

Active Laity Lacking in Latin America

The following article is by the editor of Our Times, weekly newspaper of the Yakima (Wash.) diocese, who recently returned from a 15,000-mile flying visit to Latin America as part of a team of U.S. Catholic journalists who held press seminars with their counterparts in Peru, Brazil and Venezuela.

BY RAYMOND RUPPERT
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

What did you find in Latin America on which American

Catholics could help build a vital Christianity? The question was put to me not long after I had returned from a four-week visit to Peru, Brazil and Venezuela. I thought back to a morning in Lima, Peru, when I had sat between Auxiliary Bishop Jose Dammer of Lima and Roberto Perez del Pozo, a civil engineer by occupation and a leader in Catholic Action by choice. While Bishop Dammer noted

an agreement, Perez told me that Catholic Action in Lima, a city of over a million people, could number about a thousand active lay people. Over the course of many years, he estimated, perhaps 5,000 lay people had been in and out of Catholic Action.

Several questions were put to Perez. How do the Catholic Actionists operate? What do they hope to accomplish?

He explained that the people in Catholic Action meet every two weeks in groups formed according to occupations. Engineers meet with engineers, attorneys with attorneys and so forth. They discuss concrete situations and try to carry Catholic ideas and principles back to their jobs — but without flaunting the fact that they are Catholics.

The technique is tried and tested. It is used by the Young Christian Workers and the Christian Family Movement, for example. It is the technique of look-judge-act urged by His Holiness Pope John XXIII in Mater et Magistra.

And yet as I sat there talking with Bishop Dammer and Perez, I could not shake the feeling that somehow these efforts at penetrating society with Catholic teachings have been far from successful.

Perez conceded that the upper class, the people with money and power, had written off as too materialistic; they would not help bring Christ to the marketplace. The lower class had to be discounted; the millions who are impoverished are too concerned, necessarily, with the day-by-day struggle to get enough food. This left the middle class, small in number, lacking in political or economic power. Born by a desire for the material advantages the upper class possesses.

These of course are only one reporter's opinions and views, based on a trip that certainly qualifies no one as an expert on Latin America. But much of what I was to see and hear later in Latin America confirmed the impression I had formed at that meeting with Bishop Dammer and Perez since their high school days.

IN CARACAS at the end of the trip I was anxious to check my impressions. I cornered Father Alberto Ancizar Mendoza, S.J., director of the school of journalism of the Catholic University and a priest who has a genuine knowledge of Latin America.

I told him I had gathered two principal impressions: —that Catholic lay leadership is lacking because of the materialism of the upper class and the poverty of the lower class and the weakness of the middle class.

—that the faith of the predominantly Catholic population in Latin America is piety which seldom leaves the pews and rarely is translated into effective social action in government or in business.

Father Ancizar agreed. From these impressions I drew the conclusion that the hierarchy would be forced, more and more, to speak out on social and political issues because of a shortage of lay spokesmen. Those who seek to keep the Church ineffective and silent may use this as an excuse to restrict and harass the hierarchy.

This would be a tragedy not only for the Church but for Latin America, which needs the guidance of the Church's teachings for its social development in a time of great unrest and change.

BUT WHAT DID I find in Latin America on which American Catholics could help build a vital Christianity?

Wheel Chair Wedding

Montrose, Pa. — (NC) — A young couple confined to wheel chairs were married in Holy Name of Mary church here.

Father Norman J. Irwin, the pastor, witnessed the marriage of Leonard Swiderski, 33, of Montrose and Barbara Ashlund, 33, of Spencer, N.Y., both of whom have been paralyzed since their high school days.

I answer: 1) A love for the Church among the masses, a love that must be recognized as emotional and not intellectual.

2) A growing awareness among the hierarchy that the Church's social doctrines must be applied to the economic and political life.

3) A middle class which, despite its lack of numbers and weakness, wants to serve the Church.

Much of the American effort to aid Latin America today is directed toward the lower class. Food is distributed to the starving; reading and writing are taught the illiterate; hygiene and sanitation are brought to the villages; catechism and the sacraments are brought to the spiritually undernourished.

SOMEDAY, perhaps, the lower class will move up a rung on the ladder. We should pray that when that happens their faith and the social doctrines they have assimilated from missionaries, both priestly and lay, will be reflected in what they do. Meanwhile, in a time that can be accurately described as a time of emergency for the Church, these social doctrines must penetrate the wall that has been erected between the Church and the world.

Our best hope and the target for our efforts, I suggest, should be the middle class. This is not to say that we should stop or lessen our efforts to aid the poor, but that we increase our attention to the middle class.

