic social thought, it calls us to a new world order in which supra-national agencies - some form of world government - will provide the social controls necessary to bring about a "certain equality" [15] among all the peoples of the earth so that, with basic needs met, every individual will be able to participate in society in ways that honour his or her dignity and contribute to the global common good. [27,52,58]

There are many unanswered questions about how such conversion and social transformation can come about. It will require creative new social policies and institutions to overcome the massive inequalities of economic, political, and cultural power that characterize our contemporary global political economy. The challenge is truly awesome and urgent.

Ref. CENTRE FOCUS

Issue 100; January 1991; 3700
13th St. N.E. Washington, D.C.
20017

BUDDHIST - CATHOLIC DIALOGUE: AN EARLY JOURNEY

Los Angeles Interreligious Group

While there are vast differences in the histories and spiritual lives of the Buddhist and Catholic traditions, a report by a dialogue group co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Buddhist Sangha Council of Southern California states that "in view of the compassion central to each tradition, a concern for the welfare of all beings stands out. Each tradition seeks to draw people toward a greater, purer, more loving reality than that found in the ordinary human context of life." The following report, released in March, 91, examines the significance of the founders of Buddhism and Christianity and provides a brief history of both traditions, summarizing the philosophy of each. This is the first official bilateral dialogue with Buddhists co-sponsored by a U.S. Catholic diocese. The dialogue group, consisting of six Catholic and seven Buddhist representatives, was co-chaired by Msgr. Royale Vadakin, archdiocesan director of ecumenical and interreligious affairs, and the Venerable Dr. Havanpola Ratansara, chairman of the Sangha Council and president of the American Buddhist Congress.

Buddhists and Christians have lived among each other from the early years of Christianity. Small communities of Christians existed in India, possibly as early as the first century C.E. and certainly by the seventh century, at which time there was also a Christian community in China, but records of dialogues between these communities have not come to light. At the beginning of the modern era, the European voyages of exploration and the subsequent expansion of commercial and colonial powers in Asia set the stage for the first major encounter between these religions. The explorers, as well as the missionaries who accompanied them, saw themselves as part of a divine mission to spread the Gospel; they brought the word of God into Asia, but they also instituted European structures of power and domination over the indigenous peoples, Buddhists as well as Hindus and members of other religions. This was not an atmosphere which fostered true dialogue.

Today Something New is Occurring

Today something new is occurring in the relations of these two religions. In a city named after the most sacred "Queen of the Angels" of Christianity, large Buddhist and Christian communities live side by side. The great wave of Asian immigration into Los Angeles coincided with a new openness toward other religions in Catholicism, promulgated by the decree *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. It set the stage for a real dialogue.

In Los Angeles a unique situation for Buddhism developed. All the major Buddhist Schools and ethnic traditions, each with its own language and customs, are found here. The great diversity within Buddhism stimulated inter-Buddhist dialogue. In 1980 the Buddhist Sangha Council of Southern California was formed,

the first such Buddhist organization to embrace all forms of Buddhism. The Sangha Council, while establishing its own dialogue among Buddhist groups, began to explore interfaith dialogue.

Roman Catholics

During these years the Roman Catholic community followed through with the guidelines of *Nostra Aetate*. In 1969 the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles with other religious communities founded the Interreligious Council of Southern California; in 1971 Buddhist communities joined. In 1974 the Archdiocese formed the Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs to coordinate and expedite its relations with other religious communities.

Through the Commission and the Council of Interreligious Affairs one-on-one exchanges began between Catholics and Buddhists. Some highlights of these exchanges included the 15th anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate* in 1980; the 20th anniversary in 1985; the 1986 Los Angeles observance of the Assisi World Peace Day; and the multireligious celebration of the 1987 visit of Pope John Paul II in Little Tokyo, "Nostra Aetate Alive". This history of cooperation laid the foundation for the Los Angeles Buddhist Catholic Dialogue, which began Feb. 16, 1989.

Buddhists

The Buddhist leaders of Los Angeles agreed to enter the dialogue in spite of some feelings of reticence. Fears and distrust of Christians formed during the colonial period still linger among much of the Buddhist population.

The Buddhist community saw this dialogue as an opportunity to help increase understanding and sympathy toward Buddhism, a process which could be helpful to the Buddhist

community.

There was also the tradition of Buddhism in the course of its long history to work with other religious groups. Since the essence of Buddhism is to abandon all forms of attachments, its hallmark has been not to criticize or condemn any other religion.

Dialogue

Among Catholics, *Nostra Aetate* initiated a fundamental change in the way the church viewed other religions. For the first time it encouraged dialogue with them. A profound rethinking and appreciation of the intrinsic validity of other religions has gone on; Catholics have become eager to explore and learn about other religions. Dialogue for both groups became timely and appropriate.

A core group was designed to accommodate approximately eight Buddhist representatives and eight Roman Catholic representatives. Meetings were to be held every six to eight weeks, rotating between Buddhist and Catholic locations.

The committee from the beginning recognized that this was a very early and preliminary dialogue, with a great need for mutual patience and simple getting to know one another.

DIALOGUE: THE ESSENCE OF THE JOURNEY

There are vast differences in our histories and spiritual lives. Yet we all entered the dialogue with a spirit of openness and the expectation that we could understand each other; we were not disappointed. Our dialogue experience unfolded into four dynamic processes.

First, we discovered that learning about each other's tradition was learning the vocabulary that it uses

to express itself. This proved to be more difficult than we had expected because the vocabulary comes from such different worlds. Many words have no reference in the other tradition. For example, Buddhists were perplexed with the Christian notions of soul and a creator God, while at the same time Catholics had great difficulty with the concepts of anatman (non-soul) and a cosmos without a God. At times we spent an entire session on just one word or concept. We learned not to attempt to cover a lot of material in a single meeting, for we found it took time to get in-depth understanding.

Second, while each dialogue session had brought us some knowledge and understanding of the other's tradition, at the same time we discovered that we were re-encountering our own. The novel questions and fresh approaches required us to look anew at our own traditions, to see inconsistencies, to discover what we needed to think through. It challenged us to articulate to one another what we took for granted among ourselves. Sometimes this gave us a whole new perspective on our own beliefs. We expected to be teachers of each other, but became students of our own traditions.

