

National/International Report

Pope goes to Chile as mediator, departs amid violence

By Agostino Bono
Antofagasta, Chile (NC) — Pope John Paul II visited Chile to celebrate his success as an international mediator, but he soon found himself embroiled in deep domestic divisions regarding the 13-year rule of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Although the pope repeatedly preached against using violence to effect change, violent episodes occurred during several papal events, with more than 400 people injured in clashes between police and anti-government demonstrators.

During his visit with the pope, Pinochet justified the actions of his military government as a means of defending the "authentic values of the Christian West" against international Marxist subversion. The Holy Father prayed briefly with Pinochet and his wife in the chapel of the presidential palace.

During the April 1-6 trip, the pope also met opposition political leaders, viewed numerous anti-government signs at papal events, and witnessed a bloody clash between demonstrators and police at a papal Mass.

Protest signs accused the government of murder, torture, kidnapping and being a dictatorship. Pinochet's reign also has been the focus of stiff criticism from the Chilean bishops and international human-rights organizations.

The pope did not offer to mediate. Instead, he proposed dialogue and reconciliation as the means by which Christian societies should solve their differences.

On March 31, as he flew toward South America on his 13-day trip to the continent, Pope John Paul characterized Chile as a dictatorship in transition to democracy. He also said the Church was obliged to champion human rights in that country.

During his visit, he developed two major themes: respect for human rights and rejection of violence as the means to socio-political change.

The theme of human rights easily could be interpreted as a subtle criticism of the Pinochet regime. The second could be interpreted as a rebuke of guerrilla movements that recruit new members from the ranks of frustrated youths.

The pope voiced the theme of non-violence in Montevideo, Uruguay, his first stop, March 31, and repeated it at major stops in Chile.

He gave tacit support to non-violent opposition leaders seeking a quick return to elected government.

Pinochet, 71, has offered a gradual plan for return to civilian government. The plan specifies that he would remain in office until 1997.

On April 1, his first day in Chile, Pope John Paul listened as Pinochet described his military government as a bulwark of Western Christianity against a tide of Marxism.

The next day, the pope told Santiago slum dwellers that "active participation in public life" — including the election of public officials — is part of a Christian political society. Residents of the poor neighborhoods had presented the pope with their grievances against the government, citing high unemployment and barriers against political participation.

The pope also met April 4 with several leaders of the political opposition, including a Communist Party official. In earlier letters

to the pope, the leaders pledged that their parties would reject violence as a tool for political reform.

Prior to the 1973 military coup that put Pinochet in power, Chile had 46 years of elected, civilian rule under a multiparty system, a record for Latin America.

Banners accusing the government of torturing political prisoners were raised at several papal events. In Concepcion April 4, the pope directly addressed the matter, saying the Church "denounces the practice of moral and physical torture."

Practices of torture are "infamous in themselves" and they "dishonor more their practitioners than their victims," he added. But "the path of violence does not lead to true justice for you nor for others," he said.

Violence, however, became a part of the papal trip. At an April 3 Mass, police and anti-government demonstrators clashed, leaving more than 100 people injured. The incidents occurred about 160 yards from

where the pope was celebrating Mass.

Prior to the clashes, some of the demonstrators identified themselves as members of the Leftist Revolutionary Movement, a Marxist group.

The Chilean bishops blamed the demonstrators for the "senseless violence," but did not say which organizations sponsored the demonstrators.

The pope, without mentioning Marxism, told Catholics not to be seduced by ideologies seeing "programmed class struggle as the dialectic solution to conflicts."

During his April 4 visit to Punta Arenas, one of the southernmost cities in the world, the pope also criticized the arms race, calling it "scandalous to people engulfed in poverty."

During his brief stay in Uruguay, the pope commemorated the 1985 settlement of the Argentine-Chilean border dispute.

Editors say new Bible translation is better for liturgy

By Jerry Filteau
Washington (NC) — A new Catholic translation of the New Testament is better suited for liturgical use than its predecessors were, according to the editors of the new version.

Liturgical use was "a high priority" in the new translation, said Franciscan Father Stephen Hartdegen, secretary of the editorial board and director of the U.S. Catholic Biblical Apostolate.

The new revision also tries to incorporate gender-inclusive language wherever this would not do violence to the original text or to smooth English reading, the editors said during a Washington press conference conducted April 3 to introduce the new Bible.

The revised New Testament of the New American Bible was made public April 5 in Washington. During the earlier press conference, the five-member board of editors presented the new translation to reporters and answered questions about it.

Benedictine Father Claude Peifer of St. Bede's Abbey, Peru, Ill., said the question of sexually discriminatory language "was very much discussed indeed" by the editors, "probably more than any other single issue

over the past eight years." The revision was begun in 1978 and completed last year.

The new translation uses terms like "one" where more traditional translations said "a man," or "human beings" in place of "men."

It does not, however, use gender-neutral terms for God or Christ. Nor does it resort to what the board in a press release called "inelegant circumlocutions or neologisms" to avoid some of the male terminology in ordinary English.

Thus the translation uses "he" and "him" as third-person singular pronouns and "brothers" to translate the Greek *adelphoi*, although it is clear that the original Greek term meant both men and women when it was used to speak of the Christian community as a family.

Although one publisher already has the new version on the market, the 1970 version of the New American Bible New Testament remains as the approved liturgical text, Father Hartdegen said. The editors hope, however, that the newer version will be adapted for liturgical use and approved for that purpose within the next two years or so. Monsignor Myles Bourke of St. Joseph's

Seminary, Yonkers, said the 1970 version "was objected to, I think rightly so, in liturgical use" because — in addition to some benefits — the method of translation it employed also created "sometimes idiosyncratic" translations that might confuse listeners or readers.

Father Gignac said that the new version has restored some of the "traditional terminology" that had been familiar to Catholics.

In the 1970 version, for example, St. Matthew's narration of the Beatitudes began, "How blest are the poor in spirit: the reign of God is theirs. Blest too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled."

The 1986 version of the same passage, though newer, sounds more traditional. It goes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Eight U.S. publishers have been licensed to publish the revised New Testament of the New American Bible, either alone or as part of the whole Bible. Father Hartdegen said there are no immediate plans to do a new revision of the Old Testament.

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