

## CHRIST, LIFE AND TREASURE FOR ALL

**Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**  
**July 1, 1979**

*Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-25*  
*2 Corinthians 8:7-8, 13-15*  
*Mark 5:21-43*

My dear sisters and brothers.

At this point in the Liturgical Year one has the impression of having walked on the heights and then having descended once again to the plains to continue to travel on a very ordinary path. Thus we name the Sundays after the Easter Season the Sundays of Ordinary Time. Today we find ourselves celebrating the thirteenth Sunday because before the celebration of Lent we interrupted the season of Ordinary Time in order to celebrate the mystery of our redemption during the season of Lent and Holy Week and Easter.

Now we return to those ordinary Sundays in which we live an ancient tradition that goes back to the times in which the primitive Church commemorated once a week the mysteries of Christian redemption: the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of Christ --- the paschal mystery, the mystery of redemption. The Vatican Council states: *on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1)*

For this reason the Liturgical Year, which celebrates these eternal mysteries, tries to apply the meaning of these mysteries to the present situation of each people as they continue to move through history. Here in El Salvador we do not preach on this thirteenth Sunday in the same way as is done in Rome or Poland or Africa or Nicaragua. The Word of God that was just proclaimed is a Word for us, the people of El Salvador, who have come together on this Sunday, July 1, 1979. We have to look at it from this perspective: the mystery of our salvation becomes the history of each people and each person and family and like an instrument of God saves this person or people or family. Therefore very often it can seem that our preaching touches some very dangerous realities and that it might be better to be silent. Silence, however, would mean that the Church is not fulfilling her evangelical mission of enlightening the realities of people with the mystery of Christ.

I entitle today's homily: Christ, the life and treasure of women and men. I will develop the following points: First: Christ, the divine power who gives life; Second: Christ, justice and love which equalize social differences; Third: an authentic faith in Christ is the only solution to our problems.

### **Christ, the divine power who gives life**

In the first place, let us look at Christ with his power to give life. Today's gospel presents Jesus standing before a dead child. He takes her hand and restores her to life. We also see Jesus restoring health to a woman who suffered from an incurable illness for twelve years. This is a beautiful

image of the power to give life in the midst of death and illness. As we look at this little girl who was dead we are reminded of so many young women and men, so many adults and children who have died. The reign of death moves over the earth, especially in our country where violent death has almost become the air that we breathe. Hospitals with so many wounded people as a result of violence and natural illness, cemeteries being filled with more people who have died and yet in the midst of this dark framework we see the light of the power that gives life, Jesus Christ.

Jesus, in front of the dead child, the daughter of Jairus, is the eternal God who became man. The sublime gospel of Saint John tells us that before Jesus became man he was the Word who was together with God and through this Word all things were made. *What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race* (2). Christ is the fullness from whom is derived all this life that is present here in the Cathedral and all the life that animates the life of our country. There is no life in the world that has not come from God, the power who gives life.

The first reading takes us back to a meditation on the God of life. God did not create death nor does God rejoice in the destruction of the living (3). God created everything to subsist. The creatures of the world are healthy and they do not have some deadly poison. God created man incorruptible, in his own image(4). The God who does not die wants to have a child on the earth who would also not die. The proclamation of this reality is very clear in today's Word and this should fill us with a sublime respect for life. God did not create death. God created life and wants life to continue and not die. Children of the Immortal One, we were also meant to be immortal!

Then why did death come into the world? Without a doubt Saint Paul used today's first reading to express his sublime thought in the letter to the Romans: *Therefore just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, thus death came to all inasmuch as all sinned* (5). According to today's reading and according to the primitive plan of God there should be no poison of death or kingdom of the abyss in the world. (6) The Hebrews called the abyss *sheol* and used this word to refer to death and the powers of hell. The Greeks referred to this as *Hades*. Death, which we represent with a skeleton and a scythe, an instrument used for cutting and in this case an instrument that separates the person from the gift of life, appears in the Sacred Scriptures as a power that is foreign to the human person. Today the Word of God tells us: *But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it* (7). It is a sad situation when one has to pay tribute to the devil. Death is a tribute to the power that destroys life. God does not desire death but if death has been implanted in the world it is because man has opened the doors of death through sin. Because of the disobedience of Adam, the first man and the father of all people, death entered the world and continues to afflict humanity. Death is a foreign power and it is for this reason that Saint Paul speaks to us about a disobedience, a crying out under the weight of sin, something that is not normal, something that is an enemy. Death is an enemy that continues to move in our midst.

