

EIR Document

The Pope attacks drugs, terrorism, and usury

On July 1-8, Pope John Paul II visited Colombia. He carried the Christian message to this most Catholic of Ibero-American countries, and as part of that message, he forcefully denounced drugs, terrorism, and usury—the three evils of the policy of the International Monetary Fund and the international drug trade that are being imposed on Ibero-America. Here we reprint excerpts of the Pope's speeches and homilies. The subtitles are ours.

Poor people cannot pay intolerable social costs

The Pope was speaking July 1 to over 700 Colombian political, religious, and trade union leaders, in the Presidential Palace in Bogota.

The very fact that this meeting is taking place here, in Narino House, the seat of Colombia's Presidents, constitutes a further proof of the significant Christian reality of Colombia, almost five centuries after the arrival of the Good News to this land blessed by God.

The noble Colombian people, whom you wish to serve by contributing to their true progress in all fields, have made their own the message of the Gospel which, throughout their glorious history, has marked their life and customs. Certain determined responsibilities flow from this, for the leaders of this country, which I have particularly called a Colombian Christian vocation, which must guide your life and work as citizens invested with authority, and as believers. . . . In your work as leaders, you have made the effort to seek the paths, overcome the obstacles and create the conditions that would permit the creation of a new society.

In these circumstances, there come to mind the words of

my venerated predecessor, Pope Paul VI, pronounced during his unforgettable visit to this same capital [in 1968—ed.]: "You leaders, perceive and undertake with courage the innovations necessary for the world around us. And do not forget that certain crises in history could have had other orientations if the necessary reforms had prevented in timely fashion, with valiant sacrifices, the explosive revolutions of desperation."

Without doubt you have given thought, on occasion, to this prophetic call. You know, my esteemed leaders, the realities of our world, and more specifically that of the Latin American countries, and you are conscious that its march towards progress raises not a few great questions. In the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI indicated a sickness in the world which he identified with the lack of fraternity among men and peoples. With this purpose, in my encyclical *Vives et Misericordia*, I wished to place in relief the fact that the world is experiencing a moral disquiet which is increasing with respect to Man and the destiny of humanity, especially with respect to the profound inequalities among nations and inside nations themselves. How can one not see this disquiet among the peoples of Latin America. . . ? This moral disquiet feeds on the phenomena of violence, unemployment, marginalization, and other factors which provoke disequilibrium. . . . The Church has faith in you, and asks you to be the artificers of a more just society. . . . This society could be called the Society of Love . . . a society which would grow in an atmosphere of peace and concord, in which violence and terrorism would not extend their tragic and macabre empire, and injustices and inequalities would not lead to desperation among important sectors of the pop-

ulation, and induce them to behavior which tears apart the fabric of society. . . .

In order to realize this new civilization, you face grave obstacles which are not easy to overcome, but which ought not to discourage you. . . . Some will come from abroad, and others from within your own society. Among the first, must be mentioned the grave economic crisis which is spreading throughout the globe, and which has taken root especially in the less fortunate countries. The difficulties of the more developed countries have led them, in order to solve their problems, to measures which rendered even more critical the situation of the less prosperous, increasing and aggravating the problems of the latter. On repeated occasions, the Church has pleaded for the search for, and consolidation of, unity among peoples, for an international community in which nations would be respected in their identity and diversity, and helped with solidarity in the achievement of the common good.

The social question has acquired the dimensions of the world, in which relations of justice and solidarity between rich and poor peoples constitute a priority. This is followed, in all its force, by the urgency of an integral development of the whole Man and of all men, according to *Populorum Progressio*. *Poor populations cannot pay intolerable social costs, sacrificing the right to development, which then eludes them, while other populations enjoy opulence. Dialogue among peoples is indispensable, to reach equitable agreements in which not everything would be left subject to an economic policy unbreakably dependent on economic laws, without soul and moral criteria* [emphasis added]. Herein lies the urgent need for international solidarity, which today is especially required for the problem of the external debt which overwhelms Latin America and other countries of the world.

