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ADDRESS BY
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(To be delivered 9:00 p.m. Monday, Jan. 20, 1964 at the First Annual Conference of the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program, Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago, January 20-21, 1964)

THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

One of the important problems that must come before The Second Vatican Council is the status of the Church in Latin America. In that part of the Western Hemisphere we could lose one million Catholics every year. Some countries with a large Indian population are returning to pagan practices and cults. Others, where illiteracy and ignorance predominate, the so-called "voodoo" rites and spiritism have attracted thousands. Everywhere, nominal Catholics ignorant of their religion have wandered like lost sheep away from the fold of the Church.

Do not condemn them. They have a scarcity of priests, schools, hospitals, doctors and nurses. They have no work, no hope for the future, no effective leaders to counteract the influence of false prophets. It is not surprising, therefore, that it has been estimated that a million souls annually lose contact with the

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Church. Call them nominal or unenlightened Catholics or anything
else; the truth must be faced, that we and others in this hemis-
phere have been late in recognizing their problems.

Before we consider any phase of the religious or social
conditions in Latin America, we should ask God to pardon us for our
apathy and indifference toward their sad plight. We should also
resolve to assist these people who have been abandoned over the
years by native Catholics of wealth, living as spiritual as well
as material millionaires.

I do not intend to concentrate on the evils of the pre-
sent social order in Latin America. We have had enough of that. I
am interested in action. I have heard all the arguments that re-
flect unfavorably upon the people, the hierarchy and the clergy.
But, please believe me, the people of Latin America are good, but
we must know them. The bishops are dedicated and devout, but they
lack personnel and means. The native priests are spending them-
selves and being spent against tremendous odds. We must help them.

Behind all our planning for the future, we must be con-
vinced that Latin America is the world's most critical area, and
from the religious viewpoint it should have priority of service at
the present time. The population has increased 10 per cent in the
past decade. The present population of almost 200 million people
could be doubled within 30 or 40 years. Millions now exist with
annual incomes of less than \$100. Life expectancy in half of these
countries is less than 50 years. More than 50 million adults are
illiterate. Of the 50 million young people of school age, about
one-half do not attend school. In 15 Latin American countries,

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the grade-school child averages less than three years in the classroom before dropping out to work on a farm or elsewhere. Only 20 of every 100 finish grade school. In 1960 there were 16.5 million young men and women between the ages of 20 and 24 years; of these only about 519,000 were in colleges or universities. With this mass of uneducated, how can many of the countries of Latin America solve their problems?

It will take generations, for example, to produce native-born, well-trained priests in required numbers. More than 100,000 priests, assigned where they are most needed, would be necessary to meet the most urgent spiritual demands. Since there is no short way of training priests, every section of Christendom, where priests equipped for work in Latin America can be spared, should send its quota of volunteers. But they must go where they are most needed, not where the friends of bishops and others have requested them.

Presuming that in future years thousands of priests from North America, Europe and elsewhere can be recruited to augment the native Latin American priests, it is important to insist that they must be well trained in the language, customs and cultures of the people, in the sacred sciences and in specialized field, such as social service and family counselling. When ready, they must go where the shortage of priests is the greatest and the need most critical.

The Pontifical Commission for Latin America, with headquarters in Rome, can supply bishops, religious and missionary superiors with all the necessary information for the placement of apostolic workers and especially priests. The point is, they should

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be sent where they can do the most good for all Latin America. Too often priests and lay missionaries are assigned to dioceses on the basis of friendship or some other standard that has no relation to the overall problem.

Brazil, for example, is as large as the United States with the exception of Alaska, and larger than all the other countries of Latin America combined. That country could mark the direction of the future. As Brazil goes, other countries could go.

We will get nowhere by condemning Castro. He had a great opportunity of establishing a form of democratic government that would appeal to the Latin American mind and become a pattern for many other countries. He missed the opportunity. Now Cuba is a base for communistic propaganda in the present and a threat to the future. But I am confident that Cuba, with all its propaganda, will never deceive the freedom-loving people of other countries of Latin America. They may be poor and discouraged about their future, but they love freedom and they will not accept the Castro brand.