Above all else, death is the sign of sin, and sin produces death in our midst: violence, murder, torture (which leaves so many dead), hacking with machetes, throwing into the sea --- people discarded. All this is the reign of hell. The devil makes death a reality in our midst and those who belong to the devil experience the reality of death --- collaborators, agents of the devil, and imposters of someone who is foreign and who does not figure in God's plan. Thus the Church never ceases to denounce all that which produces death. Death, even natural death, is the product and the consequence of sin. The day will come when Christ will restore immortality. Christ has paid the price of death. The Council states: *bodily death from which man would have been immune had he not sinned will be vanquished, according to the Christian faith, when man who was ruined by his own doing is restored to wholeness by an almighty and merciful Savior* (9). God, who

created life in its origins and never desired death, saw that the reign of death had been established in the world, and so he comes in the person of Jesus to recover the gift of life.

Jesus, as he stands before Jairus' daughter, is the image of the power of life that restores life to the dead. How wonderful is God's love that he does not leave us alone to bear the consequences of sin, that is, death --- for he himself knew nothing of sin. The obligation to come and restore us to life shows that God wanted to enter into solidarity with us, even with our death. Thus, dying on the cross, he destroyed death and rising, he restored our life<sup>1</sup>. Christ restores us to life, life which he gave us without any plan of death. We destroyed this plan through sin. He rescued us from sin and therefore gives us the gift of life a second time --- twice we have received the gift of life. The life that we have today provides us with a hope for life eternal, a happiness of living as a redeemed people. Thus we rejoice in a double life: life that in its origin was given to us by the Word --- in him was life and the life was the light of women and men (10) who destroyed this life through sin. Then through the redemption of Christ this life was restored to all people.

Sisters and brothers, let us pause for a moment before this spectacle of death which the devil gives and of life which comes from God. If the Church is in the world to continue the mission of Christ, that is, to uproot that which is the cause of so much death, then we can ask, why if Christ has redeemed us from sin and people repent of their sins, why do people continue to die? The answer is found in the words of Saint Paul: *Christ, through his death and resurrection, has given us the seed of life.*(11) *If the seed of death is still in the body --- sickness, old age, death, assassination, the seed of death --- nevertheless through the Spirit we carry the seed of life. The Spirit that raised up Jesus (12) will also raise up all those who have died, regardless of the manner in which they died.* Therefore Saint Paul is able to say: *Death is swallowed up in victory.*(13) *Where, O death, is your victory! Where, O death, is your sting!* (14). *The last enemy to be destroyed is death* (15). In other words, in today's world, Christians, those who because of faith and holy lives, bear within themselves the Holy Spirit and the seed of life even though others might kill them.

They have done nothing to Father Palacios. He died in God's grace. His body must decay in the ground and he must pay the debt of death because of Adam's sin. But his spirit that bears the anointing of immortality is in heaven and is laying claim to his body which will one day be raised up. On that day of universal resurrection history will be unveiled. Death has not conquered history! People will not triumph by killing others and firm and consistent systems will not sustain people in death. Tyrants and those who are attached to power like in our sister country of Nicaragua will not be sustained by their power. So much death! But death bears the seed of life and is laying claim to immortality and proclaims the most eloquent denunciation against those who have provoked so much death. The same can be applied to the situation of all countries and all political systems.

### **Events of the week**

Here and for this reason I invite you to reflect on our own reality, from the perspective of Christ, giver of life and conqueror of death; and facing the devil who implants death like a black banner opposed to the white banner of Christ, and in view of the final outcome, which is the victory of life prevailing over the ephemeral triumphs of death which uncover the sad situation of sin.

This is most painful: if death is an index of sin, then in El Salvador we are denouncing sin because we experience ourselves in the midst of a situation where sin and the powers of hell have been enthroned in a most absurd and insane manner. At least twenty-four people were assassinated this week because of political motives. Teachers continue to be assassinated. Unidentifiable bodies continue to appear in different parts of the country. So many people have died that it becomes

difficult to mention all their names or the political group to which they belong. Everyone, however, denounces this macabre dance of vengeance and of institutionalized violence. Some people die as direct victims of repression while others die as instruments of the repression.