Another series of obstacles comes from society itself. Some are not entirely dependent on your good will, and will require time and effort in order to be overcome, such as the lack of economic infrastructure, the scarcity of means for financing advanced technologies, the weakness of the domestic market.

But there are also obstacles which come under the responsibility of citizens, and which can and should be corrected as soon as possible. . . . Among these factors, which render development difficult, are to be found violence, insecurity, smuggling, the unjust distribution of wealth, *illicit economic activities and, furthermore, as has been pointed out, the massive export abroad of capital which is indispensable inside the country* [emphasis added].

One of the consequences of this accumulation of difficulties is the phenomenon of unemployment, which touches the core of the social problem, because of the right to work and the eminent dignity of same, as I have expressed it . . . in my encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. You are conscious of the

difficulties of a sane employment policy in the present economic circumstances, but you also know that the creation of new jobs and an equitable salary is something in order to guarantee the future, and avoid existing evils among unprotected families in the national context.

Allow me, dear entrepreneurs, to give you a Christian and urgent message. Being Christian entrepreneurs, you cannot conceive of a business except as a community of people. Consequently, the center of reference of your economic activity must always be an interest in all human beings. . . .

We are witnessing, and not without regret, repeated assaults against peace, from the most varied forms of violence, whose extreme and nefarious expression is terrorism, which has its roots in political and economic factors which are aggravated by the ideological interference of foreign powers and, not a few times, by the collapse of fundamental moral values. . . .

Colombia has made a generous effort to achieve peace in its territory and in brother countries. Continue placing all your efforts on obtaining and consolidating peace. . . .

The task which is entrusted to you is immense, and will be achieved only through a constant and prolonged effort. But, if the solution of material problems cannot be immediate, it is, however, possible to establish an order of priorities that would take into account the fact that *Man is the subject, and not the object of economics and politics*. You have the most important means necessary to achieve these objectives. The greatest wealth, the best capital of a country is its people. And Colombia is a country rich in humanity and in Christianity.

And what greater motivation can I propose to you than to remember, in this respect, the doctrine contained in the pastoral *Gaudium et Spes*, of the Second Vatican Council, in its treatment of the dignity of the human person? The Council proposes Christ to us as the restorer and prototype of our own dignity. He, Who is the image of the invisible God, is also the perfect Man Who returned to Adam's descendants the divine resemblance deformed by original sin. In Him, a human nature assumed and not absorbed, has also been raised in us to a dignity without equal. Christian Man, made in the image of Christ, who is the first-born among many brothers, receives the gifts of the spirit (*Gaudium et Spes*—Joy and Hope).

Each time you meet a fellow citizen who is poor or in need, if you look at him truly with the eyes of the faith, you will see in him the image of God; you will see Christ; you will see a temple of the Holy Spirit, and you will realize that what you have done unto him you have done unto Christ Himself. Saint Matthew puts these words in the mouth of the Lord: "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye do unto the least of these My brethren, ye do it also unto Me."

I also shout this to you from here, you youth who perhaps have undertaken the road of the guerrilla or harbor sympathy

for it: Withdraw from the paths of hate and death, and convert to the cause of reconciliation and peace.

Against the sects

On July 4, Pope John Paul II gave the homily from which this is drawn, while speaking to Indians in Popayan.

Popular piety ought to be the instrument of evangelization and of integral Christian liberation; of that liberation for which the peoples of Latin America thirst, conscious that only God fully frees one from slavery and from the signs of death present in our time.

But we observe, on the other side, that a poorly conceived popular religiosity has its limits, and is exposed to the danger of deformation or deviations. In effect, if this piety is reduced solely to mere external manifestations, without reaching the depth of faith and the responsibilities of charity, it could favor the entrance of sects and, furthermore, lead to magic, fatalism or oppression, with great accompanying dangers for that same ecclesiastical community. . . .