This mission to the middle class could take shape in various forms. It might be that the National Council of Catholic Men and the National Council of Catholic Women could be effective instruments. We could aid the Church greatly at harvest time if we could now transplant a few shoots off the "age of the laity" in the United States to Latin America.

It is Catholic lay people like Perez, outnumbered but trying valiantly to bring Catholic social doctrine to life in Latin America, who need the help of Catholic lay people in the United States.

No Remedy If Catholic

Tulsa — (RNS) — Tulsa school law bars attendance of Catholic parochial school children from such public school "special services" programs as remedial reading, the Board of Education's attorney ruled here.

The decision came when parents of two children who require remedial reading instruction sought to enroll them in public schools here.

School authorities were sympathetic but reported that they were forbidden by law to give such service to students not enrolled in the public school system. The law, according to the attorney, Claude H. Rosenstein, also applies to "special services" classes for crippled children: visual, hearing and speech correction and the "trainable mentally handicapped."

One of the children involved had received summertime remedial reading instruction in a public school; in this case, however, the class was operated by a "private" teacher who had rented classroom space from the Board of Education.

DIPLOMATIC TIES

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican and the Republic of Senegal in former French West Africa have decided to "consolidate friendly relations" by establishing reciprocal diplomatic relations, it was reported here.

Extension Aids 72 US Missions

Chicago — (RNS) — More than a half million dollars was spent by the Catholic Church Extension Society during the fiscal year 1960-61 in helping to build 72 mission chapels in 45 different dioceses, mainly in the West and Southwest, it was disclosed here at the annual meeting of the groups' board of governors.

Auxiliary Archbishop William D. O'Brien of Chicago, the society's president, said in the annual report that total receipts for the fiscal year were \$2,289,986. More than \$100,000 was earmarked for seminarians, while another \$300,000 was devoted to Mass offerings to mission priests who rarely receive stipends from their impoverished parishes, he reported.

A REPORT on the society's newest project — the recruitment of lay missionaries for service in the American home-mission field — was delivered by Father John J. Sullivan, head of the program known as Extension Volunteers.

Father Sullivan said that since the program was instituted last Jan. 1, some 40 young people have already begun full-time lay mission service.