We can say that our system is like that of the god, Moloch, who was insatiable in devouring victims, either those who were against him or those who served him.(16) In the same way the devil claims victims. When I am told that I only focus on one group of people and not on others, I tell people: *death pains me regardless of who the person is*. During this past week three policemen have died and I now say that their death gives me greater sadness because they died serving Moloch --- and in fact, this is how they died. Was it because of some power, or because someone brainwashed them or because they were true enemies of the people? Or was it that they wanted to gain life? It is sad but this is the reality, people from one or another political organization are assassinated and this is the macabre dance of political vengeance. These deaths are the best index, a frightening index, of the injustice of our system that claims victims by direct repression or the indirect repression of those who serve the powers that oppress. The most painful of all of this is that the government is making no effort to put a halt to these crimes that are bathing El Salvador in blood.

From a Christian point of view, none of these crimes are justified even though it might be said that these crimes are committed to save the country from terrorism. John Paul II has spoken some enlightening words about the demands of an Italian neo-Fascist movement that wants to govern the country by establishing strict anti-terrorist measures, for example, use of the death penalty. This is the voice of the extreme right. It is as though they have no other arms to defend themselves but to incite repression and so the Pope warned that *the Catholic Church seeks to free good people from the terrible temptation that could lead them to provocative and oppressive reactions*<sup>2</sup>. The Church is not a partisan of these voices of vengeance.

Once again we insist that the government has the ability to put a halt to these crimes and so we formally ask the government to do so. Violent repression is not an effective path to pacify the country and reestablish justice. General Romero will give his presidential report and we want to hear some new words in his message, words that establish credibility and restore the confidence that has been lost, words that respond to the people who have asked and waited so long for an answer: where are those who have disappeared? When will those who have been exiled return to the country? When will torture and arbitrary arrests cease? When will the Church be given authentic freedom and trust?

As we speak about violence we must also denounce the repression of our *campesinos* who have been assassinated. How could we not do this? In the hamlet of La Pita in the village of El Puente de San Vicente, 300 security forces and members of ORDEN carried out an operation during which two *campesinas* were captured and assassinated: Pilar González, 40 years old, and Adelina Carranza de Martínez, 50 years old, and her son, Pastor Martínez Carranza. I want to remind you that Adelina Carranza de Martínez is the mother of a *campesino*, Carlos Martínez Carranza, who on May 1<sup>st</sup> of last year was captured in Zacatecoluca and a short time ago wrote me a letter lamenting the sad situation and made an offering of 10.00 colones to help our Cathedral. May the Lord be mindful of this faith and love. After this the security forces went to Campanario where they arrested two other *campesinos* whose names are unknown. In another village Salvador Montano and Jorge López from San Benito were arrested. Francisco Laureano Lemus was arrested in San Marcos Lempa as was Ricardo Iván Lemus and José Antonio Rivas, and María Amanda Galán de Rivera was removed from her own house. All of these people have had recourse to *habeas corpus*, which is guaranteed by our Constitution to those persons who are deprived of their freedom. We

hope that the Supreme Court of Justice will not laugh at this legalization of the freedom of so many people who have been captured because so often we receive no further news of these people.

We continue to be saddened by the wave of abductions. We have received no further news about the English bankers<sup>3</sup> who were abducted and we hope that if they are still alive that negotiations will begin so that these men can be freed. William Rocha<sup>4</sup> and Miguel Armando Miguel<sup>5</sup> have been freed. We pray to the Lord that this voice that has no other intention but to be the voice of justice and love, the voice of truth and fraternity, may find an echo in those who are able to provide a little happiness to those families who are experiencing so much anguish.

A very significant gesture was made by the teachers who were decorated by the Ministry of Education. As a protest against the threats and assassinations of their colleagues, they returned their medals.

On the labour scene, violence continues to pass on its banner. The strike of the medical residents and interns that began on June 11<sup>th</sup> continues without any resolution. The Superior Council of the University considers the demands that were made by the strikers as just and have decided to support the strikers and have exhorted the authorities in the Department of Health to dialogue with them and come to a rational solution of the problem. The Union of the Social Security Workers decided to initiate a work stoppage on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Abuses on the part of management have been denounced by the workers at IMES, La Fabril and in San Miguel.

My sisters and brothers, let us view all of this within the framework of violence and death in the midst of which today we find Christ saving a little girl who died and He, the author of life, restores her to life.

