

Father Richard P. McBrien

Essays in Theology



The pope in Chile and Argentina

It didn't require unusual powers of observation to detect a marked difference between the public addresses Pope John Paul II delivered in Chile and those he gave in Argentina last month.

Even before his plane set down in Chile, he told members of the press that its government was "dictatorial," comparing it with the former Marcos regime in the Philippines and the former Duvalier regime in Haiti.

Although the pope never directly challenged General Augusto Pinochet while in the country, the Holy Father made his sentiments clear by his actions and public gestures. He met with human rights groups and warmly embraced a young woman who had become a symbol of human rights abuse in Chile. He nodded approvingly as a Chilean archbishop denounced the nation's "culture of death," and he told a large group of workers, "El Papa makes his own your legitimate aspirations for justice and takes them in his heart."

Finally, the pope urged the big landowners to improve the life of the Indians and farmworkers, giving them "progressive access to property" and better education, "even at the cost" of sacrifice.

In Argentina, however, it was another story. In 26 carefully prepared texts of speeches and homilies, the pope never even mentioned the "disappeared" — a word that refers to anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 people who vanished and presumably died at the hands of the former military rulers of Argentina. It was not until the last night of his visit there that he added one sentence to a major speech in which he made a fleeting mention of these unfortunate victims of official terrorism.

With rare exceptions, the stack of discourses Pope John Paul II carried with him to Argentina made no reference to the country's painful era, during which the nation's military dictators conducted a "dirty war" against the opposition. On the contrary, in one of his strongest speeches, he addressed the problem of divorce rather than human rights violations. He urged the nation's legislators not to repeal Argentina's anti-divorce laws.

Argentina is only one of seven nations in the entire world that still outlaw divorce. Both Uruguay and Chile, the two countries he visited just before Argentina, have legalized divorce — and he uttered not a word about the issue in either place.

Why, then, no significant mention of human rights violations in Argentina, and why this concern about an anachronistic divorce law that is surely to be abolished in due course?

The difference between Chile and Ar-

gentina is the difference between a theologically progressive, socially conscious hierarchy in Chile, and a theologically conservative, socially passive hierarchy in Argentina. Indeed, Argentina's hierarchy has been regarded for years as among the most right-wing of all Latin American episcopal conferences.

While the former military rulers were terrorizing their own people and dropping nuns from helicopters over the ocean, the bishops registered no protests against the government. In fact, human rights groups in Argentina accused the bishops of tacitly supporting the military.

Nobel Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel noted that the Argentine bishops had organized "a beautiful tourist trip" for the pope. Indeed, two Argentine bishops admitted that they had insisted that the pope should refuse to meet with human rights groups.

Two years ago, during his flight home from Peru, Pope John Paul II was asked by reporters why he had lashed out at violence by Maoist guerrillas while saying nothing at all about the Peruvian army's known excesses in battling the leftists. The Pope replied testily, according to The New York Times. He told the reporters that the local bishops had determined his approach.

So it was then, and so it has always been. Despite the Holy Father's reputation for preferring a unilateral, almost monarchical exercise of the Petrine ministry, he is sensitive to the pastoral judgments and recommendations of local hierarchies. But first those local hierarchies have to make their judgments and recommendations known to the pope — as brother bishops, not as deferential subordinates.

One of Pope John Paul II's most pastorally fruitful trips was the one he made a few years ago to Great Britain. It was an ecumenical triumph. Cardinal Hume and several other English bishops deserve much of the credit for shaping the visit in that fashion.

The trip to Chile also elicited praise, both inside and outside the country, while the trip to Argentina made even Nobel Prize-winners shake their heads in disappointment. The local bishops, as usual, made the difference.

The pope returns to the United States in September. You'll be able to tell by what he says and does what our own bishops urged him to say and do.

One hears that he has already received better advice than he had before his first visit in 1979. If so, perhaps we can look forward to a papal visit that is a little bit more like Chile than Argentina, and a little bit more like Great Britain than USA-1.

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



Of cabbages and kings

The aim of this weekly column is primarily to present orthodox Catholic doctrine and practice. This presentation wins the appreciation of Catholics who love traditional Catholicism. The column, sometimes with an irritated acerbity, exposes aberrations in doctrine, liturgy and practices, winning the hostility of people who proclaim a special love and concern. Often neither camp quite understands. Why? Because each approaches the column with firm preconceptions. Liberals, even before reading, are convinced that it must be wrong. Conservatives, in their sympathies, assume it must be right.

