

Liberation Theology Demands Christ's Truth

Following is the text of Pope John Paul's remarks on liberation theology, given at the general audience on Feb. 21.

Today I wish to refer to the subject of the third conference of the Latin American Episcopate: to evangelization. It is a fundamental subject, a subject that is always topical. The conference which ended its work at Puebla on Feb. 13, bears witness to this. It is, moreover, the subject "of the future," the subject which the Church must live continually and prolong in the future. The subject, therefore, constitutes the permanent perspective of Christ's mission.



To evangelize means making Christ present in the life of man as a person, and at the same time in the life of society. To evangelize means doing everything possible, according to our capacities, in order that man "may believe;" in order that man may find himself again in Christ; in order that he may find again in him the meaning and the adequate dimension of his own life. This finding again is at the same time the deepest source of man's liberation. St. Paul expresses this when he writes: "For freedom Christ has set us free." So, liberation, then, is certainly a reality of faith, one of the fundamental biblical themes, which are a deep part of Christ's salvific mission, of the work of Redemption, of his teaching. This subject has never ceased to constitute the content of the spiritual life of Christians. The Conference of the Latin American Bishops bears witness that this subject returns in a new historical context; therefore it must be taken up again in the teaching of the Church, in theology, in the apostolate. It must be taken up again in its own depth, and in its evangelical authenticity.

There are many circumstances that make it such a relevant subject today. It is difficult to mention them all here. Certainly it is recalled by that "universal desire for dignity" on the part of man, of which the Second Vatican Council speaks. The "theology of liberation" is often connected (sometimes too exclusively) with Latin America; but it must be admitted

that one of the great contemporary theologians, Hans Urs von Balthasar, is right when he demands a theology of liberation on a universal scale. Only the contexts are different, but the reality itself of the freedom "for which Christ set us free" is universal. The task of theology is to find its real significance in the different concrete historical and contemporary contexts.

Christ himself links liberation particularly with knowledge of the truth: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." This sentence testifies above all to the intimate significance of the freedom for which Christ liberates us. Liberation means man's inner transformation, which is a consequence of the knowledge of truth. This transformation is, therefore, a spiritual process, in which man matures "in true righteousness and holiness." Man, inwardly mature in this way, becomes a representative and a spokesperson of this in the various righteousness environments of social life. Truth is important for the growth of human knowledge, deepening man's interior life in this way: truth has also a prophetic significance and power. It constitutes the content of testimony and calls for testimony. We find this prophetic power of truth in the teaching of Christ. As a prophet, as a witness to truth, Christ repeatedly opposes non-truth; he does so with great forcefulness and decision and often he does not hesitate to condemn falsehood. Let us re-read the Gospel carefully; we will find in it a good many severe expressions — for example, "white-washed tombs," "blind guides," "hypocrites," which Christ utters, aware of the consequences that are in store for him.

So this service of truth as participation in Christ's prophetic service is a task of the Church, which tries to carry it out in the various historical contexts. It is necessary to call by their name injustice, the exploitation of man by man, or the exploitation of man by State, institutions, mechanisms of systems and regimes which sometimes operate without sensitivity. It is necessary to call by name every social injustice, discrimination, violence inflicted on man against the body, against the spirit, against his conscience and against his convictions. Christ teaches us a special sensitivity for man, for the dignity of the human person, for human life, for the human spirit and body. It is this sensitivity which bears witness to the

knowledge of that "truth which makes us free." It is not permitted for man to conceal this truth from himself. It is not permitted to "falsify it." It is not permitted to make this truth a "bargaining point." It is necessary to speak of it clearly and simply; and not to "condemn" men, but to serve man's cause. Liberation also in the social sense begins with knowledge of truth.

Let us stop at this point. It is difficult to express in a short speech everything involved in this great subject, which has many aspects and, above all, many levels. I stress: many levels, because it is necessary, in this subject, to see man according to the different elements of all the riches of his personal and at the same time social being; his "historical" and at the same time, in a certain way, "supertemporal" being. (History, among other things, bears witness to this "supertemporality" of man). The being that the "thinking reed" is — everyone knows how frail a reed is — just because it is "thinking" always goes beyond itself; it bears within it the transcendental mystery and a "creative restlessness" which springs from the latter.

We will stop for the present at this point. The theology of liberation must, above all, be faithful to the whole truth on man, in order to show clearly, not only in the Latin American context but also in all contemporary contexts, which reality is this freedom "for which Christ set us free."

Christ! It is necessary to speak of our liberation in Christ; it is necessary to proclaim this liberation. It must be integrated into the whole contemporary reality of our liberation in Christ, must become, for us all, more and more evident and more and more full.