### **Christ, justice and love equalize social differences**

With confidence in the Lord let us look at another aspect of today's gospel. The second reading is from Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians and deals with a collection that was promoted by the Apostle in Corinth to provide help to the poor in Jerusalem. He speaks to them about the social doctrine of the Church that would become a treasure in our time: the encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* written by Leo XIII to *Populortum Progressio*, *Mater et Magistra*, *Pacem in Terris*, the Council Documents, Medellin, Puebla --- a bright light that shines over the unjust environment of Latin America and the world.

Saint Paul speaks to the Corinthians and tells them: *For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs, that there may be equality* (17). This is what the Scriptures tell us and it would be good to be mindful of a wonderful event that occurred when the people of Israel were crossing the desert. They ate manna and each day they had to gather up enough manna for one day. Some gathered more than they needed and others had less than they needed. But the Bible tell us that those who gathered much had nothing left over and those who gathered little lacked nothing.(18) God is the One who gives us gifts; (19) he gives us the harvest, he makes the flowers grow and colors the coffee in our fields which today are a mine of red gold. God wants all of his children to be happy. Saint Paul says that we are not dealing with a situation where *others should have relief while you are burdened, but a matter of equality* (20).

Today, I invite you to join with me as we look at the document that was written by the Latin American Bishops in Puebla. Let us focus on the pastoral option that is called the preferential option for the poor. As they looked at the reality of Latin America they made an accurate analysis of the incredible social injustice. The bishops in Puebla stated: *Viewing it in the light of faith, we see the growing gap between rich and poor as a scandal and a contradiction to Christian existence. The luxury of a few becomes an insult to the wretched poverty of the vast majority. This is contrary to the plan of the Creator and to the honor that is due him. In this anxiety and sorrow the Church sees a situation of social sinfulness* (21). The Latin American bishops explicitly state that this is *all the more serious because it exists in countries that call themselves Catholic and are capable of changing the situation* (22). They then cite the words of John Paul II that were spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico: *They have a right to have the barriers of exploitation removed ... against which their best efforts at advancement are dashed.*

The document continues with the following observations: *So we brand the situation of inhuman poverty in which millions of Latin Americans live as the most devastating and humiliating kind of scourge. And this situation finds expression in such things as a high rate of infant mortality, lack of adequate housing, health problems, starvation wages, unemployment and underemployment, malnutrition, job insecurity, compulsory mass migration* (23).

*Analyzing this situation more deeply, we discover that this poverty is not a passing phase. Instead it is the product of economic, social and political situations and structures, though there are also other causes for the state of misery.*(24) We do not deny either that there are other causes of poverty, that there are some who are poor through their own fault, through their own vices; but this does not mean that there are not brutal and horrifying structures which make progress, even the best intentioned, impossible. *The internal condition within our countries in many cases finds its origin and support in mechanisms which, because they are impregnated with materialism rather than any authentic humanism, create a situation on the international level where the rich get richer at the expense of the poor, who get ever poorer. Hence this reality calls for personal conversion and profound structural changes that will meet the legitimate aspirations of the people for authentic social justice. Such changes either have not taken place, or else they have been too slow in coming in the concrete life of Latin America* (25).

These observations of Puebla lead the bishops to adopt pastoral measures and so they clearly state: *With renewed hope in the vivifying power of the Spirit, we are going to take up once again the position of the Second General Conference of the Latin American episcopate in Medellin, which adopted a clear and prophetic option expressing preference for, and solidarity with, the poor ... We affirm the need for conversion on the part of the whole Church to a preferential option for the poor, an option aimed at their integral liberation* (26).

They are even clearer when they speak about the Church: *Not all of us in the Latin American Church have committed ourselves sufficiently to the poor. We are not always concerned about them, or in solidarity with them. Service to them really calls for constant conversion and purification among all Christians. That must be done if we are to achieve fuller identification each day with the poor Christ and our own poor* (27). Here my sisters and brothers, there is a call, an invitation, and a demand for renewal that must begin with the bishop and extend to the last layperson, including the priests and religious and Catholic institutions. It is a scandal in our environment that is reflected in the reality described by Puebla that there are persons or institutions in the Church that are not concerned about the poor and who therefore live as they please. There is a need for conversion in this area.