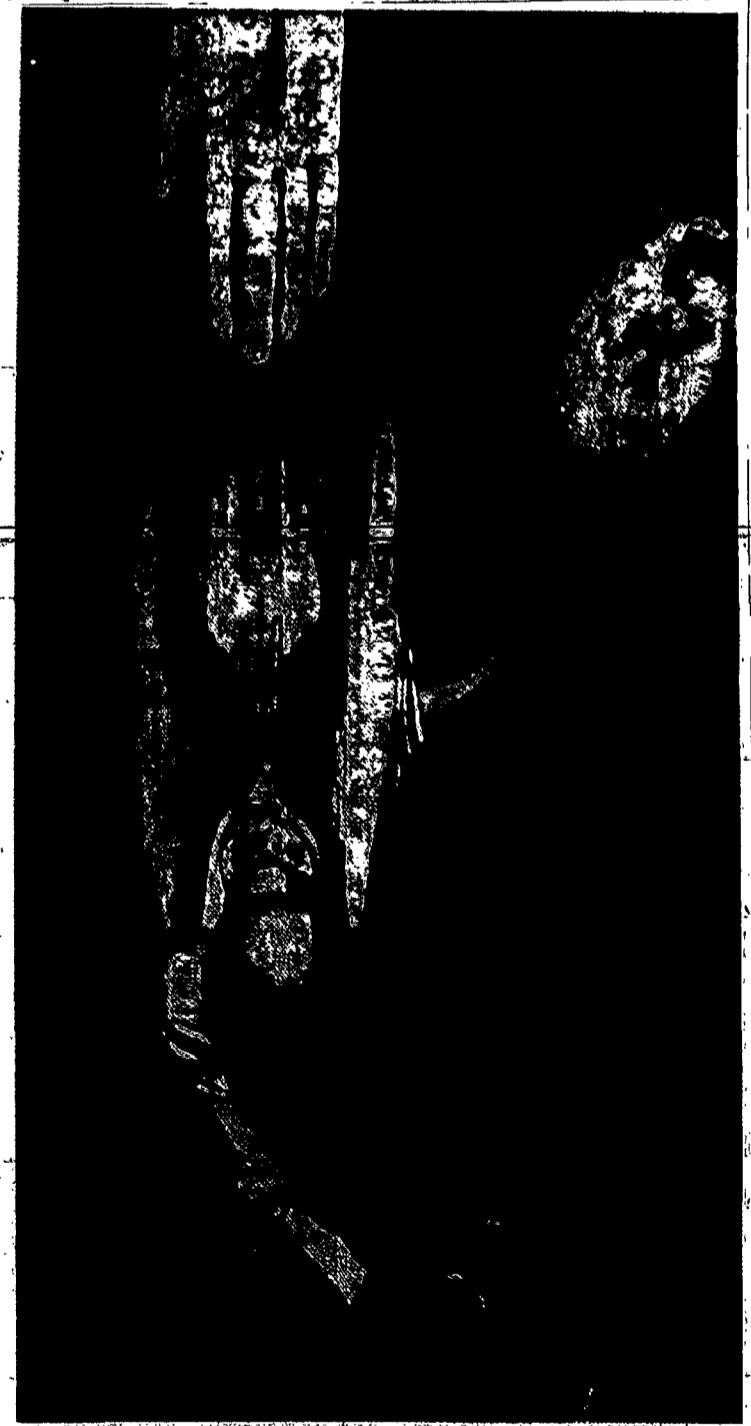
Premier's Daughter

Dar Es Salaam — (NC) — The seventh child of Premier Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, east African nation that will become independent on December 9, was baptized in the cathedral here by Archbishop Edgard Maranta.



We Give Thee Thanks...

Galvarino, Chile — (RNS) — While most Americans sat down to a huge Thanksgiving Day dinner of roast turkey with all the trimmings, more than two-thirds of the rest of the world was hungry. These youngsters in a Maryknoll mission at Galvarino, Chile, are grateful for just a bowl of stew — perhaps their only meal of the day. Many parts of Chile have not fully recovered from the disastrous, week-long earthquakes that rocked the country last year. Volunteer relief agencies spearheaded by mission groups such as the Maryknollers have set up a continuous relief program of food and clothing in the country.



"AN APOSTOLATE TO UNITE THE SUPERNATURAL WITH THE NATURAL IN THE WORLD CRISIS"

With the strong military forces of the United States and other Christian nations pitted against Russia in the cold war, a movement has been started to draw down the supernatural forces from heaven against the diabolic forces behind Communism. The Communists are avowedly atheistic and determined at moral corruption of youth in allied countries. Such a force can have its origin only in the source of all evil. Such a power is too great for man's natural progress. This Apostolate hopes to unite the Christian natural forces, with the powerful angelic array of strengths so often given to man by God, in Christian History and in the old Testament. This apostolate of the League of St. Michael, Conesus, New York, hopes to bring the nations at one moment during the day in a common act of faith in this angelic force and as petition for his help. Hence a nationwide attempt through newspaper, radio, TV and the mail is being launched that all might have away with the supernatural for the conquest of Communism and the diabolic origin.

For information in the regards, Write: THE SHREVE OF ST. MICHAEL, CONESUS, NEW YORK



If you have a taste for the best in whiskey...



You have the taste for

WILSON

\$3.99

Whiskey experts look for three essential qualities to determine the best in whiskey — a smooth taste, the same taste with every sip and a pleasant after-taste. Your own taste will tell you Wilson has all three. So why pay more? Next time say Wilson — that's all!

4.79 quart — 2.49 pint

WILSON DISTILLING COMPANY, LEWISVILLE, KY. WILSON BLENDING COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, IND. WILSON BOTTLING COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.



Shop Friday 9:30 til 9 p.m.

National

YOUNG SET SHOPS

ANNUAL WINTER SAVINGS SPREE FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

- Pre-teen fashion Coats, reg. to \$49.95 **\$27.90**
 - Girls' famous snow suits, reg. to \$22.95 **\$10.90**
 - Girls' warm Winter Jackets, reg. to \$16.95 **\$8.90**
 - Girls' school & dress Coats, reg. to \$39.95 **\$23.90**
 - Infants' poplin Pram Suits, reg. \$10.95 **\$8.90**
 - Girls' washable cotton Robes, reg. \$3.95 **\$2.90**
 - Girls' famous "stretch" pants, reg. \$5.95 **\$4.90**
 - Orlon pile-lined jackets, reg. \$19.95 **\$14.90**
- FOR BOYS . . .**
- Sherpa-lined Suburbans, reg. \$25.00 **\$19.88**
 - Boys' washable Snowsuits, reg. \$22.95 **\$16.88**
 - Boys' Winter Jackets, reg. to \$22.95 **\$14.88**
 - Boys' zip-lined Coats, reg. \$19.95 **\$14.88**
 - Boys' Orlon Sweaters, reg. to \$8.95 **\$4.88**
 - Boys' Corduroy Slacks, reg. to \$6.95 **\$3.88**
 - Boys' orlon & wool shirts, reg. \$3.95 **\$2.88**
 - Boys' winter pajamas, reg. \$2.95 **\$1.88**

Third Floor Downtown and Southtown Plaza