Third, there were discoveries. Catholics unexpectedly learned about the negative attitude toward Christianity among Asian Buddhists, the legacy of Christianity's involvement with Western colonialism, which began in the 16th century and continued in parts of Asia for more than 400 years. This legacy made all the more powerful the Buddhist's discovery of the extraordinary practice of compassion exemplified in the life of Jesus in all its simplicity and beauty. At the same time Catholics discovered how important compassion is in Buddhism, as comparable in its trans-

cendence to the divine basis of love in Christianity. We discovered in the lives of simplicity and compassion shared by the founders of our religions something basic to both. This brought up the mystery of how our traditions could share something so important yet come from such radically different origins.

Fourth, sometimes even after spending a whole session on a word, we found that we could not understand it completely. At the same time, we also found that we could continue to speak and to hear each other even if we did not have a precise understanding of each other. Nonetheless, we have the expectation that if we continue to talk with each other long enough, we will.

Among the topics we discussed were concepts of love: the Buddhist four brahma viharas of metta, karuna, mudita and upeksa were compared to the Christian concepts of eros, philia and agape. We also discussed concepts of soul and no-soul anatman, of resurrection and rebirth, and of gnosis, saving knowledge.

Looking for some common points of reference has turned out to be more difficult than one could imagine. But in view of the compassion central to each tradition, a concern for the welfare of all beings stands out. Each tradition seeks to draw people toward a greater, purer, more loving reality than that found in the ordinary human context of life, so that they may realize their full potential.

The great models of this process in both traditions are the founders, who provide the key to the spiritual life of their disciples. The importance of the founders can be seen in their titles, their roles in history and their roles in the lives of their disciples.

THE BUDDHA AND THE CHRIST

The Buddha

The "Enlightened One", born Siddhartha Gautama, a prince of the Sakya clan in northern India, c. 624 B.C.E.

Through his own efforts he achieved enlightenment, the full realization of ultimate reality (truth), perfect in wisdom and compassion. He set the wheel of the dharma in motion, showing all mankind (and ultimately all sentient beings) the way to attain release from suffering and attain nirvana, that ultimate state beyond all description.

The Christ

The "Messiah" or "anointed one", born Jesus of Nazareth in Judea; crucified outside of Jerusalem by Roman authorities, c. 33CE.

Anointed by God to save humankind by death on a cross and resurrection from the dead, God became human so humanity could be divinized. He was the total and complete manifestation of God, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.

PAST AND PRESENT

BUDDHIST

The Buddha was born in northern India of a princely family as Siddhartha Gautama of the Sakya clan. His mother died when he was 1 week old, and he was raised by his stepmother and trained to become the successor of the kingdom. He married and had one son. Leaving home at age 29, he gave up his princely life and became a wandering ascetic, seeking the answer to the question of why people suffer. At age 35, finding that extreme asceticism brought him no closer to enlightenment than did an indolent,

luxurious life, he turned to the middle path of moderation. He attained enlightenment by turning his meditation inward, achieving the realization of ultimate reality and becoming "the Buddha", the awakened one.

In his enlightenment experience the Buddha discovered the four noble truths, the causes of and methods to eradicate dukkha, unsatisfactoriness, which underlies all life. He then "turned the wheel of the dharma" (began teaching the path to enlightenment liberation) and devoted the next 45 years of his life to teaching others so that they might also attain liberation from suffering. He died at age 80 and entered into parinirvana, ultimate reality, that state of complete peace and quiet that goes beyond concepts of existence or non-existence.

Buddhism does not recognize a beginning or an end to the cosmos, but rather recognizes that there is a non-ending arising, maturing and dying of universes, all by natural law rather than by a primary cause. Thus, many different Buddhas have existed in many different aeons in many different universes. All sentient beings have Buddha nature, the potentiality of attaining enlightenment. While it would be difficult for a non-human to become a Buddha, all beings still have that potentiality of achieving human form and eventual enlightenment. What distinguishes a Buddha from other enlightened beings is that the Buddha has achieved supreme enlightenment and so has discovered the truths that Sakyamuni also discovered, and initially expounds the dharma in a universe or an age.

Thus, while Sakyamuni is the historical Buddha of our time period and is honored by all, in some traditions the central figure is not Sakyamuni, but a different Buddha. The most

popular of these is Amitabha Buddha, Lord of Infinite Life and Light, and he is venerated as the central Buddha in the Pure Land schools.

As Buddhism Spread

As Buddhism spread from India to other countries, outward appearances changed as it took on indigenous ethnic characteristics. Eventually three major Buddhist traditions emerged. Theravada (the school of the elders) became most prevalent in south and southeast Asia: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos. Mahayana (the great vehicle) emerged as a major tradition around the second century C.E. and spread into East Asia: China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam. By the eighth century C.E., the third school, Vajrayana (the diamond vehicle) emerged in central Asia: Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and eventually southern Siberia. By the 12th century, virtually all of the specific schools within Buddhism were well developed in their modern form.

While Theravada remains a fairly cohesive whole, it is more conservative in its attitudes and resembles most closely the Buddhism practiced during the Buddha's lifetime. Mahayana Buddhism added more scriptures to the canon, presenting the Buddha's teachings from a more non-dualistic view of reality. Vajrayana Buddhism added some elements of tantrism (esoteric, mystical rituals). Each developing school added layers on to the already existing canon, so that changes in practice come not only from an interpretive base, but from a canonical one as well.

CATHOLIC

Jesus of Nazareth lived for approximately 33 years at the beginning of the Common Era in Judea and was crucified by Roman authorities. He was a Jew, and he collected around himself a community of disciples who discovered that in

this Jesus of Nazareth, YHWH, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, the God who had revealed himself historically to the Jews, had become completely human. They recognized Jesus as the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the Bible, and expected him to return to institute the kingdom of God upon earth. His life of proclaiming the kingdom, his healing and forgiving, his passion and death upon the cross, and his resurrection from the dead were the ultimate revelation of God and established for eternity God's identification with humanity and the means of humankind's redemption from sin and death.

