

# Pope asks Brazilians to renew faith

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SALVADOR, Brazil — Pope John Paul II said the teaching of the Catholic Church contains the values needed to solve the social and personal problems of Brazilian Catholics.

During an Oct. 12-21 visit to Brazil, a nation larger than the continental United States, the pope repeatedly addressed issues related to land and money, their distribution and their use.

He also said families must be a top priority of the church's pastoral work.

The pope asked Brazilians to be strong in their faith and to work for justice in their homeland.

"Do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept his power. This was, in synthesis, the message which directed my thoughts during these days in Brazil," he said at the airport in Salvador before returning to Rome Oct. 21.

"I sought to bring the teachings of the Gospel to all, preaching the Christian doctrine with all its implications for the life of each individual and all society," he said.

Brazilian Catholics asked the pope to use his influence to protect and improve their way of life.

President Fernando Collor de Mello asked the pope Oct. 14 to "use the weight

of your undisputed authority" to help knock down international economic barriers that he said keep developing countries poor.

On Oct. 15, Rabbi Henry I. Sobel, leader of a 12-member delegation from the Jewish Confederation of Brazil, brought smiles to the faces of the pope and his delegation when he linked his request for diplomatic relations with Israel to the 13th anniversary of Pope John Paul's election in October, 1978.

"According to Jewish tradition, 13 is the age of bar mitzvah, religious maturity," Rabbi Sobel told the pope. "It is our fervent wish that your bar mitzvah brings with it the full ripening of Catholic-Jewish relations that will result from the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel."

At an Oct. 16 meeting with the leaders of indigenous tribes, the pope was asked by a spokesman "to carry our cry for justice" and for the protection of traditional lands to the rest of the world.

At an Oct. 14 Mass in Sao Luis, the pope said the "authentic injustice" evident in the huge gap between rich and poor in Brazil "is tied to the problem of the distribution of land and its rational use."

According to statistics published in late 1990, the richest 10 percent of Brazilians received 53.2 percent of all income, while



AP/Wide World Photos  
**Pope John Paul waves to the crowd as he arrives at Congress Square in Natal, Brazil Oct. 13. The pope celebrated a Mass there on the second day of his Brazil visit.**

the poorest half of the population shared 3.5 percent.

The pope called on the government to institute a land reform program so that "injustice will give way to justice."

Reform, he said, would improve the lives of all Brazilians, stemming mass migrations to overpopulated cities and halting the violence that took the lives of 75 people in 1990.

Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga of Sao Felix do Araguaia said that in Brazil, where land reform has been discussed for more than 20 years and was seen as one of the motivations of the 1964 military coup, grassroots action is the only recourse.

"It's not invasion, but occupation. It's not legal, but it's legitimate," he said.

Another land invasion condemned by the pope was the encroachment of miners, loggers and ranchers in traditional Indian areas.

Indigenous peoples have "a right to live on their land in peace and serenity," he said Oct. 16 in Cuiaba, capital of Mato Grosso state, which is called the "Gateway to the Amazon."

At an earlier Mass in Cuiaba the pope called protection of the environment one of the "great moral problems" of contemporary society.

The pope spoke of the importance of the family in talks to Brazilian lay leaders in Campo Grande and to children in Salvador.

At an Oct. 17 Mass in Campo Grande, the pope said a family attitude of openness and joyful acceptance of children creates an atmosphere where young people are more likely "to hear the voice of God" and give a generous response by entering the priesthood or religious life.

The basic obligation of lay Catholics, he said, is to form strong families.

The pope told the leaders he understood that the breakup of families is more frequent because of the poverty and social injustices in Brazilian society.

In Salvador Oct. 20, the pope told thousands of children, most of whom were under 12: "You are important because you are the future of the nation, important because you are the future of the church. Do you know that?"

"There cannot and must not be abandoned children, nor children without a family, nor boys and girls living on the street," he said.

"There cannot and must not be children used by adults for immoral purposes, for drug trafficking, for grave or petty crime, for practicing vice," the pope continued.

Brazilian and international human rights organizations reported that 472 Brazilian children, most of whom lived on the streets, were killed in 1990. The majority of murders have been blamed on efforts by business people to "clean-up" the streets in front of their businesses, where the children beg or steal from patrons.



AP/Wide World Photos  
**A masked soldier with a special division based in the Brazilian jungle stands on guard outside the altar where Pope John Paul II Oct. 16 offered an open-air Mass in Cuiaba, Brazil.**

## IN BRIEF

### Conscience is topic for Sununu address

NEW YORK (CNS) — Addressing the annual Al Smith dinner Oct. 17, White House Chief of Staff John H. Sununu called for renewed commitment to the value of individual conscience.

As Americans deal with their problems, he said, they should avoid any compromise on principle and build rather on the strength of their traditions.

Named for Smith, a Catholic governor of New York and 1928 Democratic presidential candidate, the dinner was started in 1945. It often becomes an occasion for good-natured political banter.

Alfred E. Smith IV, great-grandson of the governor and master of ceremonies for the dinner, kidded Sununu about the controversy over his use of government transportation for private trips.

Expressing gratitude that Sununu had been able to arrive on time, Smith explained that "under the new White House guidelines, he had to walk."

Sununu responded that actually his difficulty was finding a place in Central Park to land the B-2.

### Backers seek ballot for aid in dying bill

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (CNS) — Proponents have begun collecting signatures to put on the state's 1992 ballot a measure allowing terminally ill patients to request "assistance in dying."

Supporters of the proposed initiative titled "Terminal Illness: Assistance in Dying" have until March 5, 1992, to submit 384,974 signatures of registered state voters, according to California Secretary of State March Fong Eu.

If approved, the statute would allow mentally competent adult patients to authorize their doctors "to terminate life in painless, humane and dignified manner" after diagnosis of a terminal illness.

It would allow health professionals and facilities to refuse to carry out such wishes "if religiously, morally or ethically opposed."

Washington state voters are to decide Nov. 5 on a similar initiative authorizing physician-assisted suicide, and the Oregon Legislature is considering legislation to permit the practice.

### Ads use picture of Madonna, child

NEW DELHI, India (CNS) — Indian Christians are protesting the use of a picture of the Madonna and child Jesus in promotional materials for a contraceptive pill.

The caption for the picture states, "For the joys of planned motherhood."

Leaflets bearing the picture advocate the use of the contraceptive pills. According to UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Bangkok, Thailand, the leaflets were distributed by a drug firm in Calcutta, India.

It is "a vulgar and despicable misuse of a religious picture for purely commercial gains," said J.R. Victor Karunan, general secretary of the All India Catholic Union.