

## World &amp; Nation



Pope John Paul II is greeted by Trinitario Indians, one bedecked in a feather headdress, during a May 14 visit to Trinidad, Bolivia, one of the centers of South American cocaine trafficking. The pontiff compared the illegal drug trade to slavery.

## Pope preaches liberation from injustice

By Agostino Bono  
**Asuncion, Paraguay (NC)**— Almost 500 years after missionaries brought Christianity to Latin America, Pope John Paul II cut a path through four countries preaching Christian values and "liberation from sin and the injustices that accompany it."

His ninth trip to the region, which encompasses 41 percent of the world's Catholic population, was a call for Latin Americans to unite behind their Christian values to surmount material and spiritual problems.

"Resist the temptation of those who want you to forget your inalienable right to be Christian," the pope said. His trip took him to Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay, in the heart of South America.

During his May 7-18 stay the pope strongly sided with Latin American countries in their struggles with the developed world and extended this to include sympathy for the entire Third World, which he called the world's hope and future.

The pope warned Third World countries to avoid the pitfalls of liberal capitalism and Marxism, but he spent most of his time criticizing capitalism — the historically dominant economic factor in Latin America.

He always added, however, that criticism is not enough. Latin Americans must control their destiny, uniting in power blocs as a way of challenging the developed world, he said.

Pope John Paul also rejected accusations that Christianity is responsible for many of Latin America's socio-economic, cultural and political problems, because it went hand in hand with the Spanish conquerors as they re-

pressed peoples and cultures in establishing the basis of contemporary Latin American life.

Instead, he scaled Andean peaks and strode across tropical lowlands preaching that Christian missionaries came to evangelize, not colonize the region's native populations and cultures.

"Those missionaries and their assistants brought you the possibilities of bettering your life," he said.

The pope said the missionaries created Indian alphabets, taught farming to nomads, introduced literacy programs, developed artistic talents and helped protect Indians from abuses by European masters.

At the same time, he reaffirmed that Indians who become Christians must change their traditions that conflict with Church teachings, and specifically criticized Andean forms of marriage.

Criticisms of the Church's missionary efforts come from people co-opted by the "close materialisms" of liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, he said, noting that liberal capitalism is of an "individualistic cut" that does not "overcome the unjust distribution of riches" and sees accumulation of earthly goods as man's goal.

Conversely, Marxism negates the spiritual vocation of peoples, the pope said.

Christianity, however, offers "the values of personal dignity and fraternal solidarity," he added. Through a strong sacramental life, Latin Americans can build on these values to find solutions to their contemporary social problems, he said.

Regarding the huge foreign debts that hob-

ble the development efforts of most Latin American countries, the pope asked for a restructuring of loan conditions. But he also criticized Latin American countries for not carefully examining loan terms before getting involved in the foreign loan system. For the future he advised them to examine "your true priorities, what is the financial and human cost of the loan."

Also considered should be "the direct and indirect consequences of a delay or stopping of payments," he said. "Otherwise, the mechanisms of credits and loans can become a burden and an unsupportable weight."

The pope was equally strong in warning Latin America not to seek solutions in Marxism. Liberal capitalism is the problem in Latin America, while elsewhere problems "appear as oppressive forms inspired by Marxist collectivism," he said.

Both "have their origin in ideologies of dominant cultures and are incompatible with your faith," the pope added.

Furthermore, the pope warned Latin Americans against political polarizations between right and left. "The solution to overcoming this right-left division must be found here in your human, social and Christian realities," he said. The Church must act as a meeting place for reconciling political conflicts, he said, and must purge "erroneous forms of liberation theology" that use the Marxist concept of class struggle and the violence this produces as a linchpin for social change.

The pope called for a "new evangelization" geared to contemporary Latin American realities, and said bishops should develop appropriate pastoral plans for such a program. These pastoral plans should resolve social problems and such spiritual problems as the lack of participation in the sacraments and the proliferation of fundamentalist sects, he said.

The pope observed that sects are "sowing confusion among the people" and diluting the Gospel. Catholics must shore up their faith so that they can defend themselves against evangelization by the sects, he added.

"These sects, of a fundamentalist cut, are diluting the coherence and the unity of the evangelical message," the pope said. Bishops, he added, must train their people to "act like faithful children of the Church in which they were baptized." Many, he said, have "received baptism, but live on the margins of all Christian life."

Pope John Paul II pointed to 1992, the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in Latin America, as a rallying point for this new evangelization.

## Capsules

### First lady denies quote

**Washington (NC)** — Through her press secretary, Elaine Crispin, first lady Nancy Reagan has denied former White House chief of Staff Donald T. Regan's allegation that she ever said, "I don't give a damn about the right-to-lifers." Regan had attributed the quote to the first lady in his memoirs, *For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington*. In the book, Regan says that during a January, 24, 1987, telephone conversation with him, Mrs. Reagan demanded that all mention of abortion be removed from the draft of the president's 1987 State of the Union message.

### Signature drive fails

**Sacramento, Calif. (NC)** — Proponents of a measure to legalize physician-assisted suicide for the terminally ill fell 100,000 signatures short of the 372,128 needed to put the proposal on the state's November ballot. The measure would have allowed physicians to legally administer to a qualified patient a dose of prescription medication sufficient to induce immediate death. The campaign was spearheaded by Americans Against Human Suffering, the political arm of the national Hemlock Society, and was opposed by the California Catholic Conference.

### Court upholds ruling

**Turin, Italy (NC)** — According to reports in a Turin newspaper, Italy's Constitutional Court has upheld a ruling that officials of the Vatican bank are immune from prosecution for their alleged role in an Italian banking scandal. The newspaper *La Stampa* reported May 16 that the court decided that Italy's Court of Cassation was correct last year when it decided that U.S. Archbishop Paul Marcinkus and other Vatican bank officials could not be tried in the Banco Ambrosiano case.

### Parents protest sex book

**Detroit (NC)** — A group of parents in the Archdiocese of Detroit has mounted a media blitz against the "New Creation" sex-education series used in seven archdiocesan parishes. Concerned Catholic Parents, claiming 100 members, has spent \$10,000 on billboards and newspaper advertisements against the books, and is asking people not to contribute to the archdiocese's annual fund drive in a protest against the series. Despite problems in earlier versions of the book, the revised edition of "New Creation" is in line with Church teachings, according to Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Moses B. Anderson.

### Priest, brother indicted

**New York (NC)** — The priest-chaplain of a Marist-run boys' school and the Marist brother who was acting as the school's principal have been indicted on charges of sexually molesting boys at the school, Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx. Following the May 13 indictments, the New York chapter of Dignity issued a statement defending the Irish priest, African Mission Father Bernard Lynch, who is chaplain for their organization. Dignity said it trusts in Father Lynch's innocence, and characterized the allegations as a "witch hunt." The alleged abuse was reported by members of the school's staff.

### Pope opens homeless shelter

**Vatican City (NC)** — Pope John Paul II officially opened a new Vatican shelter for the homeless people who live in the shadow of St. Peter's Basilica. The shelter will be a "house of welcome for the most poor, here within the wall of that city which is the center of the Church," the pope said. The cornerstone of the 80-bed hostel, a special project of the pope's, was laid less than a year ago. The facility will be staffed by the Missionary Sisters of Charity, whose founder, Mother Teresa, attended the May 21 dedication ceremony.

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