The community of disciples, inspired and graced by God's Holy Spirit, proclaimed the salvation found in Christ to the world, a proclamation that has never ceased. Christ has been proclaimed on every continent in every culture. Each ethnic group has found in Jesus something uniquely its own which they celebrate through their own cultural genius and add in this way to the ongoing revelation of the Christ. In the world today great spiritual creativity is being expressed by "Third World" Christianity, that of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Though originally persecuted in the ancient world, faith in Christ became the foundation of Western civilization. Throughout the Middle Ages this faith was preserved and perpetuated in the hierarchical structures of bishops, patriarchs and popes; in the heroic spirituality of monastics; in the theology debated and refined in the great universities of medieval Europe; and in the devout lives of countless individuals.

In The 11th Century

With the breakdown of the old Roman Empire complete, theological and political disputes which had long threatened the unity of the Eastern

and Western branches of Christianity resulted in the tragic separation of the church of Rome from the churches of the East. At the beginning of the modern era, a renewed understanding of the prophetic ministry of Jesus was expressed in the Protestant Reformation. Protestants, contending that Christianity should never be tied to a single institutional expression or interpretation, broke with the Roman Church, and Western Christianity was splintered. Today there are three major branches of Christianity: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism.

Each community contributes, in its own capacity, to the presence of Christ as the divinely transforming agent and goal of human history. Across the ages, he remains the Alpha and Omega of history, the baby born in poverty, the preacher proclaiming a coming reign of peace and justice, the prophet offering himself on the cross, the suffering servant and glorified Lord of humanity, its judge and savior.

THE FOUNDER AND THE FOLLOWER

BUDDHIST

The Buddha, either sitting in meditation or standing to teach, is the usual image that adorns Buddhist altars and shrines. As the Buddhist follower looks upon this image of the serene figure and the compassionate, smiling face, he/she again pays homage to the teacher, the great enlightened one, who shows the way of peace and spiritual development to all. To him is given the greatest reverence, for he has shown the way to liberation. He is not a god nor is the Buddhist concerned with god concepts. He is the human teacher, one who has raised himself out of all suffering and attained perfection and has revealed the path which can be followed by any person. In some Buddhist schools, emphasis is placed upon "self-power", and the individual

strives for perfection and enlightenment. In other schools, the individual seeks guidance and assistance from Amitabha Buddha or one of the great bodhisattvas (highly developed spiritual beings who devote their lifetimes to helping others) for help in attaining that state which leads to enlightenment.

(1) Ethical Behaviour

Buddhist practice is threefold: ethical behaviour, mind development and intuitive wisdom. Ethics is usually seen as the foundation for all Buddhist practice. To proclaim oneself as a Buddhist is to willingly take on the practice of certain precepts as a guide for behaviour. The way in which a follower determines whether any particular action is moral or not rests upon the ultimate question, Is this behaviour harmful to myself or others? Is this behaviour beneficial for myself and others? One should always act in ways which are wise, ways which are non-harmful to oneself and others. Besides trying to act in non-harmful ways in body, speech and mind, one also strives to develop the perfections of generosity, ethical behaviour, patience, spiritual endurance, mental discipline and wisdom as well as the development of the four noble states of living: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

Serious Buddhist practitioners constantly examine their behaviour to discover their strengths and weaknesses. They attempt to strengthen those behaviors which are wholesome and to discourage those which are unwholesome. There is always the awareness that the precepts cannot be kept perfectly; guilt is discouraged as counter-productive. The precepts are not commandments, but are guidelines for living a wise life. Thus, Buddhists do not sin if they break a precept, rather they have behaved in a harmful way, the results of which will return to them.

(2) Mind Development

The second aspect of practice is mind development which is considered necessary for Buddhist practice. Meditation, or the practice of mindfulness or awareness, helps the individual to calm the mind and free it from self-involvement and self-attachment, from ideas and emotions. The practice of meditation helps a person to observe how the mind functions and to produce understanding, to experience insight and eventually liberation. Meditation is not an activity that is done only at a special time. Meditation is the state of mind of one-pointed concentration, of awareness and mindfulness, that allows one to see clearly without the mental fetters of "me and mine" which usually determine the way one perceives reality. While sitting meditation is extraordinarily important in some traditions of Buddhism, in others self-awareness is developed through other practices.

Rituals, chanting and practice of mindfulness during daily life are important tools in helping the individual to develop disciplined behaviour. Thus, Buddhists perform pujas, or offerings to the Buddha, in order to recall his great virtuous qualities and to remind them of their spiritual goal. Prostrations are done to help lessen pride. Chanting and study of the sutras is also an important part of developing discipline and understanding.

(3) Intuitive Wisdom

The third part of practice is the development of intuitive wisdom that comes only when one can break free of the three poisons of greed, anger and delusion. And this can occur only when we understand that there is no separate identity, no self, no soul. Only when we see that our ordinary perception of things is an illusion, coming from a self-centered deluded mind, can we hope to experience complete ultimate reality.

CATHOLIC

The crucifix, the image of Jesus dying upon the cross, is the universal symbol of Catholicism. To gaze upon it is to witness the horror of what humanity can do to itself, but at the same time, to see the power of God's love to save humankind through it. To see the dying Christ is to see God in the most vulnerable form of humanity and, at the same time, humankind's hope of reconciliation. He is the path to our union with God and imitation of him, the key to our salvation. "Love one another as I have loved you", Jesus said. "Take up your cross and follow me."

Though the crucifix is displayed in many places, the richness of its meaning and power is most visible when it stands over the altar. Upon that altar, as head of the congregation gathered in the church, the priest celebrates the Eucharist, the sacrament of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. The priest repeats the words and gestures of Jesus at his last meal when, with his disciples, he broke bread and shared wine, identifying them as his body and blood about to be broken and shed to redeem all humanity. "This is my body; this is my blood," speaks the priest as Jesus did that night. The body the priest speaks of is the body of Christ upon the cross and also glorified at the resurrection; it is the bread which is consecrated; it is the congregation participating; it is the worldwide church and all Christians who have ever lived; in all of these Jesus is fully present. Each eucharistic celebration renews and ritualizes the central mystery of Christ's conquest over sin and death, in which all Christians participate as members of the body of Christ.