Puebla makes a statement about the price that the Church has paid during the past ten years for having been faithful to what was proclaimed in Medellin. The document states: *The Church's prophetic denunciations and its concrete commitments to the poor have in not a few instances brought down persecution and oppression of various kinds upon it. The poor themselves have been the first victims of this oppression* (28). Incidentally, I want to take this opportunity to share with you some news that was given to me as I entered the Cathedral. One year ago today, Father Hermógenes López from San Pedro Pinula was assassinated in Guatemala because of his solidarity with the poor. Also our priests who were assassinated in the Archdiocese are the glory of this preferential option for the poor. The selfishness of those who want nothing to change cannot tolerate those who cry out for change and so with their money they are able to pay others to silence the voices of those who cry out for justice on behalf of those who are treated unjustly. This, then, is the conversion that all are invited to undertake because the Church is not some demagogue that only asks for a change of structures. Keep in mind that the Church, above all else, asks for a change of heart.

Therefore, popular political organizations that struggle for the just demands of the people have to remember that as long as they do not integrate this struggle with holiness and the wide horizon of liberation in Christ, as long as they do not recognize the reality of sin and lead people toward holiness, then their struggle is simply a struggle for a partial liberation that is very often mutilated by sin. Tomorrow they will establish new structures, but they will also act with violence toward the poor; there will simply be a new group of wealthy people. I ask those who are truly working for a more just world and who are aware of the injustices in which we live --- I ask you to begin by changing your heart. I also want to tell you whom God has blessed with many things: change and be converted.

There is a phrase in Puebla's *Message to the Peoples of Latin America* that I think shows the way for those who believe that, when the Church proclaims itself the Church of the poor, it is biased and scornful of the rich. Not at all! The message is universal. God wants to save the rich also, but because he wants to save them he tells them that they cannot be saved unless they repent and turn to Christ who lives among the poor. The Message of Puebla speaks about what it means to be poor: *To accept and take up the cause of the poor as if they were accepting and taking up their own cause, the cause of Christ himself: "I assure you that, as often as you did it for one my least brothers or sisters, you did it for me"*(29)<sup>6</sup>.

My sisters and brothers, as Saint Paul reminds us today, the secret is not in giving away all of one's material possessions and remaining with nothing. Not having things is not enough. I want to tell poor people who have nothing that that is not enough. Unless you clothe yourselves in the gospel spirit of poverty, you do not possess the poverty that Jesus desires. I also want to speak to the wealthy and tell you that spiritual poverty is not enough because spiritual poverty is a type of desire but is not effective. Therefore I say to you: As long as you do not incarnate these desires for evangelical poverty into realities that allow you to become interested in the cause of the poor, as though you were dealing with the cause of Christ himself, then you will continue to be the rich, the ones despised by God because you place more trust in your money and you distinguish yourselves from others whom you regard as second class citizens.

As long as we, rich and poor, do not have an evangelical spirit of poverty, not as some form of utopia or theory, but in reality, a poverty that makes us concerned about the poor and leads us to do good works, a poverty that Saint Paul speaks about in today's second reading: *for you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for our sake he became poor although he was rich, so that through his poverty you might become rich* (30), then we will not be poor. This is the dialectic

of evangelical poverty and therefore Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians: *You are going to give to the people in Jerusalem who do not have but do not do this in a paternalistic way. Jerusalem will share with you their surplus. They have an evangelical poverty and holiness.* I want to say the same thing: We should not feel superior when we help anyone. Those who give materially receive spiritually. There is an exchange of property that is understood only in a true spirit of poverty, which makes the rich feel they are close to their brothers and sisters, the poor, and makes the poor feel they are equal givers and not inferior to the rich. The giving is mutual, *that there may be equality*, as Saint Paul says.

How beautiful will be the day when we understand this beautiful doctrine of evangelical poverty! People who, like Christ, trust only in the Father; people, who like the Virgin, know how to be the poor of Yahweh and who with holy freedom cry out against sin wherever it is found. The poverty of the Church will be more authentic and effective when it does not depend upon or look for the help of the powerful, the protection of the powerful. Evangelization does not consist in having power but in being gospel minded and holy. Evangelization means we seek support from the One who is poor, from the One whose poverty makes us wealthy: Jesus Christ. It is because of this that in our homily we have called Christ: love and justice who equalizes social situations.

### **An authentic faith in Christ is the only solution to our great national problems**

Finally, in order to understand Christ as the power who gives life and in order to affirm Christ emptying himself for the wealthy and the poor and in order to view Christ as the person who unites justice and love, only one thing is necessary and that is the response that each Sunday Jesus awaits from us: a response of faith.