Latin American integration

On July 5, the Pope spoke at the Atanasio Dirardot stadium in Medellin, before 40,000 leaders of the poor communities.

In looking at the reality of many developing countries, in particular in Latin America, we see that in the complex of problems caused by poverty there exist not only conjunctural causes but also structural ones, related to the socio-economic and political organization of society. This is a factor which must be very much borne in mind. But behind these causes there is also the responsibility of men, who create structures and organize society. . . .

I wish to launch another call for social justice; a call to the developed countries so that, while overcoming the schemas of an economy oriented almost exclusively to the function of yielding up the most with a view to their benefit, they seek conjointly with the developing countries real and effective solutions to the grave problems which every day assume more worrisome proportions, and whose victims are every day weaker.

Likewise, I wish to invite the countries of Latin America to bend themselves to the task of creating an authentic continental solidarity, which would contribute to finding paths of understanding in the grave issues which condition their own progress and development, in the context of the world economy and the international community.

We must create a culture of Truth, of the Good, and of Beauty

Pope John Paul II gave this speech July 6 at the Bolivariana Pontifical University in Medellin, to a group of Catholic intellectuals.

The Church needs culture, as culture needs the Church. I

have already said this, and I repeat it now to you, adding that the Church, in the choice and interchange of goods between faith and culture, thinks preferentially of the young, and expects from them, in turn, a preferential support. I am here thus to share with you some thoughts on this fundamental reality, that of culture, in the life of men and peoples.

Culture, in effect, ought to lead Man to his full realization in his transcendence over things; ought to keep him from dissolving himself in materialism of any sort, and consumerism; or keep him from being destroyed by a science and technology at the service of greed and of the violence of oppressive powers, enemies of Man. It is necessary that men and women of culture be gifted not only with proven competence, but also with a clear and solid moral conscience, with which they will not have to subordinate their own action to the "seeming imperatives" dominant today, but will rather serve Man with love, "Man and his moral authority, which comes from the truth of his principles and the conformity of his acts with those principles. . . ."

Cultural identity is a dynamic and critical concept: It is a process in which is re-created, in the present moment, a past patrimony, and which projects itself towards the future so that it be assimilated by the new generations. In this way, the identity and progress of a social group is assured.

Culture, a typically human requirement, is one of the fundamental elements which constitutes the identity of a people. Here they sink their roots, their wish to be a people. Culture is the complete expression of their vital reality, and encompasses it in its totality: values, structures, persons. For this reason, the evangelization of culture is the most radical, global, and profound form of evangelization of a people. There are typical values that characterize the Latin American culture, which are, among others, the desire for change, the conscience of its own social and political dignity, the efforts for a community organization, above all in the popular sectors, the growing interest and respect for the originality of indigenous cultures, the economic potentiality to confront situations of extreme poverty. . . .

In addressing you . . . I wish to launch a call for you to participate actively in the creation and defense of an authentic culture of truth, of good and of beauty, of liberty and progress, which could contribute to the dialogue between science and faith; a Christian cultural, a local culture and a universal civilization.

Culture presupposes and demands an "integral vision of Man," understood in the totality of his moral and spiritual capacities, in the fullness of his vocation. Here is the root of the profound nexus, "the organic and constituent relation" which unites in itself the Christian faith and human culture: Faith offers the profound vision of Man which culture needs; even more, only faith can accord culture its final and radical foundation. . . .

But the connection between faith and culture acts also in

the opposite direction. Faith is not an ethereal reality external to history, which in an act of pure generosity offers its light to culture, while remaining indifferent to it. On the contrary, faith is lived in concrete reality, and it gains body in it and through it. "The synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture, but also of faith; a faith which does not make of itself a culture is a faith not fully grasped, not fully thought out, not faithfully lived." Faith engages man in the totality of his being and his aspirations. A faith which situates itself at the sidelines of humanity, and consequently of culture, would be a faith unfaithful to the fullness of what the Word of God manifests and reveals; a decapitated faith; even more, a faith in the process of self-dissolution. Faith, even when it transcends culture, and by the very fact of transcending it and revealing the divine and eternal destiny of Man, creates and generates culture. . . .