Unity of Life in Christ

At the center of our lives as Christians is the sacramental unity of life in Christ. We became Christians

through the sacrament of baptism. In earlier times the person was fully submerged in water, a kind of symbolic burial, and then raised up again, symbolically resurrected with Christ. It means a new beginning - a new life - a life of union with Christ. This participation in the death and resurrection of Christ is a lifelong process, not completed until our own deaths and resurrection. It is a process of personal purification and divinization, but the process ultimately includes the cosmos itself. The presence of the resurrected Christ is drawing all of humanity and the cosmos toward a final reconciliation with the Creator, toward a new creation.

Pursuit of Justice

To sign oneself with the cross as we do is to take up a life of exemplary love. It is especially to take up the cause of those who have no one else to act on their behalf, the powerless and oppressed, for they are humanity at its most vulnerable. Christian spirituality must

be manifested in involvement with one's social community and in pursuit of justice. "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do it to me," Jesus said. The pursuit of justice and concern for others imitates the earthly life of the Christ.

Scripture

Reading Scripture and praying are the other chief practices of our spiritual lives. Both are done as encounters with Christ. The Divine Office, for example, consisting of prayers and scriptural readings, is the daily offering of the church itself to God. The practice of meditation and contemplation, which dates from the earliest years of the church, continues to enrich the lives of Christians today. Through such prayer one can be drawn to the highest levels of prayer, mystical union with God. In recent years Christians have found certain practices from the Buddhist tradition helpful and consistent with their own tradition.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This statement, tentative and limited, reflects our early experiences. We feel it shows that the Buddhist-Roman Catholic dialogue is moving in the right direction, dealing with religious prejudice and fostering mutual respect and understanding. Our next steps include discussing historical and social concerns such as the colonial experience of Christianity

among Asian Buddhists and the ways our religions deal with racism, and fundamental concepts such as the arahant and bodhisattva, original sin, the communion of saints, and heaven and hell.

Ref. Aide Inter Monasteres Bulletin
#41. May, 1991, pp.8-12.

A DWELLING PLACE

"IT IS IN THE SHELTER OF
EACH OTHER THAT PEOPLE LIVE"

— IRISH SAYING

Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND

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I. The Framework Of Our Enquiry

If I were to ask you where you live, you could answer in a number of different ways, all of them correct. One person might say that at the moment they are living here in Rome. Another, thinking of a permanent address, might say that they live in Bombay, or Chicago. Someone might timidly say, "I live on the earth."

The earth seems so big to us and now its problems seem unmanageable. But what if we were to see the earth from out in space? Let me share a description of the earth, from astronaut Edgar Mitchell:

Suddenly from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to realize fully this is earth ... home.

In point of fact, the earth is the only ball around, for millions of miles, that is alive with the life that we know as plant and animal life. And now we are coming to see the earth and its supporting atmosphere as all of a piece, as a single cell.

For historic reasons that cannot be developed here, those of us who come from Europe and America are not conditioned to see the earth as a mystery. We are brought up to see the earth as a mass of raw material to be worked upon by the dominant creature of the earth, humankind, usually referred to as man in this kind of philosophy and theology. When humankind, or man, abuses the earth, we use such expressions as "the rape of the earth", which is instructive partly because it projects an image of the earth as the violated feminine.

Especially for the last twenty years, philosophers and theologians have developed an ethic of stewardship to correct the abuse in the notion of ownership. There is good

biblical foundation for this shift. There is much that is of perennial value in the notion of stewardship, but today, it is seen as inadequate in addressing environmental issues. A more fitting way to see reality is to see ourselves as called to participate in creation as in a transforming community, rather than as stewards of commodities to be consumed.

Three points need to be kept in mind: first, the suggestion that we use the notion of home, or dwelling place, as we reflect on our responsibilities to respect life, including respect for the earth itself; second, the claim that we will get more insight from considering the environmental crisis as a matter of mystery, than as a set of problems; third, having claimed the priority of mystery, at the same time we need a firm grasp of the problematic dimension, based on measurable facts.

II. Ecological Issues:

A Set Of Problems To Be Resolved

A quick and effective way to get the big picture of our environmental problems is through the research of Lester Brown, founder and director of the World Watch Institute, an environmental research group based in Washington, D.C. Brown coordinated a project which studied the effects of human action on four renewable resources, not in one country only, but globally. The four resources were grasslands or grazing lands, crop lands, woodlands, and fish. The conclusion, reported in the late seventies, was deeply disturbing. The research revealed that in each case the rate and amount of taking from the system was greater than the capacity to renew itself. In other words, there is a rhythm or law inherent in the earth's constitution, and it was being violated with disastrous results. One example that is now finally getting attention is the case of the tropical rain-forests of Brazil. It is not only trees that are being destroyed, to the peril of the

entire planet. Peoples who have lived for many centuries in the forest are being destroyed.

The research also brought out the extent of linkages. Flooding in Bangladesh which wipes out entire areas, including people, is caused by cutting wood up in the Himalayas, a place far distant, which few Bangladesh ever see. Brown's research also reported that the amount of waste dumped into the purifying systems of our earth, both the water and the air, exceeds the carrying capacity of these purifying systems.

Today, public consciousness has been aroused. The Church's social teaching is now integrating environmental issues, even as it is coming to re-think its teaching on war.

Calvin DeWitt, of the University of Wisconsin, has described the environmental crisis in terms of seven degradations of creation. His enumeration gives another perspective to Lester Brown's analysis. These seven forms of degradation include: 1) land conversion and habitat destruction, including tropical deforestation which destroys 25 million acres of forest every year; 2) extinction of species; 3) degradation of the land by poor farming practices and the use of destructive pesticides; 4) production of hazardous chemicals; 5) poisoning of the planet through carelessness, as in oil spills, and through mismanagement of toxic wastes; 6) the greenhouse effect caused by excessive use of coal, petroleum, and wood for fuel (among other causes) and 7) human and cultural degradation.