"For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."

The Church, looking to Christ who bears witness to the truth, must always and everywhere ask herself, and in a certain sense also the contemporary "world," how to make good emerge from man, how to liberate the dynamism of the good that is in man, in order that it may be stronger than evil, etc. The third conference of the Latin American bishops bears witness to the readiness to undertake this effort. We want not only to recommend this effort to God, but also to follow it for the good of the Church and of the whole human family.



Catholic Charismatics
AUBURN
St. Alphonsus Prayer Group
95 E. Genesee St.
Auburn, 13021
Michael Brown 315-586-6767
Phillip Gauthier 315-253-4206
Friday, 8 p.m.
BATH
St. Mary's Prayer Group
36 East Morris St
Bath 14810
Mrs. Nancy Jones 607-776-3996
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
CALEDONIA
Rosary Group
198 North St.
Caledonia 14423
Loretta Parnell 716-538-2378
Friday, 1 p.m.
St. Columba's Saturday Night
Prayer Group
198 North St.
Caledonia, 14423
Loretta Parnell 716-538-2378
Saturday, 8 p.m.
CANANDAIGUA
St. Mary's Prayer Group
Gibson Street
Canandaigua 14424
Robert Abraham 716-394-2955
Tuesday, 7:45 p.m.
CONESUS
Word of God Prayer Group
St. William's Church
Elm Street
Conesus, 14435
Ann La Forest 716-246-3444
Wednesday, 8 p.m.
CORNING
"Anawim"
St. Mary's House of Prayer
161 State St.
Corning 14830

Father Francis Marino 607-936-4965
Thursday, 8 p.m.
ELMIRA
St. Mary's Prayer Group
Marian Centre Building
225 Franklin St.
Elmira 14904
Bernard Rutzke 607-733-3460
Sunday, 8 p.m.
St. Patrick's Prayer Group
Christian Living Room
Park Place and Main Street
Elmira 14901
Rosemary Hackett 607-732-1488
Thursday, 8 p.m.
GENESEEO
St. Michael's Prayer Group
23 Main St.
Genesee 14454
Michael Duff 716-243-0947
Sunday, 8:30 p.m.
GENEVA
St. Spephem's Prayer Community
DeSales High School
Geneva 14456
S. L. Venuti 315-789-8557
Monday, 8 p.m.
HAMLIN
Chadash
Lynch Home
830 Clarkson-Hamlin Rd.
Hamlin 14464
Warren and Helen Lynch 716-964-2498
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
HENRIETTA
The Good Shepherd Prayer Group
Good Shepherd Chapel
3264 East Henrietta Rd.
Henrietta 14467
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Iacono 716-334-9772
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
HOLCOMB
Charismatic Prayer Group
2360 Pond Rd.
Holcomb 14469
Don Rimlinger 716-657-7644
Thursday, 8:30 p.m.
HORNELL
St. Ann's Prayer Group
St. Ann's School Hall
31 Erie Ave.
Hornell 14843
Harry R. Fillmore 607-324-3680
Friday, 8 p.m.

HORSEHEADS
One in Love Prayer Group
St. Mary Our Mother School,
815 West Lake St.
Horseheads 14845
Sally Ryan 607-739-5514
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
ITHACA
Catholic Charismatic Prayer
Group
Anabel Taylor Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca 14843
Father Jim Connolly
607-272-2240/256-4228
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
LIMA
People of Joy,
St. Rose Church
1985 Lake Ave
Lima 14485
Mrs. Jean La Bore 716-582-1319
Monday, 9 a.m.
MENDON
St. Catherine's Prayer Group
20 Mendon-Ionia Rd.
Mendon 14506
Ray DeMeo 716-586-6259
Monday, 7:45 p.m.
MT. MORRIS
St. Patrick Prayer Group
St. Patrick Convent
33 Murray St.
Mt. Morris 14510
Charles Garagozzo 716-658-3413/4460
Thursday, 8 p.m.
NEWARK
Little Flock
St. Michael's Church
Main Street
Newark 14513
Dick and Anne Switzer 315-331-1379
Sunday, 7:30 p.m.
NEWFIELD
Newfield Christian Community
Prayer Group
1185 Trumbull Cors. Rd.
Newfield 14867
Norman Burlew 607-564-7724
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
OWEGO
St. Patrick's Church Prayer Group
300 Main St.
Owego 13827
James Ross 607-687-4674
Tuesday, 7 p.m.

