

Vatican by Augustinus

Dope and anthropology are scored

The Pope had two messages for Colombia's bishops—fight drug trafficking, and put social justice ahead of debt.

Pope John Paul II issued a new and vigorous condemnation of drug trafficking when a group of Colombian bishops visited him in Rome in the first week of March. After recalling the difficult situation in which the bishops of that country have to work, thanks also to the spread of false "anthropological" positions by persons and groups which pretend to interpret the true cultural values of the people, the Pope denounced the drug traffickers who in the "indigenous regions disrupt the life of these populations to drag them into the filthy drug traffic."

During the same period the vice-president of the Colombian National Anti-Drug Coalition, Maximiliano Londoño, reached Rome on one leg of a European tour, to bring the message of the new offensive against drug trafficking launched by the various anti-drug coalitions around the world.

Londoño, in an interview with Vatican Radio, reported on the important conference against drugs which opened in Mexico City on March 13, and on the proposal presented by the American politician Lyndon LaRouche (see page 36) to use the military and tighter coordination between the governments of the Western hemisphere to combat drug running.

As Londoño explained, for many Latin American governments the war on drugs is a life or death matter for those countries' democracies, given the attempt by the drug-runners to install dictatorial governments on the model of the "cocaine generals" who

seized power in 1980 in Bolivia.

The Church shares this concern, attested by the document presented by the permanent committee of the Colombian Bishops' Conference which met right after the bishops met the Pope. The Colombian prelates honed in on the crimes of kidnaping, extortion, and homicide: "Kidnaping destroys the economy of persons and the nation, insofar as it discourages productive work to the point of making it impossible, while it obliges one to transfer one's goods and even one's person abroad, in search of greater security. It is a cruel assault against the legitimate property of persons and families, with the anti-social and anti-patriotic aggravating factor that frequently the product of this criminal industry is destined to the subversion of public order, i.e., to the ruin of Colombia."

The bishops made a moving appeal for action to save their country: "No more silence, nor passivity, nor tolerance, which could become complicity in the face of crimes that not only are an outrage against, but indeed destabilize and destroy Colombia." To stop the dismantling of the state, the bishops asked, more incisive measures and more severe penalties, noting that "there are obviously unpunished crimes, and revelations of excessive softness and even growing venality are not rare. Certainly praiseworthy is the opinion campaign conducted with no holds barred, and completely supported by citizen solidarity, to end the criminal industry which trafficks with

liberty and with life."

During the Vatican discussion with the Colombian Church, a specially convened plenary assembly in Rome of the members of the Swiss Bishops' Conference went almost unnoticed. The chairman, Mons. Henri Schwery, told the press that "the Holy Father wanted to meet with us to conclude the dialogue initiated with the Conference of Bishops at Einsiedeln, on June 1 of last year," where the Pope had scored the cynicism of financial power and asked believers and Catholics in particular to never separate morality from economics. Since then, the U.S. Treasury and numerous law enforcement bodies have charged Swiss banking with massive laundering of illegal-drug gains.

Last Feb. 23, the Pope had received a first Colombian group of bishops, and stressed the need to guarantee a more just social order internationally to construct real peace in their country. To that appeal the bishops of CELAM, the Latin American Bishops' Conference, responded in their recently concluded plenary assembly.

The assembly especially stressed "the dramatic situation going on in the continent because of the economic crisis owing to the enormous foreign debts." "From 1979 onward," the document goes on, "the economic situation of the Latin American continent not only did not improve, but the process of impoverishment is getting worse every day."

Among the motives for concern were indicated: "The numerous attacks on the Holy See, above all via the media and penetration by religious sects." The reference is to various pseudo-religious groups, such as the National Action Party (PAN) of Mexico, and the Brazil-centered Tradition, Family, and Property cult, present all over the continent.