About this last DeWitt observes, "The meek of the earth are displaced by labour-saving technology; they are pushed to the margins or to the cities. Disconnected from the land that could sustain them, they are driven into joblessness and poverty. The powerful - in the name of conducting "good" business - use the

land and resources of the meek, depriving them of the ability to take care of themselves and creation and depriving them of their cultural and agricultural inheritance".

III. The Risen Christ And The New Creation - A Mystery To Be Lived

We Catholics love to sing, at the Easter Vigil, "O felix culpa", "O happy fault". That is how we see Adam's sin, because it was the occasion of such a redeemer. Will we be able to say "O felix culpa" about the environmental crisis? Yes, but only to the extent that we are active participants in the ongoing work of redemption.

The new creation is here already, but it is not complete. We get a fresh perspective on this mystery from the only prophetic book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now ..." (Rev. 21:2) In this book of Scripture, the focus is on action, and the central character is the Person who brings about the new creation. It is this reality of the new creation achieved by Christ, and coming to completion in Him and with Him, that grounds our own action in the ecological crisis in which we will live out our days.

Ten years ago there were not many persons concerned about and working on the environmental issues that we now recognize as critical. Most people thought we could safely leave such things to the experts. We were conditioned to believe that there was some kind of technical fix just round the corner. We now know that we were wrong.

How did it happen that both our environment and our political systems have come to such a pass? Why is it that we have been such wretched managers of our human condition? Human beings have killed over 100

million other human beings in wars during the twentieth century. In the nineteenth, we killed about nine million. Judging from this one sorry fact alone, intelligent beings looking in from another planet would say that our race is in deadly decline. Why?

One cause has been an obsession with having, and independently controlling. We have created a culture in which we are expected to get our identity from what we have, and from being in charge. This is certainly true of the wealthy industrialized countries. Those from other kinds of cultures can analyze their own situation. We will be redeemed, saved, rescued from this situation when we get our identity sense from being in loving relationships, and from being stewards of the goods that are gifts meant for everyone, to satisfy human needs in community, not individual wants.

The earth is the Lord's. (Ps. 24) We receive all as gift. None of it, when we come to think of it, do we receive as individuals. Two human beings collaborated to give each of us life, and throughout our lives, all that is good comes to us through cooperative work. The very purpose of work, and all that it produces, is for sharing, for bringing us into that human communion that is foretaste and participation in the divine communion we call the Blessed Trinity, the Blessed Three in One Love.

The environmental crisis will be solved in a new way of thinking that leads to a new way of acting. For us, this new way is grounded in our living, acting faith. The old way, in which we get our identity from what we have, leads to the need for having more and more, for insuring our future through amassing material goods. The new way requires that we put our energies rather into building community in love, which will always be stretching beyond itself to those in need. The first

demand of love is justice for all, and the first demand of justice is that we take care of everyone's basic needs before satisfying our wants. This requires restraint and self-discipline on the part of the strong, that is, the economically strong, who can engineer the satisfaction of their own ever-increasing wants at the expense of the very lives of others. Americans consume up to forty per cent of the world's goods, though they are only six per cent of the world's population. We have known this for years, but what have we done about it?

We cannot make the changes needed if we act only as individuals; we can make the necessary changes only as members of community. At the same time, our first identification is with the human race, and commitment to the race as our primary community puts in order all our other loyalties. These two forms of commitment, to the race and to the face to face community, are not contradictory; rather, they are essential to each other, and they flourish or languish together.

We are responsible for this beautiful earth. As far as we know, it is the only planet, for billions of miles around, that supports life. And this life is all of a piece. We need to take care of it with exquisite attention and love. It is not a mass of raw materials for our immediate gratification. We are now using more apt symbols, of the earth as our mother, of the ecosystem as a single cell writ large. We are learning to be careful as we use petroleum that takes millions of years to form, as we use fish and forest, field and grazing range. If we take time to contemplate the beauty of the world of which we are a part, we will be saved.

I remember hearing a wonderful little account told by a renowned surgeon who had been decorated by the Queen of England for his work among lepers. He said that whenever

he was about to operate on the hand or foot of a leper, he first took the hand or foot in his own hand, and looked at it for a very long time. He said that it was only when he had a sense of its beauty that was still there, that he knew how to apply the surgeon's knife. Then he raised his own hand in the air, and slowly flexed his fingers. "Look," he said, "it has been doing this for seventy years, and it has never been oiled."

This man had learned the law of God written in his own heart. We need to learn again the wisdom of that law. We know that hearts can become so stony that God, in a kind of divine desperation, once wrote the law on tablets of stone, hoping with a parent's inventive love that at least there, we would be able to read those saving laws of our existence.

One law that has been widely disobeyed to our peril is the law of the Sabbath. We are to keep that day holy by taking time to contemplate the gifts of God. That is what God did. God took time to relish the creation and proclaim it good. Our Eucharistic celebration is a celebration of thanks and praise for the goodness of God in its ultimate expression in Christ our Lord.

IV. Acting On Our Faith

It is out of contemplative experience that we will learn the next steps to take, and we will find the strength to take them. They will differ from culture to culture, from situation to situation. For some, a first response will take the form of recycling materials that we have been accustomed to throw away with no thought of the impact of the waste materials on our environment, or on the economy of those who have nothing to throw away, those who lack the essentials of life. For many of us in industrialized countries, especially Americans, it must mean a deliberate return to more public transportation, to less careless use of

automobiles. We drive 35% of all the automobiles on the planet though we are 6% of the human family. Our earth simply cannot afford our life style, which is a lethal life style. What our government called our vital interests, in the Gulf crisis, are in truth our vital excesses. No amount of theologizing will absolve us from the need to take action that for us may seem sacrificial, but in truth is simple justice.

One of my lay friends belongs to a small Christian community called the Earthkeeper Covenant group. They have made a covenant with each other to seven kinds of action in response to their understanding of the ecological crisis: contemplation, intercession, restoration, lifestyle change, education, and public witness.

What is important is that we begin, that we encourage each other in our actions, and that we discipline ourselves to regular reflection on what we are doing. We will be asked to do more, not to fall into empty routines that degenerate into token gestures.

