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"He is limited in his mobility," said Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien of the Archdiocese of Military Services, "but as one of the bishops said, 'The pope runs the church not with his feet, but with his head,' and there are all sorts of things still going on there."

Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York, 78, said he sees the 77-year-old pope so often, he really has not noticed any changes.

"But far be it from me to look at someone five months younger than myself and notice signs of his aging," the cardinal added.

After concelebrating Mass with the group, the pope handed them a copy of his prepared remarks. He said that over the course of the next eight months he would discuss with the U.S. church leaders "how we as bishops have received and implemented the rich body of teaching" elaborated by the Second Vatican Council.

Beginning with the council's document on divine revelation, the bulk of the pope's February speech focused on the need for bishops to read and love Scripture, then to share that love and knowledge with the people of the United States.

"Our catechesis must convey the full truth of the Gospel, for that fullness of truth is the very source of our capacity to teach with authority," the pope told the bishops.

The people of the United States need and want to hear the truth, despite signs which suggest more and more people believe one can never know what is true, he said.

"Our age needs to hear the revealed truth about God, about man and about the human condition," the pope said.

The Catholic Church in the United States is called to preach Jesus and his truth in a cultural climate permeated with doubt about the existence of "objective, absolute truth" and which often rejects "the very idea of authoritative teaching," he said.

The church's teaching, the pope said, goes to the heart of what it means to be human and highlights the human being's ultimate destiny.

"If this is the truth we proclaim, then the church is never marginal, even when she seems weak in the eyes of the world," he said.

As science, technology, political and economic systems hold out promises for liberation, the pope said, the church must remind people that the movement toward freedom will remain incomplete unless it is inspired by truth and love.

"The challenge is enormous, but the time is right," Pope John Paul told the bishops.

Other currents and philosophies which pretend to have the answers "are exhausted, implausible or lacking in intellectual resources adequate to satisfy the human yearning for liberation," he said.

Pope John Paul told the bishops, "The great truth to be proclaimed to this and every age is that God has entered human history so that men and women can truly become children of God."

Bishop Paul S. Loverde of Ogdensburg, N.Y., told CNS: "One of the points of these visits is to give a pastoral push to the bishops — and I can tell you, it worked for me. I go back enthused and energized."

# Mexican government expels priest

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A French priest expelled from Mexico by the government in late February said he just as easily could have been killed by paramilitary troops.

Father Michel Chanteau, a 67-year-old priest who had worked in Mexico's southern Chiapas state for 33 years, told Vatican Radio March 2 he was "still under shock" at being expelled from the country.

The priest was arrested and forced to leave Mexico Feb. 26 after being accused of "activity incompatible with his status." The government claimed he had become involved in politics, supporting the indigenous Zapatista rebel movement.

"I thought that it could happen some day and, in reality, it certainly was the lesser evil because I ran the risk of being killed," the priest said.

Father Chanteau said an interview he gave to Mexico's TV Azteca probably was what led the government to arrest and expel him.

"I made a declaration which I knew

could have led to my being condemned to die. I affirmed, in fact, that the massacre at Acteal was not — as the government has asserted — an act of revenge within the context of an interethnic conflict, but really represented a plan to destroy the Zapatista's base of support," he told Vatican Radio.

Acteal was the village where 45 indigenous Mexicans were slaughtered Dec. 22 while attending Mass.

Father Chanteau was stationed near Acteal at the parish in Cenalho in the Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Asked whether he wanted to stay in Mexico knowing that his declaration could have put his life at risk, Father Chanteau answered, "Well, of course. One has a vocation, right? It is in the Gospel: The Good Shepherd gives his life for his flock."

The French priest said whether or not he was guilty of what the Mexican government accused him of depended on how one understood "political activity."

"When I was interrogated before leav-

ing — the interrogation lasted four hours — they even asked me if I was a member of the Zapatista army. I responded that I had never had any contact with the Zapatista army and, furthermore, I am absolutely opposed to the use of weapons to resolve problems," he said.

The priest said he hoped the conflict between the Zapatistas and the federal government would be resolved soon and that "the displaced — who number about 10,000 — would be able to return to a normal life."

Father Chanteau, said, however, "I know well that this is utopian because they no longer have anything. Their houses have been burnt down and, what is more, the paramilitary forces are selling their land to others."

"A solution seems very far off and very difficult," he said.

The French priest said he would maintain his contacts with friends and parishioners in Chiapas.

"After 33 years, I can't just cut all ties," he said.

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Your faith has  
made you well.

(Luke 18:42)

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