

THE POPE

# Central America Shares Christ's Passion

(Following are excerpts from the NC News translation of Pope John Paul II's address during the general audience of March 16, at which he spoke on his pilgrimage to Central America.)

"In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine."



"Accept us humble and penitent, O Lord." may that pastoral ministry which you permitted me to carry through in the countries of Central America during these recent days of Lent be pleasing to you.

In the period when the entire Church seeks to be particularly close to Christ — who accepts temptation and sacrifice — you permitted me, O God, to find myself particularly close to the peoples who are partaking in Christ's temptation and sufferings in a particular way in our day; you permitted me, O Lord, to celebrate the most holy sacrifice with them and meditate upon your word. You permitted me to venerate the Mother of Christ with them, particularly at the shrine of Suyapa in Honduras. You permitted me to live the unity of the people of God, which is covering a particularly difficult stage of its earthy pilgrimage.

It was convenient to make one single pilgrimage through the countries of Central America, without forgetting however that they are different from one another and not all countries visited belong to Central America strictly speaking.

They are separate countries. They are among the small countries in the great family of peoples and states. None of them has even 10 million inhabitants. They number about 28 million altogether.

Before my eyes are millions of human beings. During the days I spent there they gathered about the Bishop of Rome during the celebration of the sacred liturgy and during his passage through streets and plazas. I wanted to give those men and those peoples testimony of the Church's love and solidarity.

Particularly important from the point of view of themes and ministry were my meetings with ecclesiastics: priests in El Salvador, men religious in Guatemala and women religious in Costa Rica.

It is generally known that the societies I had the grace to meet during that journey continue in a state of great internal tension, and some are actually theaters of war. This is particularly true of some of them.

The tensions have their sources in old socio-economic structures, in unjust structures which permit accumulation of the majority of goods in the hands of a numerically small elite alongside the co-existing poverty and misery of an enormous majority of society. This unjust system has to be changed through adequate reforms and observance of the principals of social democracy. Along this path alone and in respect for the individuality of each society concerned, must the solid international collaboration necessary for these societies also take shape. Events of recent years prove, however, that attempts are rather being made to find solutions along the path of violence, by imposing guerrilla warfare, which in El Salvador alone has already caused tens of thousands of victims, including Archbishop Oscar Romero. This struggle is being conducted in notable measure with the aid of foreign efforts and with arms furnished from outside against the will of the vast majority of society, which instead desires peace and democracy. This is what one of the best-qualified representatives of the episcopate of that country has declared.

On the last day, in Haiti it was given to me to open the periodic meeting of the delegates of the Latin American Bishops Council.

That meeting had to deal with a series of problems vital for the Church in all of Latin America.

The fundamental and central problem is to insure the identity of the Church on the doctrinal and pastoral level in conformity with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the directives of the general conference of the Latin American episcopate at Puebla in 1979. In contradistinction to this identity are many attempts to subordinate the evangelical contents to political categories and aims.

The Church of the people of God expresses its genuine face first of all with the adoration of the mystery of the Eucharist, and it is unthinkable that this mystery could

## Rosary Seminar Planned

Elmira — The Ladies of the Immaculate Heart Society of Ss. Peter and Paul's Church will sponsor a Rosary Seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m., Sunday, May 1, in the school hall.

Sister Edwina of Notre Dame High School will be the guest speaker. Her topic, "A Pilgrimage," will feature a

slide presentation on the Shrine of Lourdes in France.

A social hour will follow the program. All Catholic women's groups are invited. Reservations may be made by mail to Theodora Bragg, 611 Jay St., Elmira, 14901; or Bea Norton, 463 Maple Ave., Elmira, 14904.

undergo a deformation, which unfortunately happened in one case. Fortunately, it remained an isolated one. Such a deformation borders on an organized profanation of the eucharistic liturgy.

The Church in Latin America as in all Latin America possesses great sources of Christian devotion and faith. This is a "popular" devotion, concentrated on the principal mysteries of the faith: on the most Holy Trinity, the Redemption, the sufferings of Christ, the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, and the Mother of God. Guided by a healthy "sense of the faith," the people of God ought to follow Christ, the Good Shepherd, through the ministry of all pastors united with the Bishop of Rome. Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, this union shows the way of true evangelization, and at the same time the way of authentic service for the sake of peace and justice, of which the societies of Central America have so much need.

"I wanted to give those men and those peoples testimony of the Church's love and solidarity."

And the universal Church must not be lacking in prayer and concern for those particularly tried brethren of ours, especially now, as the Holy Year of the Extraordinary Jubilee of the Redemption of the World approaches.

# EASTER SPECIALS

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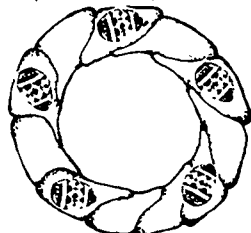
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## Special

The Nazare "Children's Cheerful," p of New Yor program bei McPherson begin at 11 available fro