

Synod Action Foreseen on World Justice

By FR. ROBERT A. GRAHAM

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Vatican City — (RNS) —
"Justice in the World" is a
nice generality, in the minds
of most people, but at the Bish-
ops' Synod it is emerging grimly
as a jumping off point for
unprecedented Church involvement in
crucial world problems.

Specifically, the bishops are
being asked to declare open
war on colonialism and the
veiled recommendation was
made that the right of recourse
to revolution be invoked in the
name of the Christian mission
of liberation.

Never in modern times has
the issue of political or near
political action been raised so
openly at this high Church
level.

The direction was set by
Archbishop Teopisto Alberto y
Valderama of Caceres, the Phil-

ippines, in his formal presenta-
tion of the Synod's second ma-
jor theme which is world jus-
tice.

Truth to tell, his exposition
was no surprise and consisted
mainly of a sympathetic review
of the background paper sent
out to the bishops months ago
by the Synod secretariat. The
document had been elaborated
by a group of experts from the
Pontifical Commission on Jus-
tice and Peace. The archbish-
op's introduction also borrowed
heavily from the letter of Pope
Paul VI to Cardinal Maurice
Roy of Quebec marking the
80th anniversary of Pope Leo's
social encyclical, Rerum No-
varum.

As the Synod discussions go
forward with emphasis on ac-
tion rather than doctrine, the
letter to Cardinal Roy may
mark the beginning of the
"post-encyclical era." The only
surprise was that the Synod
spokesman did not tone down
some startling phrases of the
earlier documents.

The inaugural statement and,
probably more so, the remarks
based on it by various bishops
are likely to arouse the anger
of some governments — and
not only Portugal and Brazil.
It is guaranteed to arouse the
world's right-wing press and
perhaps also stir the irritation
of the world's secular human-
ists who may feel this new
Church line is unfair competi-
tion.

To put it briefly, Archbishop
Alberto expects from the Synod
a condemnation of political, so-
cial, economic and cultural op-
pression and this not in words
or in doctrine but by action.
He spoke against the back-
ground of a revolutionary situa-
tion, as many define it in
Latin America above all and
presumably also in the Philippi-
nes. It is of vital importance,
he said, quoting the Latin
American bishops in a recent
statement for the Church —
that is, the official or institu-
tional Church — to assemble
at the continental and world
level, "to resist those powers

which often hold millions of
men in state of dependence and
servitude."

The finger of accusation of
injustice and oppression is
pointed squarely at developed
countries and to the oligarchy
within the respective develop-
ing countries who are their ac-
complices in "institutionalized
international injustice."

Having squeezed the last
drop out of the guilt com-
plexes of the developed peo-
ples, the speaker then said that
the situation of injustice and
oppression is really not due to
any moral failure or omission
but to the whole "system" in
the political, economic, social
and cultural domain. Moral in-
dignation is not enough, he
said, study and action are ne-
cessary.

The situation, he went on to
say, "needs strong medicine
and if necessary a surgical op-
eration" in the name of jus-
tice, liberation and progress.
Archbishop Alberto stated:
"Where men and nations are

prevented positively from de-
veloping themselves in con-
formity with human nature or
where they are denied access
to the means necessary to such
progress, they are living in a
condition of unjust oppression
and have the right to liberate
themselves by recourse to the
means of defense that the na-
tural law grants to them."

This is a rather elementary if
not even scholastic statement of
a general ethical principle. In
the context of the revolutionary
situation and in the presence
of the Synod of Bishops, it is a
Church boost to the various
revolutionary movements cur-
rently taking the field, includ-
ing North Ireland.

The speaker also stated, "In
short, if progress is a right, it
should not only be recognized
in theory, but also in practice.
To exercise this right in the
developing countries means to
defend them against minorities
in their countries and against
minorities exploiting others for
their own benefit in the inter-
national sphere."