We will find joy, because our lives will become less cluttered, less overactive, more contemplative. We will have time to come close to the poor, and they have much to share with us. We will find new levels of energy through our active collaboration in the redemptive mission of the Lamb of God who is even now taking away the sin of the world, the sin of greed and selfishness, of individu-

alism, of injustice, the Lamb of God who is bringing about the new creation of love and peace, and who by some inscrutable design, depends on us.

A Few Points That May Be Helpful For Reflection And Discussion:

1. There is a danger that we will treat the environmental crisis as "just one more set of justice and peace issues". Does the approach taken here help to offset that danger? If so, How? If not, why?
2. How does concern for the environment affect the efforts to meet the needs of the poor?
3. What help do you find for addressing environmental issues in your own spiritual tradition?
4. Why are "home", "hospitality", and "dwelling" apt symbols as we try to act faithfully towards the ecological crisis?
5. What relationship do you see between the feminist movement and the ecology movement? Do you think there are relationships that should be fostered? In what way?
6. How is the mystery of the resurrection central to creation spirituality?

Ref. International Union of Superiors General, No. 86, 1991.

A TIME OF TRANSITION AND CHANGE

ARCHBISHOP HUNTHAUSEN'S RETIREMENT AND CHANGE

(This extract is from Bishop Hunthausen's address at an interfaith service at St. James Cathedral, Seattle, on the occasion of his retirement. "If we are truly born of the Spirit", said the Bishop, "we welcome change. Because with change there is growth. And with growth there is openness to the Spirit. But change also brings pain, worry, doubt, even despair.... The changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, the openness, shared responsibility and Gospel values by which I have tried to guide my ministry are not without hurt, confusion and misgiving.")

...Within weeks of my consecration as bishop of Helena, Pope John XXIII called all the bishops of the world to the first session of the Second Vatican Council. I was the youngest and greenest American bishop. So young and so newly appointed that I occupied one of the least seats in the balcony.

Vatican II

Vatican II was a marvelous event in the life of the church and a watershed moment in my life. There in Rome, commuting to the Vatican with three other bishops in an ancient Volkswagen Beetle, I experienced a truly universal church. A church of many languages, many races, many cultures and customs, yet at its core a church of one faith in Christ.

What happened at Vatican II resonated deeply with me, with my prayers and hopes for a church with a vision and a mission of transforming our lives.

As a result of Vatican II, the church abandoned the sure, secure, comfortable confines I'd known for most of my life and stumbled into the modern world. I say stumbled advisedly. Because with openness to

the world comes change, anxiety, doubt and challenge.

Some of the changes were evident almost immediately. We celebrated the Mass in our native tongues. We turned the altar around and invited the congregation to pray with the priest. We encouraged Catholics to read the Bible for themselves. We reached out to other faiths, apologized to those we had maligned and invited all to work with us in manifesting God's glory.

When the last session of the Vatican Council concluded in 1965, I returned to Helena converted. To use the language of our evangelical brothers and sisters, I was "born again." Or better said, the church I cherish and love had been "born again."

For me, Vatican II revitalized three key principles. These principles are as relevant now as they were a generation ago. I have tried to make them the foundation of my ministry."

"People of God"

First, we are all 'people of God.' Though we may play different roles, by right of baptism we are all called to do the work of the church. We

are all called to minister one another.

Because of that "shared responsibility," all must be invited to join in the banquet of the Lord. Not just to eat, drink and pray. But to speak, listen and take action.

Yes, it's true that in the church of western Washington the buck ultimately stops in the office of the archbishop. But I would hope that my decisions came out of a process, an openness to allow the Spirit to work in people so that the best decision would emerge.

Shared Responsibility

The second principle of Vatican II is really a corollary to the first. If we are to share the responsibility of being people of God, each of us has a personal responsibility to live out the message of the Gospel. Each of us must do our part to build the kingdom of God.

We do that by heeding the call of the Gospel to make moral decisions and take ethical actions. We follow our conscience, a conscience guided by tradition, teaching and openness to the Spirit of God through prayer.

The insight of Vatican II is the realization that striving to discover God's will is always an uncompleted task. We are searchers for the truth.

In This World

Finally, Vatican II convinced me that we find salvation in this world, not the next. We are not passive onlookers, stacking up personal credits in some heavenly paradise. We are participants, strugglers, sojourners, day labourers in the vineyard of the Lord.

A church that is not involved in the world is irrelevant. Our mission is to bring the values of the Gospel

and the love of God into everyday life. Two thousand years ago, the Christ who walked the earth spoke of peace, understanding, reconciliation and love. Is that not God's message today?

When you welcomed me as archbishop of Seattle 16 years ago, I talked about shared responsibility, collaboration and the church's challenge to infuse the Gospel in the everyday life of western Washington.

My ministry was what it was because of you. You collaborated, you shouldered responsibility, you took to heart the injunction to spread the good news.

THANK YOU

I thank all of you. You have made my years as archbishop of Seattle wonderful years of personal joy and spiritual growth. I am deeply appreciative.

I thank Archbishop Murphy, who succeeds me now and has been my dear friend and supporter over the past four years. I have the deepest respect and admiration for his talents, his enthusiasm, his energy and his commitment to the Gospel. We have laughed, prayed, even cried together. I cannot imagine the archdiocese being in better hands.

I thank our priests, religious sisters, brothers and deacons, whose faith, loyalty and devotion to ministry continue despite diminishing numbers and difficult challenges. You have buoyed me up and renewed my spirit.

I thank the many women, men and children who have taken up the challenge of the Gospel and ministry to God's people. I have seen you in the schools, the jails, the shelters, the nursing homes and the parishes doing God's work. You have

enlivened my faith.

I thank the civic leaders, the people of other faiths, the activists for peace, justice and understanding. I remember how we stood together on weapons tracks, in peace processions, in crowded council chambers. You have my undying respect.

I thank my fellow bishops and church executives, both Catholic and Protestant, for your support, counsel and encouragement. I know how we have laboured to apply the word of God to the issues of the day. You have my prayers.

Finally, I thank my family, my brothers and sisters, my many nieces and nephews. I remember how you calmed me when I was upset, comforted me when I was hurting, revived me when I was down.