It is wonderful to see the gesture of Jairus who kneels before Christ: *My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live* (31). While they were traveling there some people from Jairus' house came to him and said: *Your daughter has died; why trouble the Master any longer?* (32). Jesus told him: *Do not be afraid; just have faith.* Faith was the condition that Jesus asked in order to continue the journey even though others might laugh: *the child is not dead but asleep.* Taking the child by the hand Jesus cries out in Aramaic that Saint Mark preserves: *Talitha kaum which means, little girl, I say to you arise* (33). Then with a very human gesture Jesus helps the girl get up and hands her over to her parents and tells them to give her something to eat. She awoke with hunger.

We also see another wonderful gesture from the woman suffering from a hemorrhage. This woman is simply called a woman with a hemorrhage by the evangelist because she had suffered for many years with a flow of blood. She sought her way through the multitude in order that she might touch the cloak of the Master and with great faith she said: *If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured* (34). She was able to touch his clothes and was cured. As a result of the faith of this woman who touched him, Jesus experienced that power had gone out from him. Her touch was different from all the others who touched him out of curiosity. Jesus turned toward the woman who now with fear and trembling tried to explain herself to the Lord, but Jesus said: *Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction* (35).

Puebla reminds us that among the realities of Latin America we find a treasure in the Ecclesial Base Communities. These are their words: *Commitment to the poor and the oppressed and the rise of grassroots communities have helped the Church to discover the evangelizing potential of the poor. For the poor challenge the Church constantly, summoning it to conversion; and many of the*



*poor incarnate in their lives the evangelical values of solidarity, service, simplicity, and openness to accepting the gift of God (36).*

Here is stated the wonderful reality that, thanks to God, our Diocese is trying to put into practice and make real in our midst: the base communities of faith. These groups of Christian reflection are not subversive! They are groups where people learn about the evangelical virtue of poverty which is indispensable for both the rich and the poor. I speak to all the beloved pastors and pastoral ministers and women religious who work with our people and first of all I thank you because we rely greatly on these communities of faith and second, where there is still some mistrust about these communities I ask you to remember that the effective school where we can discover the values of the poor and our *campesinos*, and where we can discover the hidden treasure in so many hearts is found in the ecclesial base communities of faith.

Yesterday, it seemed to me that we were involved in a congress of the base-level ecclesial communities. Few times do we experience a Mass like yesterday, the one Mass that was celebrated in memory of Father Rafael Palacios. Everyone participated and we all experienced ourselves as sisters and brothers to one another. We communicated hope to one another and our joy was contagious. This is the flowering of poverty: the base ecclesial communities. It is for this reason that the Church that yesterday presented this wonderful spectacle is the same Church that today wishes to inform people about the life of the Church and invites each person to live daily this communion and unity of our community.

### **Life of the Church**

The Church is grateful for the condolences and the expressions of solidarity that have come from different areas on the occasion of the death of Father Palacios. Without a doubt the Lord will reward this priest who lived a hidden life --- he worked silently and yesterday the Church gave her response. I want to second the initiative of the priests who have invited us to reflect more profoundly on our present situation.

In different parts of the Republic many novenas are being offered for Father Raphael. Tuesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 9:00am, we will celebrate a Mass in El Calvario de San Vicente. I have been asked to extend an invitation to the friends of Father Palacio and to all Christians to participate in this celebration.

I also want to reiterate my condolences to the parish of Jucuapa and Bishop Rivera, the Bishop of Santiago de María, on the occasion of the death of Father José Abdón Arce who was buried fifteen days ago.

Last Sunday we celebrated the patronal feast of Saint John the Baptist in the community of Chalatenango with true Christian joy. We suspect that the Security Forces, with barriers at the entrance to the town, prevented the arrival of many people who wanted to participate in this celebration with a Christian spirit.

Even though I have done this before I want to lament the fact that the Episcopal Vicar, Father Fabián Amaya, was offended, mistrusted, searched and brought to the police station.

In the community of San José Villanueva people attempted to set fire to the church. The Passionist Sisters have removed the statues from the Church so that they would not be damaged and have stored them in their house.

This Diocese rejoices with the members of Opus Dei as they celebrate the fourth anniversary of the death of their founder, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. The spirit of Opus Dei, which many members do not practice, is outlined in the fourth chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, a chapter dedicated to the laity.(37) Opus Dei has many members and their leaders have told me that many members do not understand their role and have become fanatics. If the members truly lived what is stated in the fourth chapter of the Constitution on the Church, a chapter that outlines the spirituality of Opus Dei, the role of the laity in the world, then we could rely on many Christians who through their professions and their holiness would do much good for the Church. On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the death of their founder, we ask God to help the members of Opus Dei to understand and live an authentic spirit of Church, such as is found in the Council documents.

