

THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF LATIN AMERICA'S 'VOCATIONS CRISIS'

EL COLEGIO DE MEXICO by Abbe Francois Houtart

Following is a somewhat summarized translation of a study made by the Belgian sociologist, Abbe Francois Houtart, who has directed the ~~publications~~ research and publication of some 40 socio-religious and sociological studies on Latin America, the FERES series.

At the beginning of this study two basic points on the theology of vocations should be recalled. First, we are certain that God does, and will, assure the Church in every age the number of vocations necessary to spread the gospel. And, secondly, we believe that vocation is by definition God's call to man, a call that supposes a free answer from the latter.

Despite the direct responsibility God has given to men and to the Church in particular, with respect to vocations, mankind remains marked by sin. Thus, certain obstacles may impede ~~either~~ man's perception of God's call, his acceptance of it, or realization of a positive response. Such obstacles have always existed, but ~~at~~ they sometimes have ~~a~~ come to provoke a real crisis. The causes of such a crisis are not to be found only in the individual responsibility of those called, nor solely in an atmosphere of materialism or secularism. There are causes of a ~~sociological~~ social or pastoral nature that must be analyzed before causes of a moral nature.

If indeed we admit the hypothesis that there is a vocations crisis in Latin America, which we have first to prove, analysis of it consists in identifying the factors that may be obstacles between God and men in the field of vocations in Latin America. This study, therefore, is not so much intended as a complete description of the situation -- although much of that will be necessary to verify the hypothesis -- but is rather more directed to an analysis of the causes of the situation. Thus we may arrive at some conclusions immediately useful for action. The whole of this work is based on studies ~~made~~ by Father Gustavo Perez, director of the Bogota Center of Social Research and Latin American coordinator of FERES' studies. To conclude this introduction we would like to point out that Latin America's vocations problem cannot be treated solely on a continental level. While obstacles exist ~~everywhere~~ to vocations, the situation is very different from one country to the other. Moreover, statistics on vocations are very often deficient in Latin America; our discussion is founded on the best documentation available.

A. The Dimensions of the Vocations Crisis

The word "crisis" may be taken in two senses, ~~XX~~ i.e., it may mean the failure or lack of something, or it may mean an especially critical period in the evolution of something. There is a static or dynamic aspect ~~in~~ the problem, and one can thus speak of a vocations crisis in Guatemala, where ~~there~~ there is but one priest to every 12.3 ~~thous~~ thousand inhabitants, and at the same time talk of a crisis in Belgium, where the diminishing number of vocations at present are not going to support a ratio of one priest per every 600 inhabitants in the future. The double meaning of the word crisis makes us ~~think of Latin America with a static perspective~~ ask two questions about Latin America: Is the number of vocations inadequate there? Is the ~~pr~~ continent passing through a particularly difficult period with regard to ~~XXV~~ vocations or is the situation improving? The answers to these questions for a particular country or area are not necessarily related, ~~XX~~ e.g., vocations may be increasing in a country with a large deficit today, and vice versa.

(FLAM meet on vocations 1963 see Bulletin of CELAM)

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1.) Is the Number Inadequate?

Using the ~~number~~ average number of inhabitants with which each priest is charged as the over-all measure, we find that this number is high in all of Latin America, although there are great differences among various countries. The figures range from the lowest, in Chile, 3,100 ~~in~~ inhabitants per priest, to the highest, in Guatemala, 12,300. The continental average is about 5,300 inhabitants per priest. In Europe the country with the worst situation, Portugal, has one priest for every 1,770 inhabitants.

While it is difficult to ~~say~~ fix the optimum (population density, size of territory served, methods of pastoral action, etc., have to be taken into account), one can conclude that Latin America's averages indicate an inadequate number of priests and, therefore, a lack of vocations. Moreover, since ~~at~~ a large proportion of foreign ~~p~~riests is included in the statistics (some 21% of the diocesan clergy and certainly higher, probably up to 50%, among Religious), one must take this currently large contribution into account when elaborating a program of pastoral action for vocations.

2.) How Is the Evolution of Vocations Going?

Study of the growth in the number of priests in Latin America shows a positive tendency. For the continent as a whole the number of priests increased over 54% between 1945 and 1960; by country this growth varied from 11.4% in Uruguay to 160% in Guatemala. But it would be misleading to consider merely the evolution in absolute numbers. Because of ~~population~~ rapid population growth, an exact ~~vision~~ view of the problem is better based on changes in the number of inhabitants per priest. Also one should note the ~~different~~ quite different evolution among secular and religious priests.