No matter how we look at Latin America, the first and foremost problem from the spiritual viewpoint is the scarcity of priests. The population is increasing more than five times faster than the priesthood, which provides only one priest for about every 6,000 Catholics. To meet this situation the Church in the United States, despite its own needs, must accept its share of responsibility. Other countries must do the same.

I confess that we have neglected the missionary dioceses in the United States. I protest that some dioceses of this country have an abundance of everything for the spiritual formation of their subjects, while others are struggling to survive. I object that any

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bishop of this country or any country should have an abundance while other bishops in missionary areas are forced to beg here, there and everywhere, absenting themselves from their priests and people for a prolonged period of time in order to collect a few thousand dollars wherever and whenever they were given the permission to do so. During the few weeks I spent at the first and second sessions of Vatican Council II, more than 100 bishops contacted me for assistance. I would need unlimited funds to help them all. The present method of helping the missionaries at home and abroad is totally inadequate and out of line with the nature of the Universal Church.

If we are to respond according to our ability to the needs of the Church in Latin America, consider, please, the following:

1. Probably 90 per cent of all the energy and money expended by Catholics for the support of their church is devoted to the preservation of the faith in their parishes or dioceses. But what have we done and what are we doing for the preservation of the faith in Latin America?

2. These countries to the south of our borders, with a population destined to surpass that of the United States, were brought into the Church centuries ago by explorers and missionaries from Spain, Portugal and elsewhere. Then, after revolutions brought forth about 20 independent nations, they were left to themselves. For some 30 years they were without any bishops. I admit it was an impossible task to save them. The message of the missionaries did not go deep enough. Their numbers were not multiplied sufficiently until the time when the visible Church could be governed and staffed by a well-formed native hierarchy and clergy.

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3. What is the result? Today millions of Latin Americans never see a priest, and millions more wait for years for the sacraments, the channels of grace. Those who possess wealth in abundance have lost contact with the Church and have never been trained to share their abundance with the poor whom they have exploited or with the Church that has the potential to save them from false prophets and dictators.

4. The popes in our times have warned us about the incredible possibility of losing millions of Catholics in Latin America to Communism. Pope Pius XII told me to send priests in Latin America. I responded five years ago by founding the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle for the recruiting of priests, who would volunteer, with the permission of their bishops, to go to the poorest of the poor who had no priests or were unable to support them if they were available. Over 100 of them are now located in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

The Pontifical Commission for Latin America was established later by the Holy See. It has been most successful in persuading bishops, religious and missionary superiors to send priests, sisters and lay apostles to that sector of the western hemisphere. As a result, by 1970, 5,000 priests from other lands should be strengthening the faith of millions of our fellow Christians below the Rio Grande.

5. Pope Pius XII, Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, have done everything within their power to bring to the attention of the Catholics of the world the possibility of abandoning millions of Latin American Catholics.

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6. The Bishops of the United States have established the Latin American Bureau as a department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Rev. John J. Considine, M.M., of the American Catholic Foreign Missionary Society, popularly known and universally loved as Maryknoll, is the executive director of this bureau. No priest in the United States is better equipped for this office. I have been identified with Maryknoll since the days when Boston priests devoted to its co-founder, Father (later Bishop) James Anthony Walsh, helped the Maryknoll movement to survive. Today, we are proud to salute it as one of the greatest missionary organizations of the Church. One of the most outstanding contributions that Maryknoll has made to the Church universal is the response of the superior general of Maryknoll, Most Reverend John Comber and his council, to my request for the full-time services of Father John Considine to our Latin American Bureau. A better informed or more mission-minded priest could not be obtained.

What about the future? I am very optimistic, but it is difficult to understand how we can succeed unless a new social order is established. The religious picture is better than it was, but we have a long way to go. Castro, originally and understandably having the good will and support of all the media of communications and of the officials of the State Department of the United States, finally betrayed us all. He could have become the greatest man in all the Americas, if he had a program and a government that would be a model for most if not all the countries of Latin America. He failed, and now we have Russia within 90 miles of the coast line of the United States and Cuba within its orbit.