On June 29<sup>th</sup> the Salesian school of María Auxiliadora and Santa Ines celebrated the feast of the Pope. The feast day of the Pope, Saint Peter, was also celebrated in the parish that bears his name, Pedro Perulapán. A similar celebration took place in Ciudad Barrios which has Saint Peter as their patron. We send to these communities our greeting and an expression of our solidarity.

I invite you today, the first day of the month, to participate in the Holy Hour which will be celebrated at 5:00 pm in the Hospital de la Divina Providencia. Speaking about the assistance that Saint Paul referred to in today's reading I want to point out to you that the hospital is widening their attention to those who are ill. They are beginning a work with those children who have been orphaned because of the disappearance and/or assassination of their parents. This is truly a gospel work. They are promoting the buying of a square yard of land for 50.00 colones and this low price has been established in order to facilitate contributions to this work. Many people have already bought a yard or several yards and I invite you today, a day dedicated to Divine Providence, to go there and help in this work and, like Saint Paul, we are invited to see Christ in this work so that *you might excel in this gracious act also*.

Several pastoral events have taken place such as the meeting of the Vicariate of Mejicanos, the meeting of the Pastoral Commission and the Clergy Meeting. This activity in our Diocese, thanks to God, is telling us that we have to organize our pastoral ministry in a better way.

As one of God's blessings I want to speak about the popular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Yesterday, and for the next three days, we will be hearing the sound of many rockets --- these are the prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This morning I will be in the market to collaborate with this popular movement that gathers many of our humble people together in prayer to the most holy heart of the Redeemer of humankind.

I am grateful for the very significant visit of the workers who returned from Saudi Arabia who wanted to thank the Archbishop for the support that was given to them in their conflict. They left a generous donation and asked for a blessing for themselves and for those who are still in that foreign land.

I want to speak about the box that is now located here in the Cathedral and from which we have gathered up some wonderful initiatives. Anyone who wants to propose something that will better our life in community, know that you are a part of our family and therefore help us to become better by giving us your suggestions.

I want to speak about a letter that was written yesterday by the Minister of the Interior and directed to the director of YSAX, the Pan American Voice. He reminded the radio station that they ought to contribute to the maintenance of the social peace in our country and further reminded them of the articles in the Constitution affected by the law of nationalemergency and also Article 14<sup>7</sup> which among other things states: *radio stations should not transmit under any pretext news or messages of any kind that are contrary to moral, good international relations, peace or public order or that cause scandal and affect in any way the private life, the honor or the interest of other people.* A response is being prepared that will be given to the Minister but I want to communicate two things to my community of the Archdiocese:

First, if this is a circular letter of the Minister of the Interior that is being sent to all the means of social communication, then we are in complete agreement. It is a routine and useful reminder. I would even ask for more. I would ask that Article 14 be fulfilled and therefore prohibit certain newspapers and radio stations from communicating paid campaigns of slander that offend people and their dignity.\* An example of this slander: you will remember that it was published, almost like an advertisement for *Cafiaspirina*, that that Archbishop had asked for support from a communist representative in Costa Rica<sup>8</sup>. Even though we made a clarification that was also read, nevertheless the slander continued to be announced on radio.<sup>9</sup> The truth of what happened is here, in a publication that has arrived from Costa Rica.<sup>10</sup> Among the things that were under consideration by the Legislative Assembly --- there were eight things --- the fourth point was the following: *We highlight the voice of Bishop Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, as a voice of protest who is asking for international pressure to force the end of governmental repression in El Salvador.* Later, in the agreements, the third agreement reads: *We agree to express our total solidarity with the campaign that has been undertaken by Bishop Romero in order that a regimen of authentic democracy might be established in the sister Republic of El Salvador.* The decree of the Costa Rican Assembly denounced other things but at no time is the slander mentioned that was broadcast here through the media. Yes, we are in agreement with this Article 14 and it is good that we are reminded of this Article by the Minister of the Interior and we hope that those who are not fulfilling this article will do so because it is possible that this is not being fulfilled for the sake of the convenience of the powers that be.