- Among the latter one ~~notes~~ sees a considerable improvement since 1912, the date from which ~~we have~~ available the first general figures. This is so in all countries but Chile, where improvement ~~has occurred in the years~~ is notable around the years 1950-1955. Growth in the number of religious priests is faster than that of the population, but since the precise importance of foreign Religious cannot be calculated in Latin America, it would be imprudent to conclude ~~correctly that there has been~~ that the religious orders have found a spectacular number of native vocations.

- Among the secular clergy the 1912 to 1945 figures do not indicate a ~~similar~~ similar evolution; the situation deteriorated in all Latin American countries. Since 1945/there ~~is some improvement~~ has been ~~noticeable~~ improvement in some countries ~~of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Paraguay~~. But sharp differences are observable; ~~in these countries~~ in some cases, ~~vocations have~~ ~~not increased while the foreign clergy has~~ ~~meanwhile~~ foreign priests, not vocations, ~~have increased~~. Meanwhile in the other countries ~~of Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela~~ the number of inhabitants per priest continued in varying measure to increase.

3.) The Future?

What will happen in the future? It is dangerous to prognosticate, especially when many factors might intervene and modify the situation. We ~~have~~ therefore, ~~we suggest~~ a two-fold preview of 1975's needs for diocesan clergy, allowing for demographic growth ~~and~~ in one and in the other assuming that the of people per diocesan priest can be reduced to 10,000.

/or 1950  
~~(1950-1955 only)~~

explain/  
the improve-  
ment.

prepared

\*#-3

lowering  
/raising

To maintain the present ratio of inhabitants per priest in all of the 20 nations, the increase in the number of priests will have to equal or surpass by 50% the present totals in a relatively short time. What can one say then about ~~lowering~~ the number of people per ~~priest~~ diocesan priest to 10,000? In Honduras and Guatemala, for example, the number of diocesan priests would have to increase 462% and 534%, respectively, by 1975. Very considerable effort would be required in all countries, except perhaps in the six now having one priest for an average of less than 10,000 inhabitants, in order to come close to that ratio in 1975. Figures used ~~for~~ to indicate the 1975 objectives are adjusted to allow for deaths, although the average death rate among priests is not known exactly country by country.

B.

II. Causes of the Vocations Crisis

Turning now to a detailed analysis of causes of a vocations crisis, we come to an examination of the obstacles to a positive response to God's call. These obstacles may be personal, when an individual's responsibility is directly involved; or social, when they result from a collective ~~xxx~~ factors, such as a society's organization and life or a ~~kind~~ certain type of pastoral action. One must know Latin American society and the process of change it is currently experiencing, to understand the nature of these social obstacles. In sum, the grand reality is that a feudal, two-class society in which the masses have no voice is, under the pressure of technological development and population increase, changing rapidly. This transformation, often bringing with it the rise of a new middle class, is at various stages in the several nations of Latin America. What still remains in many places is a great separation between social classes, between rich and poor. In each of these classes obstacles to priestly vocations will be quite different.

1.) Obstacles to ~~Possible~~ Access to the Priesthood

Here we mean ~~the~~ all the factors that might impede one's entering the priesthood. Evidentially, if seminaries are closed by the government, a good number of young men will not be able to realize their vocation. But there are besides various other kinds of obstacles, such as the following:

a) Social Obstacles: In Latin America vocations among the urban and rural masses are particularly affected by social obstacles. A common opinion considers rural areas a good source of vocations, but where possible to verify it we have found more vocations come from the cities proportionately. Thus, in Colombia, while 59.4% of seminarians come from rural zones, 68.3% of the country's people live in these zones. In Brazil, the percentages are, respectively, 46% and 67.7%. Moreover, few seminarians are from farm-worker families: 92.3% of one grouping of seminarians originating from rural areas in Brazil were sons of land-owners. A similar observation can be made regarding the urban-worker sector, so that in fact one concludes priests are not recruited from the lower classes. If an agricultural zone does have a priest, he often fills a position of real social leadership and young men of the district would not aspire to bridge the distance between themselves and the priesthood.