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There is no magic or easy way of solving these social or economic problems, any more than there is for solving the religious problem. Capitalism, socialism, communism, democracy as we know it, or military dictatorship are not the answer. To change an ancient, deeply rooted and discriminating social order that serves "the haves" and ignores "the have-nots" requires patience, understanding and courage. It also requires far-reaching educational programs and the enormous task of convincing those who own banks, land and lucrative investments, that all their surplus profits do not belong in safety deposit boxes in the United States, Switzerland or other foreign countries but should be channelled back in part at least into the countries from whence they have been accumulated. All this and more must be accomplished prior to peaceful revolutions through far-reaching education, industrialization and legislation planned and applied to eliminate poverty and unemployment. It must be added that we cannot transplant the culture or traditions of our country or any foreign country into Latin America. Nor can we expect our form of government to replace those in the southern part of this hemisphere. Our culture and our form of government do not meet the minds or move the hearts of the people.

The alternative to a Christian social order would be violent revolutions inspired by the Communists within and outside Latin America. They are very active. They have infiltrated the press, radio and television networks, the educational systems, the peasant organizations, the government agencies and the labor unions of many countries. Well financed, well organized, nevertheless they can be curtailed by a corps of native leaders who are familiar with their

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techniques and capable of advocating and sponsoring much needed reforms in a social order that is an antiquated relic of feudalism.

All this will take time. We must "make haste slowly" by educating the multitudes and training well equipped native leaders. The difficulties to be overcome are great and many. But they are not hopeless. Much progress, however slowly, has been made in recent years. Fundamentally, however, the Latin Americans must mobilize their resources, originate development programs, endure the shock waves of change and progress and modify their traditions of centuries.

The greatest bond of unity among the people is the Catholic faith. The vast majority profess and proclaim it. But they have not been adequately informed about it. Before supplying the means for their education, they must be properly housed, clothed, employed and paid, as befits the dignity of human beings. A vast educational program must be available for the youth who have in their pockets or satchels the keys of the future. It will cost billions of dollars, but education is the soundest cure for poverty, discontent and every form of violent social revolution. It is the investment that pays the largest economical social dividends. A nation's greatest wealth is the talent of its citizens. Its most costly error is failure to educate its sons and daughters adequately.

The greatest religious hurdle to be overcome by the Church is the lack of priests and well trained lay apostles or witnesses of Christ capable of spelling out the encyclicals of popes pertaining to a Christian social order.

This problem cannot be ignored by Vatican Council II. The Latin American bishops look to it for help. For that reason they

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supported the revival of the order of the diaconate so that married or unmarried deacons, as a part of the structure of the Church, could substitute for priests in all phases of pastoral work save those pertaining to purely sacerdotal functions.

The civilization of Latin America was born in the bosom of the Church. The dialogue between the Church and the modern world which the second Vatican Council seeks to establish, reveals to the people and leaders of Latin America the horizons suited for the solution of its problems. But we must avoid two extremes: blindness based on ignorance that will not see the problems, and a type of black legend about Latin America which does not correspond to the truth.

There are those who are pessimistic about the future. They seem to be convinced that material aid from some foreign governments and church-related assistance given by Catholics of other countries have arrived too late with too little. But it is never too late to support a just cause. Material and spiritual assistance has been given in abundance and will be given in greater measure as the programs they maintain become so effective that the Latin Americans in high positions will help their own respective nations.

On the material side, the U.S. government, under our late beloved president, sponsored about two and a half years ago the Alliance for Progress. It represents the greatest task undertaken in our history. President Kennedy frequently told me, and publicly stated, that it will require difficult and painful labor over a long period of time. Despite the enormity of problems and our heavy responsibility, the people of the United States have been asked to

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sacrifice relatively little in support of the Alliance. Less than one per cent of our federal budget is allocated to assist half a hemisphere that we must save if we are to survive.