Secondly, if this letter was only written to Radio YSAX and written as a warning then we ask that we be shown with concrete cases what programs of ours are a danger to the social peace, which programs are a danger to the tranquility and peace of our national audience. What peace and order is being referred to?\* I want to be very clear because if they want us to collaborate with some pseudo peace, some false order that is based on repression and fear, then it should be remembered that the only order and peace that God desires is that which is based on truth and justice. In face of this dilemma, our opinion is clear:\* we will obey God's order before the orders of men\* ... While we would naturally not like it, but we would prefer that they suppress our radio station.\* We have seen and there is sufficient proof that when we could not transmit our programs because of technical problems it was as if people were lacking air because they were lacking the truth and the light that shines in the midst of darkness. It is for this reason that I say we would prefer that they silence us because we speak the truth and defend justice\* rather than continue to speak and be manipulated by the repression\* ... We would only be saddened by the fact that people would not have the slightest opportunity to hear a voice of truth and justice. We would feel as though people, especially those who have no way to express their voice, would not even have this small means of communication which our humble Pan American Voice, YSAX, provides.

We conclude today by saying that the faith of this community, the bold faith that impels you to follow Christ faithfully, is not some kind of magical faith. The faith in which the miracles of the gospel are rooted is a faith that consists in a disposition of total confidence in Jesus who leads us to a free acceptance of the Savior. My sisters and brothers and esteemed radio audience, I want you to have this same faith: a total confidence in Jesus, a faith like that of Jairus and the woman suffering from hemorrhages because it is only in this way that we will have a people who truly await the justice of the Lord.

Let us now listen to some of the voices of our people, supplications of humble people, expressions of faith, two different faces. One is a young woman from Ilobasco, Ermérita Miranda, who has asked me to give public thanks for the miraculous cure of her mother: *My intercessor is the Virgin of the Forsaken and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On my knees and with total Christian faith and tears in my eyes, I prayed for the health of my mother and they heard me. I ask you to kindly let all Catholics know that when they pray with faith, miracles occur.* The other is the case of José Antonio Orellana who was brought to the Social Security Institute with a hemorrhage. He now wishes to thank the Lord because with faith he prayed to the Lord. *Please, without any fear, publish this testimony and tell everyone that faith is not simply a reality of twenty centuries ago; faith is a present day reality!*

Look at the role of faith in the curing of these persons who trusted in Christ. My sisters and brothers, I ask why does Jesus Christ not act in this way toward our people, people filled with sin, death, assassination, illness, poverty, institutionalized injustice. A new order of things will come! There will be new women and new men! Faith, faith in Jesus Christ will bring about these new woman and new men! So be it.\*

<sup>1</sup> See *Roman Missal*, Easter Preface.

<sup>2</sup> Allocution of John Paul II to Bruno Bottai, new ambassador of Italy before the Holy See (25 June 1979), *La Prensa Gráfica*, 26 June 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Cameron Massie and Michael Chatterton, kidnapped by FARN on 30 November 1978.

<sup>4</sup> William Rocha, a Nicaraguan citizen and manager of the National Cash Register was liberated on 27 June 1979 after being kidnapped for 12 days. See *La Prensa Gráfica*, 28 June 1979.

<sup>5</sup> A Salvadoran businessman kidnapped on 27 May 1979.

<sup>6</sup> *Mensaje a los pueblos de América Latina*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Reglamento para el establecimiento y operación de estaciones radiodifusoras.

<sup>8</sup> See *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 June 1979.

<sup>9</sup> See *La Prensa Gráfica*, 7 June 1979.

<sup>10</sup> The notice, coming from the daily *La Nación*, was reproduced in *Orientación*, 10 June 1979.

*Marginal References* (1) SC 106; (2) Jn 1,14; (3) Ws 1,13-14; (4) Ws 2,23; (5) Rm 5,12; (6) Ws 1,14; (7) Ws 2,24; (8) Rm 5,19; (9) GS 18; (10) Jn 1,4; (11) 1Cor 15,45-49; (12) Rm 8,11; (13) 1Cor 15,54b; (14) 1Cor 15,55; (15) 1Cor 15,26; (16) Jr 32,35; (17) 2Cor 8,13-14; (18) Ex 16,18; (19) 2Cor 8,15; (20) 2Cor 8,13; (21) P 28; (22) P 28; (23) P 29; (24) P 30; (25) P 30; (26) P 1134; (27) P 1140; (28) P 1138; (29) Mt 25,40; (30) 2Cor 8,9; (31) Mk 5,23; (32) Mk 5,35-36; (33) Mk 5,39-43; (34) Mk 5,28-30; (35) Mk 5,34; (36) P 1147; (37) Lg 30-38.