Youth, you are the salt of the Earth, the light of the world

The Pope delivered this homily July 2 to youth at the El Campin stadium in the Colombian capital of Bogota.

Dear young people of Colombia: You are the salt of the Earth, you are the light of the world of this land Colombia, of this Latin American world to which you belong. . . . In you there springs the renewal of the community of believers, and you represent the replacement for those who construct the temporal city. . . . You are a privileged generation. With you, one millennium is coming to an end, and another is beginning: the third Christian millennium. Also in you there culminate 500 years of the evangelization of this New World that is Latin America, and there begins a renewed evangelizing effort that will project the Church of Jesus Christ towards the future precisely starting from you, the youth of this Continent of Hope.

I know that many of you here present have grown up in situations with which you have not failed to express your disagreement. You are conscious of the problems of your country, and do not wish to resign yourselves in the face of corruption, injustice, and violence. You want a radical change, because you wish for a more hospitable society, in which all Colombians could share and enjoy the fruits which God created for all, and not just for a few. You desire peace and concord among all, in order to be able to confront the future with less anguish and greater certainty. You are the light in the midst of so many shadows, if you allow yourselves to be illumined by Christ, "the Light which illumines every man who comes into this world. . . ."

You, dear youth, suffer because of those conflicts. You are victims of those contradictory processes, and in any case sometimes feel confusion and bewilderment in the face of so much economic disequilibrium and so much social injustice . . . in a country like yours, so rich in material and human resources. You yourselves are part of that store of re-

sources. . . .

But together with so many hopes nourished in you, you cannot ignore the strong temptations which lie in ambush for you on your path. There is the attraction that could be exercised by easy enrichment, by paths which are contrary to Christian law and morality, the temptation to escape which could lead to burying you in the alienation of drugs, alcoholism, sex, and other lamentable vices. There are some who attempt to seduce you with certain attitudes of conformism, passive indifference, and skepticism, tearing out of your youth the most noble human and Christian ideals. And there is no lack of those who proclaim, as a final and desperate solution, the armed violence of the guerrilla, in which a good number of your brothers have fallen, sometimes against their own will and other times disoriented by ideologies inspired in the principle of violence as the only remedy for social evils.

These and other temptations are awaiting you. As Christians, you can and must pass the test. You know that you are the salt of this Earth, whose virtue cannot be taken away. You are the light which must shine, the city sitting atop the mountain. . . .

The Church has need of you. I go further: The Church has need of Latin America, already at the doorstep of the third Christian millennium, in the immediate preparation of the fifth centenary of the evangelization of America. I wish to express from Colombia the wish that, through beneficial interchange, you take to the universal Church the gifts of the varied, rich, and original Latin American cultures, in which Christianity has become embodied in a profound manner. . . .

Drug traffic: the most fearsome form of slavery

The Pope spoke July 6, at the Sanctuary of Saint Peter Claver, in Cartagena.

Among the inviolable rights of Man as a person, there is the right to a dignified existence in harmony with his condition as an intelligent and free being. . . .

Slavery . . . has been abolished in all the world. But, at the same time, new and more subtle forms of slavery have arisen. . . . Today, as in the 17th century . . . greed for money seizes control of many people and converts them, through the drug traffic, into traffickers of the liberty of their brothers, whom they enslave with a slavery more fearsome, at times, than that suffered by the black slaves. Slave traders kept their victims from exercising freedom. Drug traffickers lead their victims to the very destruction of the personality.

As free men, whom Christ has called to live in liberty, we ought to fight decisively against this new form of slavery which subjugates so many in so many parts of the world, especially among the youth, who must be warned at all costs, and aid the victims of drugs to free themselves. . . .