Over the years I have journeyed back many times to my Montana home to wildflowers, the mountain streams, the big sky and the family hearth. I think of what Norman Maclean, a fellow Montanan, wrote about growing up near the great trout rivers of the Rockies.

"In our family," he wrote, "there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing."

I suppose that's the way it is in my family. Fishing, skiing, hiking, family reunions and faith are all one.

I thank all of you here this evening, all of you who have processed to the altar and all the ministries, offices, faiths, races, ethnic communities and organizations you represent. Thank you. Thank you very much.

PASSING ON THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP

But I am passing on the mantle of leadership. It is a time of transition, a time of change. I am reminded of what Jesus tells Nicodemus in the

Gospel of John: "The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

If we are truly born of the Spirit, we welcome change. Because with change there is growth. And with growth there is openness to the Spirit.

But change also brings pain, worry, doubt, even despair. I think of our Lord and the apostles in the fishing boat on the storm-tossed waters of the Sea of Galilee. "Lord," they cried out, "are we going to perish?"

The changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, the openness, shared responsibility and Gospel values by which I have tried to guide my ministry are not without hurt, confusion and misgiving.

We are forever asking ourselves: What is sacred and absolute? What is profane and temporal? What do we keep and what do we discard? What gives us life? What denies us life? What leads us to God? What takes us away? What does the Gospel say about making war? Or making love?

These are not easy questions. At times our tradition and our teaching seem to conflict with the Gospel. This becomes especially difficult when we sincerely believe that a given church policy is contrary to the best interests of both the Gospel and the church. In the words of Vatican II, the church is *semper reformanda*, continually in need of reform.

I don't have any grand plan for church reform. I don't even have a miniplan. But I think we have to keep raising issues, examining our consciences, searching for the truth.

Are we a church that includes gays, welcomes the divorced and

separated, offers equal opportunity to women? Have we really taken a preferential option for the poor? Are our doors sincerely open to the least of our brothers and sisters?

If charity begins at home, let's look at our own house. Are we good stewards of what God has given us? How do we treat our former priests and religious? How willing are we to dialogue with those troubled by what we teach or how we act?

We must never forget that we are a church of sinners. Yet in trying to reform the church, we must also remember that the church is the body of Christ, ever under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit. Put simply, to keep faith with Jesus is to keep faith with the church.

I believe we keep faith in many ways, but especially through prayer. We Christians acknowledge, as the apostles did on the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee, that Jesus is the center of our lives. We concede our own poverty of spirit and ask that we do God's will.

More and more the nature of my

prayer is trying to find a way to let God come into my heart. I don't expect lots of answers. Maybe it's because I have far too many questions.

Whether it be the gulf war, sexual morality, nuclear disarmament, respect for life, this is God's world, not mine. So I try to find a way to let God come in and live with me and among us. That's really what I think prayer is - letting God live among us.

My friends, to have shared this journey with so many of you has been such a blessing in my life. It is a debt I can repay only with my thanks, which, believe me, I offer wholeheartedly. With my prayers, which I promise you now and in the future. And, of course, with my love, which has been there from the beginning and has increased immensely in recent years.

May the Lord Jesus continue to guide and direct the journey we all share. May the power of the Spirit be yours in all you do and may you know the presence of God's joy, peace and love in your life always.

CATHOLIC - ORTHODOX
RELATIONS

(RUSSIA)

"The future of Christianity in Russia is in the hands of the Russian Orthodox Church," an American Jesuit ordained in the eastern rite has stressed. Fr. Robert Taft, who teaches at the Oriental Institute in Rome, said at a press interview in New York that if the Catholic Church tried to undermine the Russian Orthodox, it would "harm the future of the Christian Faith".

Those in the West who were concerned about the future of Christianity in Eastern Europe should help East Europeans to reclaim their heritage without renewing hostilities of the past. "No one has clean hands in all this," he said. "Catholics have sometimes acted in oppressive ways, and we must own up to this. Others have done the same to us, and cannot make any pretence at claiming the high moral ground."

Fr. Taft said that some of the leaders of the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Churches had compromised themselves through collaboration with the Communists. He hoped that the Catholic Church would work to strengthen the Orthodox, while seeking closer unity,

and eventually communion, with them.

The Catholic Church, he said, was better equipped than the Orthodox of Eastern Europe to enter into dialogue with secular intellectuals aware of the bankruptcy of the Communist ideology.

Ref. The Tablet, 14 Sept.
1991

ASSASSINATIONS

(HUASAHUASI-PERU)

"Irene McCormack O'Meara, 52 years of age, a Sister of St. Joseph, an Australian Order and better known there as the 'Brown Joeys', died instantly at about 8 p.m. on the evening of Tuesday, May 21st. Lying face down on the terrace, a few yards from the door of the parish church - St. John the Baptist - she was the first of five, the only woman, to receive a bullet from an automatic rifle directly into the back of her head.

Strange the unexpected deference to a woman, that she was the first shot, even though she lay second from the door. Perhaps the 16 years old girl who pulled the trigger, for it

seems to have been a girl who did it, retains some twisted semblance of femininity. I don't know.

Once she was brought to the plaza, Irene was made to sit on a circular bench near five men prostrated before her. A few seconds before they were shot a young man, second from the door and apparently not on the death list was told to get up and go away. It seems that he was only being made to 'sweat it out' because he had delayed too long in opening the Cooperative that they wanted to loot and burn. Irene was made to replace him and was then summarily shot.

Then died Agustin Vento, Pedro Pando, Alfredo Morales, and Noe Palacios, who as fifth in line managed to get up and run for the crowd. He got about five metres and was brought down, it seems with a mattock. As he lay beneath a palm tree he in turn was shot through the head.

About nine o'clock when I was reasonably sure that the Sandero had definitely gone, I went out and anointed the five bodies. There were thirty, maybe forty people gathered around. Each body had been covered with a blanket by their family. Raúl, Willi and another of our liturgical group had taken a rug from the house to cover Irene's body.