Some have claimed that the Alliance for Progress has not accomplished all that was expected of it. But they have not come forth with a substitute that will be more successful. Great patience, great confidence and, indeed, great faith are required to reach the maximum good anticipated by this bountiful 10 year project of the United States. More than a decade, however, will be necessary to realize its goals. It should not be abandoned nor should the money to finance it be reduced. Added to that program is the "know how" which the Peace Corps of the United States can give to the people themselves in abundance as its personnel multiplies in the future.

Sometime, somehow, those who control the wealth of Latin American countries and those who govern them will see the necessity of giving maximum cooperation to the Alliance for Progress. If they fail to do so, and if they do not produce a better program for changing a social order that has brought fortunes to the elect and misery, starvation and premature death to forgotten millions, then they are hastening the day of reckoning when, urged on by evil forces, the multitudes will arise and more Cubas will be the result. The handwriting of this prophecy is visible to all who refuse to close their eyes to the facts.

To quote our late President--"We have created new machinery for inter-American cooperation. The United States has pledged over 2 billion dollars to "the Alliance for Progress". The Latin-

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American nations identified with it have pledged their share. As a result, in many countries there have been new efforts at land reforms and tax reforms, education and agriculture. The basic issues of progress and reform, long ignored, have become the battleground of the political forces of our hemisphere. The failure of some countries in Latin America to meet their responsibilities is not the result of the shortcomings of the Alliance. No amount of external resources, no stabilization of commodity prices, no new inter-American institutions can bring progress to nations that do not have political stability and determined leadership.

No series of hemispheric agreements or elaborate machinery can help those who lack internal discipline, who are unwilling to make sacrifices and renounce privileges. No one who sends his money abroad, who is unwilling to invest in the future of his country, can blame others for the deluge which threatens to overcome and overwhelm him. The Alliance for Progress is not an external aid program. It is more than a cooperative effort to finance development plans. It is a battle for the progress and freedom of all of our nations.

On the spiritual side of the picture, the Church of North America and other countries is sending priests, nuns and lay missionaries to Latin America in greater numbers than it has ever sent to any other part of the world. These men and women of God are well trained in the language, culture and traditions of the countries to which they have been assigned. They have no intention of replacing Latin American traditions with the customs of their own countries. On the contrary, we are making every effort to increase the number of the native clergy. We have built seminaries, we have

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helped to staff them; we have established scholarships for future priests, and we have financed the postgraduate studies of many priests.

I would also recommend the founding of a seminary in the United States for students in our country who desire to become incardinated in the dioceses of Latin America where they are most needed. This seminary could also accept students from any Latin American country who have been assigned there by the bishops. We have such a seminary in Montezuma, New Mexico. It was started by the American hierarchy 26 years ago for the formation of Mexican priests during a time of persecution. Since then, over 1,250 alumni of that institution have been ordained for their own Mexican dioceses. Today this institution has an enrollment of 380 major seminarians from 40 Mexican dioceses, plus one from British Honduras.

Some day we shall have a seminary for the education of future priests from North America who wish to be permanently identified with the priesthood of Latin America or with the priesthood in the United States and Canada where hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking people have migrated from Puerto Rico, Cuba and many other countries below the Rio Grande. I know that there are many vocations for such a seminary available at the present time. Young men in colleges and seminaries have written to me about the possibility of being accepted in our Missionary Society of St. James for recruiting priests for Latin America. We cannot accept them, for the objective of this society is to recruit priests for temporary service in Latin America, not to train future priests who will be permanently identified with that sector of the vineyard of the

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Lord. In September of 1964 we shall open Pope John XXIII Seminary for belated vocations. Over 200 have applied for admissions but comparatively few are qualified. We expect to open this new institution with a class of about 35. Of those already accepted, some are desirous of going to Latin America after their ordination. This is especially true of the six doctors of medicine who have qualified.

