

Excerpts from Pope Paul's Christmas Message

The following excerpts from the Christmas Message of Pope Paul VI to the world convey the theme that heaviest as the world may think it, Christ remains our real and highest hope.

Today, man thinks, acts and lives by virtue of hope. Is not hope the interior mainspring of modern dynamism? Is not hope the root which nourishes the immense task of the World, as it reached forward toward its transformation and progress?

No one is any longer satisfied with what exists at present. At one time, the experience of the older generation was the guarantee of actual or desirable order. But now it is just that order which is attacked. And precisely because it is inherited from the past, it is overturned rather than conserved and renewed. The blind hope that of new will be fruitful for human progress. No further credence is now given to the stable values of faith, culture and institutions.

Two factors have concurred to generate this tension of hope. The discovery of ever-increasing possibilities of unforeseeable conquests through scientific exploration and the technical domination of nature; and the observation of the conditions of need in which, under so many aspects, the greater part of mankind lives.

Consequently, this two-fold discovery has awakened new and immense desires in human hearts. That is, the hope of using the riches of the means acquired to fill the lack caused by hunger, misery, ignorance, insecurity and insufficiency, from which the man of our century still suffers.

It is, however, a hope in the kingdom of this earth, a hope in human self-sufficiency.

Progress itself, in some fields, creates enormous fearful dangers for all of humanity. The use which modern man can make of the murderous forces which he has mastered raises on the horizon, not hope, but heavy clouds of terror and folly. The peace of peoples or, in clearer words, the existence of man upon the face of the earth, is put in peril.

Today's man has observed that the entire construction of the economic and social system, which he painfully builds up with superb practical results, is in danger of becoming his prison, of depriving him of his per-

sonality, of turning him into a mechanical instrument of the great machine of production. That machinery, while it provides numerous wonderful external improvements, subjects man to a colossal apparatus of domination.

In this way there will arise a society redundant with material well-being, satisfied, satiated, but lacking in superior ideals which give meaning and value to life, and, as it were, to the groans of the poor, near and far, who yet call themselves men and are in fact brothers.

The gaze of some young people in particular, of those who are usually clairvoyant and prophetic, has been darkened by their never being taught absolute principles, but the systematic spread of doubt and agnosticism. At a certain point, then, constipation became the fashion, with the temptation of degenerating into rebellion, violence and anarchy. In this social and mental field, too, human hope is being degraded and extinguished.

With sorrow do we see that, because of these ill-advised collective confusions, historical, cultural, moral values which are still valid and worthy are being lost, with consequent damage to the entire civilized community.

Perhaps never before, as much in our day, literature, theatre, art, philosophical thought, have cruelly borne witness to the deficiency of man, his mental debility, his demonization by sensuality, his moral hypocrisy, his facile delinquency, his increasing cruelty, his possible abjection, his inconsistent personality. All of these self-satisfied accusations are based on a terrible and seemingly irrefutable argument: Such as man, such is the great and miserable son of the century. This is the true reality of life.

The experience of the desperate condition of human life, an experience which modern progress, instead of suppressing, often sharpens and exacerbates, must call us back to admit an unavoidable need which humanity, in various forms and degrees, has always preserved in its deepest consciousness — the need of being saved.

Indeed, all of us have need to be saved. We cannot succeed in this by our own strength alone (cf. Rom. VIII, 15-26). Our presumptuous struggle to save ourselves, by ourselves only serves, finally, to under-

line the conviction of our radical incapability.

We can go even further, in virtue of man's conscience and that of history: We have need of a saviour, of a Messiah, the name of Jesus means Saviour, and Christ means Messiah. That name, "Jesus Christ," is the proclamation of our salvation. It is the promise on which our hope is founded.

We have need of Christ. It is necessary that He have divine power, because no other power can overcome our life. It is necessary that He have brotherhood with men, because if He were not a brother, could we understand Him well. St. Leo, the Great Pope of the mystery of Christ, says: "If (Christ) were not true God, He could not offer us a remedy. If He were not true man, He could not offer us an example."

This proclamation is not vain, because the hope we place in it will not be in vain. On that blessed night, through the virgin motherhood of Mary, Christ inserted himself into the history and destiny of mankind, and He still lives today. He lives in the fullness of a glory which for now we cannot properly name or imagine, in the life of heaven.

But he lives also here among us, being continually reborn, like a fountain from its spring, in His mystical body which is the Church, ever spreading throughout the world His truth and His grace.

Christianity has the power to infuse hope and give life, not only in its own order which is that of religion and the supernatural, but also in the profane and natural order. For when that order links its own earthly and therefore fallacious hopes to that unshakable hope which descends from the kingdom of heaven, it no longer doubts that its work may be in vain.

Christianity lives in the reality which Christ works among us: the candid piety of children, the sufferings offered by the sick, the healthy deep love of families, the generous unselfishness of youth, the humble invoking patience of the poor, the yearning struggle for greater justice of workers, the silent active charity of the good, the unceasing prayer of the community of the faithful.

This is Christianity alive in the holy Catholic Church, which upholds eternal hope, and also strengthens earthly and truly human hopes.

Puerto Rico Said Still 'Colonial'

San Juan, Puerto Rico — (NC) — Puerto Rico is still a victim of colonialism, said a spokesman for Bishop Antonio Parrilla Bonilla S.J., told a large audience at the Athenaeum here.