However, the column also aims at strengthening parish and diocesan community. Hence the frequent narrations about parishes — about fine priests, sisters and laity. This news is of interest to the diocesan family.

For example: Father Charles McCarthy, pastor of St. Januarius in beautiful Naples, invited me to take care of his parish the week after Easter. It was a happy assignment, first because of the nature of the parish — contented, active familial and devout — and secondly because it is near villages where I have good friends with whom I could visit without being unduly away from Naples.

First I visited nearby Wayland, where my friend Father Paul Schnack and I had our traditional lunch of tomato soup, peanut-butter sandwiches, ice cream and coffee. Then I stopped in Dansville, also nearby, to see Monsignor Art Ratigan in the hospital. He has had some severe health problems and since the visit has taken up residence at St. Ann's Home, Rochester, which was built under his supervision when he was director of Catholic Charities some 15 years ago. And finally, I went to Hornell, not too far away, to arrange for a slide presentation about southern Ireland at St. Ann's School Hall on Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. Although the slide presentation originally was planned for those who took the tour of Ireland with me — many of them live in the Hornell area — the committee (Ann Candiello, chairwoman; Bertha Logan; Virginia Hussong of Hornell; and Helen Pratt of

Dansville) decided to open the show to everybody. An interested crowd is expected.

Now, all this featuring of people, places and events has a wide interest, strengthening diocesan community.

Another aspect of this column is suggestions about good books, for example *The City of Joy* by Dominique LaPierre, which Bishop Hogan has read and admired; of Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote*, which Father MacNamara of Corning recommended. Suggestions about films and video tapes like *The Mission*, a stimulating picture of the Jesuit reductions in South America, *Monsignor Quixote* with Alec Guinness and Frank McKern, a great film on the Eucharist; and the thriller *The Scarlet and the Black* with Gregory Peck as the Irish Monsignor O'Flaherty (whom our own Monsignor Richard Burns and Father Elmer McNamara knew in their Roman days) and Christopher Plummer as the Nazi general during the occupation of Rome.

Most recent was the Metropolitan Opera's *Dialogue of the Carmelites* over PBS, presenting the execution of the Carmelite nuns during the French Revolution. I weep that diocesan communications offices do not notify their people of such coming events, though the Courier-Journal did do an excellent article on *The Mission*.

Most people's interests are less in great events like the U.S. bishops' pastorals on economics and nuclear things, and more in ordinary, intimate happenings. That's one reason Bishop Clark's "Along the Way" column is so popular.

But most readers of this column find a kind of humor in the reports on the quality of mattresses in rectories; the rectory menu, which every woman finds as interesting as Ann Landers' column; and some odds and ends like the fact that guest rooms in rectories rarely have a drinking glass. The reason is obvious — the glass is taken to be washed and, since no one is occupying the guest room, it is easy to forget to return it.

Now that you have read this column, test yourself on what things you remember!

Correction

A typographical error produced an incorrect time listing in last week's item regarding floral donations for the May 17 Marian Year Day of Prayer rally at Silver Stadium.

Flowers should be brought to the stadium at 9:30 a.m. — not 9:30 p.m. — on the day of the event. We regret the error.

TGA sets listening sessions

Coordinators of the Annual Catholic Thanks Giving Appeal have announced a series of listening/communication sessions to gather ideas and share information with parish leaders and pastors.

Sessions are planned for Tuesday, May 26, at Sacred Heart, Auburn, 7:30-9 p.m.; Tuesday, June 2, at St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, 7:30-9 p.m.; and Thursday, June 4, at St. Thomas More, Rochester, 7:30-9 p.m.

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WILL PRESENT ITS...

Graduation Supplement
Thursday, June 4, 1987

In recognition of the graduating seniors from the Catholic High Schools of the Rochester Diocese, the Courier-Journal will be featuring a special keepsake supplement in the issue of June 4, 1987.

Included will be a listing of all graduates from the eight Catholic High Schools, a photo of the valedictorian and salutatorian from each school, and details of commencement ceremonies.

If you or your business would like to participate in the Courier-Journal's Graduation Supplement, special advertising rates and sizes are as follows:

1/4 page	5 x 4 inches	\$135.00
1/4 page	5 x 8 inches	\$250.00
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