How should we, the citizens of North America, followers of Christ, view this phenomenon of a world of 200 million souls agonizing in its mighty unsolved problems that touch every phase of its daily life? We should adopt at least the following directives:

1. We must have a deep and sympathetic understanding of the Latin American world, of Latin American peoples in particular, and develop a strong spirit of friendship with an earnest concern for their grave problems.

2. We must recognize that Latin America represents a score of nations and 200 million human beings, a major segment of world society and 35 per cent of the membership of the Catholic Church throughout the globe. Therefore, in addition to our personal and individual involvement, the 44 million Catholics of the United States should be involved, the United States of America as a nation is rightfully involved. We can expect, therefore, other individuals of our particular circles and walks of life to prompt groups and organizations to roll up their sleeves for Latin America.

3. We must be prepared to respond to the Latin American church authorities and authoritative Catholic groups regarding various forms of cooperation which we can render. Such cooperation can represent the encouragement of others to offer their personal ser-

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vice, their prayers and material assistance;

Behind all of these proposals stands our ideal as United States citizens and members of the Church to draw near in true understanding and appreciation to our brethren of the Church in Latin America.

Late in 1962 a Catholic magazine of thought in Chile, with a Spanish title meaning "The Messenger," published a special issue entitled "Revolution in Latin America--the Christian Vision". About a month ago, in December, 1963, this same magazine published a similar issue of 200 pages, this time called "Revolutionary Reforms in Latin America."

The group of talented priests and laymen responsible for these studies on present conditions throughout the Latin American world are encouraged in their work by Chile's great church leader, His Eminence Cardinal Raul Silva, archbishop of Santiago. These people are driven by the strong conviction that they speak quite literally when they talk of a revolution.

"We witness", this group tells us (and there are many other able groups throughout Latin America who say the same), "an ever-growing mass of Latin Americans becoming conscious of its misery, conscious of the injustice of so much that in the name of the existing political, juridical, social and economic order they are obligated to accept. It is clear that this huge majority is determined not to accept this situation any longer. They call for a rapid and radical change.

"And hence", this Catholic group declares, "we assert that a social revolution in Latin America is already on the march.

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Further, it appears to us that the most appropriate attitude for the Latin American Christian is not to close his eyes to the obvious but to confront the facts squarely and search for ways to 'Christianize' this revolution which advances with compelling inevitability."

There may be many good people in Latin America who do not accept this point of view. It frightens some, it angers others. This Santiago group is aware of this difference of outlook on the part of some and strives vigorously to explain its position.

"To Christianize this revolution already on the march," they say, "means to us to free it from unjust violence, resentments, hates, egoistic selfishness. We don't stand for the suppression of freedom and the rights of man. On the contrary, we contend that this freedom and these rights should not be the monopoly of a small minority but should be extended to all Latin Americans everywhere."

If not revolution, these men ask, what other word might be used? Would it be better to talk of evolution, of restoration, of consecration to brotherly service? Such words, they answer, just won't do.

"The fact is," they assert, "that a genuine revolution is now in progress in Latin America, motivated by tremendous injustice. The people, with good reason, don't believe in 'evolutions' or in vague 'consecrations.' They ask for and they need a radical, integral, rapid change. Not to call it a revolution seems to us," these men declare, "to represent categoric blindness. Therefore, we talk of revolution, though of course in terms of Christian revolution."

I close my address, my dear friends, on this question of what the movement for change in Latin America is to be called, in

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order to highlight the tremendous gravity of the situation in the
lands of the great area to the south of us. In every field of life--
the political, the economic, the educational, the social, the relig-
ious--Latin America's problems of reform are enormous. Into what-
ever area we look, the tasks to be done are far greater than those
in similar fields of any other region in the western world.

What would I call this tremendous movement for change? I
would unhesitatingly name it, as did the Santiago group of progress-
ive priests and laity supported by their Cardinal Archbishop, "The
Christian Revolution in Latin America." I pray that you shall all
be identified with it. Peaceful, constructive and educational, it
is the only effective answer to the Communist threat.

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