In his harangue, before the shooting the Sendero leader gave no reasons for his choice of people to be killed, except for the Sisters. Their involvement with the US Catholic Relief Food Programme made them a target. In fact Irene was never involved in this. Sister Dorothy Stevenson, (Dot) a Kiwi, and Irene's companion, yes, she coordinated the distribution out to the tiny hill villages of the parish.

No matter how well run, this programme tends to provoke terrible envy and squabbling among some of the people. Sendero blamed the Sisters for collaboration with the 'Yankee imperialists' and for mismanagement, an unjust accusation.

Their bitterness is directed towards the programme itself. The US Government manages to turn a work of charity into a huge political propaganda piece, with USA and the Stars and Stripes pretty much splashed over everything. It thus makes sure the left hand knows well what the right hand is doing. An Australian parallel would be the TV charity appeals, where the donor's name figures large and loud....

We went first to the Diocesan Chancery to get the Administrator onto the Coroner's wheel to get him out to Huasahuasi as quickly as possible. Local law demands his say before

a body can be removed by a family. We went to an undertaker to buy a coffin and to have it zinc lined just in case when her Community and family heard the sad news, we here would not get the option of burying Irene's body with the people with whom she died, and among whom she was working until that terrible evening.

I was unaware that Irene's aged mother was still alive and of course had first call on the body of her daughter and the people here would have understood this as they are very much family orientated.

They, however, dearly wanted Irene to be buried here among them and with the men with whom she had died. It would mean a lot to their morale and to their sense of self-worth, which historically has always taken such a beating.

Thirdly, the Sisters of her own Community in Lima had a claim on her; their main mission is based there and they naturally wanted her near where they could honour her grave.

All claims were more than valid, and the only person capable of determining an effectual priority was Irene herself. God love her family, for they had told the Sisters in Lima that they wanted the ashes, unless Irene herself had expressed some wish to be buried there'.

...By God's good grace, Ursula one of the Sisters, went across to the church prior to getting into the jeep going to Tarma to call Lima. Here she met three elderly local ladies, white hats, long plaits, and flounced skirts of the women folk of the mountains. These three had two marvelous things to say to her: Tell Dot (in Lima) not to cry, that they would do her weeping for her; and secondly, they themselves had actually once gone with Irene up to the cemetery and she had exclaimed how really beautiful it was and how she herself would love to be buried there, were she to die while stationed in Huasahuasi."

A song-tape was sent to us by some unknown friend in Sydney. I quote from it:

*'I love rainbows and butterflies,
wild flowers and starry skies
and dreams unafraid to come true'.*

'Dreams unafraid to come true'

What a beautiful and powerful line. It could serve as the epitaph on Irene's tombstone."

Source:

From the account of Fr. Leo Donnelly SSC., pastor of Huasahuasi, in Columban Intercom, Vol. 13, No. 7, September 1991. Dalgan Park, Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland.

SOME AIDS TO MISSION

1. BETTER LIFE TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE POOR

This 220 page book is written by UN GLOBAL 500 Laureate Dr. Felix Ryan who has been working for the UNIDO and the ILO as an Advisor on rural community development and extension methods in several countries. It contains two hundred grass-root development ideas to help the very poor to help themselves to live better, economically, socially, and hygienically. All the ideas can be implemented even in remote villages with local raw materials, with their own resources and without any financial or technical aid from outside.

The poor will remain poor if they depend on the technology of the rich. Some of the ideas do not require any money at all to be put into practice and many of them can be implemented with about US \$2 only. Usage of metal parts, even simple items such as nuts, bolts, washers, nails, screws and binding wire are avoided as far as possible.

Every detail is explained in simple language with diagrams and it is an ideal guide book for grass-root workers to bring about development without delay and dependence.

Appropriate technology, self-help, waste utilization, development of one's own raw materials, people's participation, learning on the job, employment of women, children and unemployed youth in particular, is the keynote of the book. The book is also written for refugee settlements, interior villages, small underdeveloped islands, tribal areas and the urban informal sector.

Available from: CARITAS INDIA.

C.B.C.I. Centre, Ashok Place (Gole Dakhana) New Delhi-110 001, India.

2. AGENCIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE:

A Guide to Sources of Support for Small Church-Sponsored Projects in Developing Countries (Aubin/Cotter) This is a new directory of international agencies which support grassroots pastoral/socio-economic development initiatives. Also included are an overview of current policies of international development agencies, proposal-writing guidelines, and various indices.

Available July 1991 for \$US 50.00 (shipping incl'd) from: Mission Project Service, 1 Haven Plaza #24A, New York, NY 10009 (phone #212-533-6286) Pre-payment required.

3. "CHALLENGE" SOUTH AFRICA

We have just received news of a new magazine CHALLENGE which will contain news about the Signs of the Times in South Africa. Ten issues per year. Published by The Institute of Contextual Theology (ITC). P.O. Box 32047, Broamfontein 2017, South Africa. Editor: Fr. Albert Nolan, OP. Editorial Board includes such people as Rev. Frank Chikane, Fr. Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Rev. Kenosi Mofokeng, Rev. Malusi Mpumlwana, Dr. Beyers Naude, Sr. Bernard Ncube, Prof. Charles Villa-Vicencio.

Sample copies of the first issue are available in SEDOS; also subscription forms. Yearly subscription US\$ 20.00 Phone us or write for further information.

COMING EVENTS IN SEDOS

RERUM NOVARUM TO CENTESIMUS ANNUS:

IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION

a one day seminar

SPEAKER: PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

November 7th, 1991: 9.30 - 17.00 hrs.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, via Aurelia, 276

MISSION/EUROPE

A follow-up to the June, 1991 "round-table" consultation

FACILITATOR: FRANCOIS NICOLAS, CSSP

October 23rd, 16.00 - 17.30 hrs. SEDOS Secretariate

SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SEMINAR 1991

December 11th: SVD College

9.30 - 13.00	Mission/Europe
14.30 - 16.30	General Meeting
17.00	Eucharistic Celebration

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAITH OF ISLAM
and
QU'RAN: ISLAMIC REVELATION AND BASIC TEACHING

new dates and times to be announced

5TH CENTENARY - A NEW AGENDA

Villa Cavalletti: May 19 - 23rd, 1992