Bishop Parrilla, a former auxiliary bishop of Caguas, is a leader in the Puerto Rican independence movement. He has no diocesan duties but teaches at Puerto Rico's state university here and at the Catholic University in Ponce. He is a pioneer in Puerto Rico's cooperative farm movement and a former rector of Ponce's major seminary.

"There are two sets of conditions in our island which amount to a critical violation of human dignity," he said.

"One is the continuation of colonialism, however disguised under attractive names, and in spite of a certain autonomy in the public administration. The burden of such stigma is worsened by the fact that other peoples have been decolonized.

"The other set of conditions, resulting from the first, is paternalism, which keeps our people in a state of inferiority in all fields—political, social, economic, cultural and religious."

Bishop Parrilla asserted that paternalism "permeates all aspects of our lives: the home, where parents neglect to raise children in the proper use of freedom; the school, subservient to the established order; the factory, an irritant in industrial relations.

"Even trade unions have copied paternalistic aspects of the U.S. labor movement," Bishop Parrilla said. "There is paternalism within our churches, as is evident in the lack of dialogue."

AMERICAN AT VATICAN NAMED BISHOP

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — Msgr. Paul Marchinkus, a priest of the Chicago archdiocese who is on the staff of the Vatican Secretariat of State, has been named to the episcopacy and assigned to the titular Diocese of Orta by Pope Paul VI.

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Tokyo (RNS) — Christians now number 858,602 among Japan's population of 100 million or nearly one per cent of the total, according to figures made public here.

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U.N. More Words Than Action

By Jeff Kadri
Special Correspondent

United Nations, N.Y. — (RNS) — The 23rd regular session of the U.N. General Assembly, just concluded, may go down in history as one of that body's most disjointed, lackluster, argumentative, and contradictory performances.

Because of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia, the bloodletting in Biafra, and the continuing brink-of-war hostility in the Middle East, the Vietnamese war was hardly mentioned.

The other three crises produced considerable verbiage but the 126-nation Assembly, for various reasons, shied away from doing anything about them.

"The humanitarian problem in Nigeria" did not come before the Assembly.

It might seem incredible that Vietnam did not appear on the agenda, but it would have been "highly inconvenient" to have Vietnam discussed during peace negotiations in Paris and an election campaign in the U.S.

The president, Emilio Arenales of Guatemala, said the United Nations faces defeat because of "the unrealistic, and emotional approach of a large number of delegates." He used the "unrealistic" because delegations devoted their efforts to produce a number of resolutions for each item, forgetting that the "will of this world are not cured simply by negotiated resolutions but by the actions of governments."

If member states are not ready to transform thought into action the United Nations will remain a "mythical entity in which only those of us who work here believe." Nor must it be forgotten, he added, that before governments can carry out decisions, peoples must be prepared.

"When the people are not ready to lay aside emotion or violence, their leaders can do nothing and political and diplomatic efforts will be of no avail," he said.

But with the exception of Western Europe, North America, Latin America and some Far Eastern countries, the bulky Afro-Asian bloc soon returned to its obsessive preoccupation with apartheid, foreign interest in Portuguese Angola and Mozambique, the remnants of colonialism (only Western) and the complaint that the "have" countries are doing too little, too reluctantly and far too late at far too discriminatory arrangements for

the "have-nots" which were statistically getting poorer rather than richer.

Communist countries were clearly on the defensive throughout. Despite the severe verbal spanking the invasion partners received from countries neutral or sympathetic to the Soviet cause, they but seldom used their big propaganda guns trying to out-thunder the cries of the world public opinion which, for reasons of justice, outrage, international morality, legalism, humanitarianism or plain sympathy for the underdog, kept returning to this subject.

Communist countries, in Czechoslovakia notwithstanding, staged one of the loudest protests in years over the presence of United Nations troops in South Korea.

In de-colonization debates they were second to none demanding "immediate" liquidation of foreign rule or influence.

Peace-keeping remained a dream and those in the U.N. who had pushed hard to make it a reality had to admit that 1967 was a total failure.

The Middle East crisis simmered all fall, spilled over into

the Security Council a few times, but in essence remained static, and so did the mediating mission of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring of Sweden.

Louder than before, some of the more militant Arab nations demanded the scrapping of the 1948 U.N. decision to create Israel as a state in the first place.

The Communist countries, except Rumania, fully sided with the Arabs, including their argument that alleged Israeli treatment of Arab refugees has surpassed Nazi atrocities against the Jews during World War II.

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New Sisters'

By FATHER PATRICK J. (NC News Service)

Salmon — The willingness of the Sisters to serve the people in dangerous areas to the morale of U.S. troops. Msgr. Andrew Landi, assistant director of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the overseas agency of U.S. Catholics.

After finishing an extensive tour in Vietnam to evaluate the country at Go Vap and in Saigon, Hue, Kontum, and An Giang in the Mekong Delta.

Nam Hai and Cam Ranh go projects to afford boys and long range help displaced by the fighting. The team has a child welfare in hand while the Go Vap in an orphanage, one of the country. In the De engaged in social welfare in Kontum in the central the team provides health.

Commenting on his trip, Landi said, "I am very satisfied with the personnel, their dedication to their work, and their dedication to the people. The fact that all of them carry risks, lack of comfort in their accommodations in some areas are no complaints. They are a high esteem by the U.S. military, the Vietnamese, and the people, men, women, and children whom the team is serving."

When he last visited months ago, Msgr. Landi set up the teams that are among the refugees and projects. Having seen the situation, he said, "The teams

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