BARBARA WARD

Church Must Reflect Justice, Barbara Ward Tells Synod

Vatican City — (RNS)—Dr.
Barbara Ward (Lady Jackson),
noted British economist, told
the Synod of Bishops that the
Catholic Church should be
careful to conduct "its own af-
fairs" in a "strict spirit of jus-
tice and poverty."

Dr. Ward spoke on "Justice
in the World," the second ma-
jor theme of the Synod.

Dr. Ward was one of two
Catholic lay women named by
Pope Paul VI to be "assistants
to the special secretary" for
questions on justice and peace
before the Synod. The other is
Maria Del Pilar Bellosillo of
Spain, a consultant to the Vati-
can Council on the laity. Dr.
Ward is a member of the Vati-
can's Justice and Peace Com-
mission.

She appealed to the world's
bishops to include four points
in their response to what she
described as "the deepening
crisis of world justice."

These four points, she said,
comprised the following: One,
to set in motion a process of
education of all Roman Catho-

lics in the facts of world jus-
tice, and global interdepend-
ence.

"Two, to call on all Catholic
citizens in developed countries
to join in demanding a per-
manent commitment by govern-
ments to expanded trade with-
out which economic develop-
ment on a wide scale could not
succeed.

"Three, to urge all Catholics
to reconsider their social struc-
tures and personal living stan-
dards, because many of us
profit only too lavishly by pat-
terns of ownership and income.

"Four, to see to it that the
Church herself conduct its own
affairs in a strict spirit of jus-
tice and poverty."

Condemn Colonialism, Racism, Vatican Agency Urges Synod

Vatican City — (RNS)—Call-
ing for a "worldwide non-vio-
lent revolution of love," a Vati-
can commission urged the Ro-
man Catholic Church to find
ways to express its "solidarity"
with all victims of "colonial-
ism, neo-colonialism, and racial
discrimination."

"We refer especially to terri-
tories like those in southern
Africa, where the white minor-
ity oppresses the black major-
ity, often in the name of Chris-
tian civilization," the commis-
sion said.

The Pontifical Commission
on Justice and Peace, in a doc-
ument submitted to the World
Synod of Catholic Bishops now
in progress, urged the Synod
to condemn the world's vast ex-
penditures on armaments; to
give practical support to paci-
fism; to assist all efforts for de-
velopment; and to launch a
worldwide campaign to promote
"liberation, justice and peace."

The 64-point message of the
18-member commission, aimed
at spurring the Synod to take
concrete action, differs from
the official working paper on
"Justice in the World" distrib-
uted some time ago to the
world's Catholic bishops. World
justice is the theme now being
discussed by the synodal dele-
gates. The official document
speaks in more general terms
and avoids specific and pointed
references to injustices.

The commission's message
spoke out strongly on the need
for the Church to back cam-
paigns for liberation and pro-
gress in developing countries.

"Local (national) Churches,"
it said, "should support internal
moves for change, and the uni-

versal Church should denounce
the domination of poor nations
by wealthy nations."

"Local churches," it went on,
"should stimulate their mem-
bers to align themselves in po-
litical life and take up political
action, including the creation
of public opinion, the forma-
tion of minority pressure
groups, and the employment of
democratic processes to achieve
reforms."

The document said that "to
this end," the national
Churches should make every
possible effort to work within
existing structures, "but they
should be prepared to reject
those which cannot reform
themselves and to create
others."

Cardinal Warns Of Infanticide

Washington, D.C. — (RNS)
— Cardinal Patrick A. O'Boyle
of Washington warned a Catho-
lic women's group here that so-
ciety is facing a new danger in
its growing demand for popula-
tion control — infanticide.

The prelate, an outspoken
champion of Catholic Church
opposition to birth control and
liberalized abortion over the
years, reacted to a report in
local newspapers that physi-
cians at Johns Hopkins Univer-
sity Hospital, Baltimore,
watched a mongoloid baby
starve to death.

The infant's parents had re-
fused permission for a "simple
operation," he said, to correct a
digestive obstruction.

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