

# Bishop

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pal nuncio could make the announcement themselves.

Negotiating sessions between church and state reportedly are going on behind closed doors, but Salinas has been silent on the topic since his inauguration. Catholic News Service reports that political observers in Mexico predict a battle if the question is debated openly. One state leader has gone so far as to say that amending Article 130 would set Mexico back 100 years.

It is in this environment that the papal visit offers both hope and fear for the conflicting elements of Mexican political life.

Nevertheless, Bishop Garcia said he did not expect the government to use the papal visit for any announcements concerning constitutional reform, since the relationship between church and state needs time to mature.

"Discussions should be more in-depth rather than just opportune," he said. "You can't solve in five minutes a problem that has been going on for 150 years."

Still, the Mexican hierarchy sees the visit as a boost for its efforts. "The thrust of (the pope's) visit would be, as always, to confirm the faith of his brothers and sisters," Bishop Garcia said. "But it would also be an opportunity to clarify the history of the real church."

Bishop Garcia said that the anti-clerical forces in Mexico — especially the Masons — have systematically implemented an educational campaign designed to turn people away from the church. In propaganda aimed at adults and in government-approved school texts for children, the

bishop said, these forces indoctrinate Mexicans with a one-sided church history.

Bishop Garcia said this campaign focuses on the Inquisition, the mistakes of the Crusades, the mysticism of the Middle Ages — "all the black of the church ... They have been doing this for 100 years, but they haven't changed the people's faith."

In preparation for the pope's visit, the Mexican bishops hope to counter the government-sponsored view by having a professor of history at the Pontifical University of Mexico write a popular history of the church. The history will be illustrated with cartoons for easy understanding, he said.

Noting that this history will provide a balanced view of the church's virtues and failings, Bishop Garcia said he hopes it will teach the people the history of the universal church, Mexican church and the church of Tabasco.

Although anti-clerical factions view the pope's visit as a plot to capitalize on Salinas' overtures toward the church, Bishop Garcia noted that the request for a papal visit was made two years before the election that brought Salinas to power.

The bishops sought the visit to provide further inspiration for a spiritual renewal now underway among the nation's Catholics. Bishop Garcia said this renewal is notable because it came about in spite of government persecutions and the intense proselytizing efforts of fundamental sects.

He also noted that, although the pope visited Mexico 10 years ago to open the meeting of the Latin American bishops' conference, CELAM, he did not see much of the country and says he has yet to make a truly pastoral visit to Mexico.

The agenda for the pope's visit has itself caused controversy within Mexico, following the August release of a proposed itinerary calling for stops in 17 cities over the course of eight days. The original Vatican plan called for a tour of only five days in duration, with a request that major stops be scheduled in areas the pope did not visit in his previous trip.

The commission to receive the pope left Mexico for a Sept. 23 meeting in Rome to discuss the proposed itinerary, and results of that meeting have not yet been released.

Yet when he was in Rochester in mid-September, Bishop Garcia seemed fairly confident of a papal visit to his diocese. He said the papal nuncio to Mexico had assured him that Tabasco, in southeastern Mexico, is among the most likely places for a papal stop.

If his confidence proves well-placed, Bishop Garcia will show the Holy Father the resurgence of faith in Tabasco, the diocesan effort to rebuild the cathedral, his diocesan seminary and, "naturally, the poverty that exists among most of our people."

He will also show the pope the work being done by the mission team from his sister diocese. One measure of his confidence in a papal visit to Tabasco is the fact that he has already issued invitations for the event to Bishop Clark; Father John Firpo, director of diocesan social ministry; and Lourdes Perez-Albuera, associate director of social ministry for justice and peace.

"Rochester is our sister diocese, and when a brother or sister has an important visitor, all the family should be present," Bishop Garcia concluded.

# Marcos

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series of newspaper articles accused the cardinal of "political agitation."

Marcos won the election — with an 85 percent voter turnout — by a landslide.

In a speech prepared for the opening of the Philippine bishops' general assembly less than two weeks later, Cardinal Sin accused the president of stifling religious freedom.

The following year, Cardinal Sin said he was uncomfortable with his reputation as a strong critic of Marcos and preferred to be called a critical collaborator of the government.

In 1983, the Philippine bishops issued two pastoral letters critical of Marcos and asked him to remedy the Philippines' social

situation. After the Aug. 21 murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. — whose wife would become president three years later — Cardinal Sin said no matter who was responsible for the murder, the government could not "wash its hands clean" of responsibility for his death.

Bishop Francisco Claver, retired head of the Malaybalay See, called the Philippines' political future a "pure nightmare" and said Marcos was unlikely to resign because of his "messianic" tendencies.

In a speech in February 1984, Cardinal Sin asked Marcos' opponents to drop demands that he resign and urged them to press instead for clean elections and greater civil liberties. Later in the year, after the Philippine military used force to break up anti-Marcos protests, Cardinal Sin accused it of engaging in "a saturnalia of sadism and violence with impunity."

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