PENFIELD
Holy Spirit Prayer Group
PO Box 127
Penfield 14526
Albert P. Bergeron 716-671-3777
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
St. Joseph's Prayer Group
St. Joseph's Church
43 Gebhardt Rd.
Penfield 14526
Robert Hess 716-586-3016
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
PENN YAN
Christian Fellowship
214 Keuka St.
Penn Yan 14527
Agnes DeMoras 315-536-2081
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
PINE CITY
Mount Saviour Prayer Group
Mount Saviour Monastery
Pine City 14871
Brother John Brown 607-734-1688
Tuesday, 7 p.m.
PITTSFORD
Glory of Yahweh Christian
Fellowship
St. Joseph's Motherhouse
4095 East Ave.
Pittsford, N.Y. 14534
Mrs. Martin Lynch
716-385-1035
Monday, 7:30 p.m.
ROCHESTER
Christ the King Prayer Group
445 Kings Highway South
Rochester 14617
Father Donald E. McCarthy, CSB
716-266-1288
Monday, 8 p.m.
Emmanuel
St. John's Convent
150 Floverton St.
Rochester 14610
Judy Costello 716-654-9597
Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.
Holy Redeemer Prayer Group
Hudson and Clifford Aves.
Rochester 14621
Generosa Rivera 716-325-3718
Saturday, Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Holy Rosary Prayer Group
269 Lexington Ave.
Rochester 14613
Jerry and Diane Kacprzak 716-647-3497
Sunday, 7:30 p.m.

St. Andrew's Life in the Spirit
Prayer Group
Portland Avenue
Rochester 14621
Joseph J. Marotta 716-544-2172
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
St. Augustine's Prayer Group
St. Augustine's School
420 Chili Ave.
Rochester 14611
Thomas Almeter 716-328-3735
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
The New Commandment
St. John the Evangelist Parish
2400 West Ridge Rd.
Rochester 14626
George H. Frank 716-225-8185
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Mother of Sorrows Prayer Group
5000 Mt. Read Blvd.
Rochester 14612
Thomas Kluchko 716-865-0163
Thursday, 8 p.m.
St. Helen's Prayer Group
50 Lexington Pkwy.
Rochester 14624
Donna Brongo 716-247-4396
Monday, 10 a.m.
St. Philip Neri's Prayer Group
1782 Clifford Ave.
Rochester 14609
Joseph Marmo 716-338-7708
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
St. Michael's Prayer Group
3681 Lake Ave.
Rochester 14612
William W. Buechel 716-663-7645
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
St. Michael's Women's Prayer
Group
3681 Lake Ave.
Rochester 14612
Mary A Buechel 716-663-7645
Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.
St. Charles Borromeo Prayer
Group
St. Charles Church Nursery
3003 Dewey Ave.
Rochester 15616
Dorothy and Taffner 716-227-5579
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
St. Cecilia's Prayer Group
50 Sandoris Circ.
Rochester 14622
Gene Mieltski 716-342-5785
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
St. Pius Tenth Prayer Community
St. Pius Tenth School
300 Chili Ave.
Rochester 14624
Mr. and Mrs. Jack McTigue 716-889-2134
Wednesday, 8 p.m.

SENECA FALLS
Maranatha Prayer Group
18 Bayard St. W.
Seneca Falls 13148
Lucy N. Briggs 315-568-8112
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
UNION SPRINGS
New Life Prayer Community
Yates Residence
Lavanna Road
Scipioville, N.Y. 13160
Paul and Connie Yates
315-364-8562
Friday, 8 p.m.
VICTOR
St. Patrick's Prayer Meeting
6209 Silver Birch Dr.
Victor 14564
Father Paul Cloonan 716-924-7111
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
WATERLOO
St. Mary's Parish Prayer Group
25 Center St.
Waterloo 13165
Kathy McCutcheon 315-539-4218
Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.
WAVERLY
St. James Prayer Group
St. James School
505 Clark St.
Waverly 14892
Mrs. Lois Cullinan 607-565-7867
Sunday, 7:30 p.m.
WEBSTER
The Glory of the Risen Lord
Prayer Group
St. Paul's Church
783 Hard Rd.
Webster 14580
John F. Paille 716-671-6090
Thursday, 8 p.m.
Bethlehem Prayer Community
St. Rita's Church
1008 Maple Dr.
Webster 14580
Joseph Aman 716-671-7297
Tuesday, 8 p.m.
For the initial listing of a Catholic charismatic prayer group, or for a subsequent change, persons are advised to contact Father Thomas F. Schmidt, Notre Dame Retreat House, PO Box 342, Foster Road, Canandaigua 14424, (716) 394-5700.