

Pope Paul: Man Must Change Attitude toward Nature

Stockholm (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, in a message to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment said the technological approaches to environmental problems will prove unavailing unless there is "a radical change" in man's attitude toward nature.

Calling for "a trusting communion with the laws of nature," the pontiff said that "for the human race, subduing nature means not destroying it but perfecting it: not transforming the world into an uninhabitable chaos, but into a home which is beautiful and ordered in respect for all things."

His message was read at the opening session by Father Henri

de Reidmatten, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Emergency Relief and Development, who heads the Vatican delegation to the conference.

Emphasizing man's "indivisibility from his environment," Pope Paul affirmed that man's creative abilities will bear "real and lasting fruits" only to the extent that man "respects the laws of nature" that regulate progress, prevent pollution, soften the effects of natural catastrophes and allow for renewal.

The pontiff stressed the need of replacing "the often blind and brutal thrust of material progress, left to the mercy of its own dynamics, with a profound respect for the biosphere in an

over-all vision of the dominion entrusted to mankind."

Observing that "scientific and technological progress — in spite of its promising aspects for the development of all peoples — also carries with it, like every human activity, very serious dangers," the Pope listed some of the dangers threatening total environmental pollution.

Among these, he said, are the possibilities of "atomic, chemical and bacteriological warfare and many other instruments of war for which our moral awareness cannot but feel horror."

The Pope then mentioned "unbalances" produced in the biosphere "by disordered exploita-



tion of our planet's physical reserves, as well as by the waste of our natural resources, which cannot be renewed, and by the pollution of our soil, water, air, and space — with consequent deplorable damage to all vegetable, animal and human life."

Alluding to the unbalance created in many parts of the world by population growth, Pope Paul cautioned against "easy solutions." "The demographic problem," he said, "will not be solved by unjustly limiting the right to life."

This remark was interpreted as a reiteration of the Catholic Church's condemnation of abortion.

Pope Paul ended his message to the U.N. conference with a plea that, while the participants

consider questions of "ecological equilibrium," they also give heed to the problem of a "just equilibrium" of prosperity between the world's rich and poor nations.

The imbalance which exists between the two groups of countries, he said, "has rightly been called the worst of all pollutions."

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Urges Morality in Medicine

Pope Paul VI raises the chalice during the celebration of Mass in the Vatican Sistine Chapel, attended by members of the International College of Surgeons. In his comments to the group who are practicing medicine, he said morality in the therapeutic field of medicine "is developing into a science of cases of conscience that ranges very widely and is very often of the gravest importance" and asked the delegates to join in a battle against what he said is a growing "indifference and permissive hedonism" throughout the world. (RNS)

Pontiff Warmly Greets Buddhists

Vatican City (RNS) — Officials of the Christian Unity Secretariat are assessing the effect of Pope Paul's expression of "extremely warm" regards to a visiting delegation of Buddhists.

Most observers and experts, as well as secretariat members, feel the "profound regards" that the pontiff voiced at an audience with the Buddhists from Thailand will "go a long way toward stepping up dialogue" between the two faiths.

"We recognize the values of which you are the custodians, and we share the desire that they should be preserved and fostered," the pontiff told the Buddhists.

"We hope that there will be increasingly friendly dialogue and close collaboration between the traditions that you represent and the Catholic Church," he said, adding:

"Such contacts can assist in advancing the cause of justice and peace in a world that needs a united effort by as many people as possible to overcome the grave problems which face the world."

'Pieta' Defender Honored by Pope

Vatican City (RNS) — Marco Ottaggio, a young Roman fireman who defended Michelangelo's La Pieta sculpture when it was attacked two weeks ago by a Hungarian drifter, was made a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Paul in ceremonies here. Ottaggio, one of 2,000 off duty firemen attending a religious service at St. Peter's Basilica where the statue is located, helped save the masterpiece from total destruction.

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"Burn" The Missions

Fire is one of those elements in life expressing our feelings and experiences. As a symbol, it can represent a blessing or a tragedy; it can be a light that guides or blinds; or a heat that warms or blisters.

Scripture and religious symbolism make use of this dichotomy in fire: God appears to Moses in a burning bush and the end of the world, it is said, will come by fire. Hell is symbolized by fire while the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in "tongues of fire."

We, too, receive this Spirit at Baptism, Confirmation, and in our celebration of Pentecost — and its presence and effect are (or can be) just as powerful and life-changing as the first Pentecost. I have never seen a flame of fire alight on someone's head, but I have seen people so "on fire with love" that their whole presence gives out a warmth and light to others. If you have ever visited a mission among poor and suffering people, and have seen a missionary working in their presence, you would know what I mean. You would see the Spirit at work in the Sister who reaches out with a smile to a frightened, crippled victim of leprosy who crawled 10 miles to get to the mission clinic. You would hear the Spirit speaking in the catechist, enthusiastically telling a Gospel story to a group of friends. You can see the fire of God's Love in every missionary who comes home to visit — to beg for money for his people — anxiously waiting to return to the missions.

And yes, I have seen the Spirit in the hearts and minds of so many people, not missionaries, but so in love with God and the world that they give and really sacrifice to support these missionaries bringing the Good News of Pentecost to the neediest of peoples. The Third World peoples need many things: food, medicine, education, and social development, and these are being given by today's missionaries, thanks to your generosity; but above all — you are sharing in their greatest work: bringing the "fire of Truth and Faith" and the experience of God to others.

This Pentecostal Season, I pray that we all receive the experience of the Spirit who will enkindle in us even more, the fire of love, and that we will "burn the missions" with that love, and with the Spirit, renew the face of the earth.

It was this Spirit that compelled young Pauline Jaricot 150 years ago to found a society for mission support. Through the workings of the Spirit this Society grew to become the Pope's own society for mission support by the entire Church, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. This year celebrates its 150th anniversary. May this time of Pentecost find each of you a part of this celebration, your sincere prayers and generous sacrifices for the Church's missionaries and the poor they serve.

"Come, Holy Spirit, and set us on fire with Your Love." Please join with us by sending your special gift for the missions today. Remember the Society for the Propagation of the Faith when writing or changing your will.

SALVATION AND SERVICE are the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Please cut out this column and send your offering to Most Reverend Edward T. O'Meara, National Director, DEPT. C. 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or directly to your local Diocesan Director, Reverend Joseph Reinhart, 123 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14604 6/14/72

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