

## Vatican by Augustinus

### Pope in India: morality in economics

*Forces around Cardinal Martini in Italy, however, seem to be pushing for a post-industrial utopia instead.*

**O**n Feb. 1 the Pope began his ten-day trip to the Indian subcontinent. Following the tradition of Paul VI, the first Pope to go to India, in 1964 during the Vatican II Council, John Paul II will take words of hope and justice to India.

He will confront the debt problem which is suffocating the developing countries' economies and—as was announced by an Indian bishop interviewed on Vatican Radio—he will denounce the usurious economic policies implemented by international monetary institutions.

The Pope's trips abroad have taken on greater and greater social and political, as well as religious, importance, because they are occasions for clinching the concept of respect for the inalienable rights of all men and for denouncing underdevelopment. "Every new international system must be based on the personal commitment of making the primary and basic needs of humanity the first imperative of international policy," the Pope said in his message for the 19th World Day of Peace.

On that occasion, John Paul II had condemned all theories that attempt to justify or to legitimize the *status quo* or conflicts, as normal or inevitable. The Pope had criticized Social Darwinism and economic liberalism, repeating the "necessity of considering the common well-being of the entire family of Nations," as not only an ethical, but a juridical duty.

The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, recently concluded in Rome,

charged the entire universal Church with the great responsibility of implementing the Pope's messages in favor of a more just world order. This is the reason for the renewed attacks on the Pope coming from the promoters of a cynical "New Yalta" deal, to divide up the world between Eastern and Western empires. The Soviet review *Science and Religion*, in its latest issue, accused the Pope of going on a pro-American binge. Death threats from fanatical religious groups against the Pope's person have come from various Indian press agencies and journals. A so-called Front for Sikh Liberation sent death threat letters against Rajiv Gandhi, announcing terrorist actions in India coinciding with the Pope's visit. Death threats were also sent to Cardinal Ratzinger, who had a key role in the Synod proceedings.

A Catholic monthly in Italy reports that traditionalist groups around Monsignor Lefebvre are expanding and opening new seminaries in Africa, India, and France, and calling for revolt against Rome, Vatican II, and the latest Synod.

In the opposite camp, but also critical of the Synod, are the friends of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan, the Stensen Institute of the Jesuit Fathers in Florence (noted for having hosted meetings of autonomous movements during the years right before the terror wave in Italy), the monastic community of Camaldoli, and the review *Il Regno*. These banded together in Assisi barely 20

days after the Synod for a conference called "Vatican II in the Italian Church: Memoires and Prophecies."

The most important conclusions of the Synod were deliberately underplayed. Martini attacked the Synod fathers' decision, taken at the behest of Cardinal Ratzinger and others, to write a universal catechism. "One would risk," said Martini, "imposing on all the churches a single language of communication of the faith"—showing a failure to understand the Synod's distinction between plurality, and pluralism, which was defined as "leading to dissolution, destruction, and loss of identity."

Cardinal Martini seems equally confused on economic issues. Speaking to a conference on youth unemployment organized by the Milan diocese in early January, he practically lined up with the promoters of a collectivist, post-industrial utopia. In a series of complicated circumlocutions, Cardinal Martini got across the idea that neither capitalism nor healthy profit is ethical; instead of pinpointing the ills that afflict society in the evils of economic liberalism, the Cardinal preferred to condemn the entire economic "system." St. Bernardino of Siena, the fiery preacher against usury who participated in the 1439 Council of Florence, had clearer ideas about economics back in the 15th century!

It cannot be ruled out that the Milan Archbishop's novelties might find a consensus behind the Iron Curtain in the obscurantist and anti-Western circles of the Russian Orthodox Church. Informed circles in the Vatican maintain that Cardinal Martini, who frequents the monastery of Mount Athos and supports the anti-capitalist theories of the former head of the American Benedictines, Rembert Weakland, is the Russian Orthodox Church's favorite candidate for the succession to the Holy See.