Figures indicate that recruitment for the priesthood in rural areas usually concentrates on a minority of the population that enjoys a certain standard of living. The social change now in progress and, among other things, agrarian reforms that integrate the rural masses into an intermediate or middle class promise ~~will~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ social conditions more favorable to vocations. In the cities social disintegration, accentuated by the breakdown of patriarchal family structures or by an unjust economic system in sectors where industrialization is retarded, add new elements to an already negative set of conditions among the lower classes with regard to vocations.

- b) Cultural Obstacles: ~~It~~ Besides their social isolation, the masses also live in cultural isolation. Illiteracy rates remain high (in only five countries is it less than 30% of the population over 15; in nine it is over 50%), and this means that a considerable portion of young men cannot enter the seminary as they are. At the same time, except in Uruguay, Argentina and Mexico, there is a close relationship between illiteracy and the number of people per priest.
- c) Family Obstacles: Another problem that especially affects young men in rural areas is one of family. A high rate of illegitimate unions continues and in most places illegitimate children are not admitted to seminaries. In El Salvador and Panama, for example, studies have shown 61% and 33.3%, respectively, of men 15 to 24 years old to be illegitimate. Even when ~~such~~ ~~children~~ sons of illegitimate unions are formally permitted to be ordained, very few will be found in the seminaries. At the same time, research indicates that consensual unions may be more stable than those consecrated by the Church. Social and ethnic factors frequently enter in, as study of rural regions in Colombia, Venezuela and Central America demonstrates.
- d) Ethnic Obstacles: Difficulty of access to the priesthood in Latin America is even greater for young men of indigenous or Negro origin. For them racial obstacles are added to social obstacles and their recruitment for the priesthood is affected. The oppression and cultural isolation of the Indians for four centuries and Negro slavery till quite recently (1888 in Brazil) weigh heavily, and one must admit that in too many places ~~these~~ ~~indigenous~~ ~~and~~ ~~Negro~~ young men of these races have not been encouraged to enter the priesthood, although ~~fortunately~~ the situation is fortunately beginning to change.
- e) Religious Obstacles: Finally, one notes, the priest shortage, particularly acute for the dispersed rural masses and concentrated urban proletariat, has its own repercussions in vocations. Certainly contact between young men and the Church is extremely important, though often so sporadic as to be of small influence, in the normal development of vocations. Rural parishes extend to a size of 2,000 square kilometers and often a priest has to attend to several ~~such~~ parishes. In the cities the average parish population is over 20,000, over 30,000 in Santiago de Chile, and over 40,000 in Mexico City and Havana. Decentralization of pastoral action may be the way to overcome this obstacle to vocations, consisting in the lack of live contact with the Church.

To conclude we would like to call attention to the interdependence of these ~~various~~ ~~impeding~~ factors. They are often found together. And since 70-80% of Latin America's population is made up of the urban and rural masses, these fac-

tors cannot be overstressed. A large part of the population is thus practically denied access to the priesthood by social conditions, which of course vary significantly from one country to the other. They are conditions, not determining factors, since the freedom and grace of men may overcome such imperatives of a collective character; but, since the Lord ordinarily respects the ordinary laws of human life, one cannot expect this to happen except in exceptional cases.

2.) Obstacles to Perception of the Priesthood as a Value

Even without any hindrance to vocations socially, a positive response presupposes with all the rest that the priesthood is regarded as a value. What we say here about an entirely different series of obstacles applies essentially to the 20-30% of Latin America's population not blocked theoretically from the priesthood by insuperable social obstacles. We find mainly three types of hindrance here:

a) Materialistic World Outlook: Where there is a real conflict between the "spirit of the world" and the gospel, a materialistic world outlook may hinder a young man's perception of the priesthood as a value. The upper classes, with few exceptions (Chile and Colombia, especially), produce very few vocations in Latin America. The reasons are obvious. Though they respect and support the Church, those of this social group often have values radically opposed to those of the gospel. The priesthood is very low in their estimation and often they regard it as but a middle-class function of an institution needed for the good order of society. To leave behind social rank and material goods inherited from the past in order to accept a vocation is for them, therefore, a real "about-face." The middle classes are in both city and country the sector where the largest portion of vocations originate. This is almost 100% true in the country; a little less so in the city where some vocations do come from both the upper and the worker classes. The intermediate classes can thus be said to favor vocations and one might hope for a perfect correlation between the population of these classes and their vocations. To some degree there is a correlation, but it is far from being absolute or automatic. Various factors, including the absence of pastoral attention, tend often to obscure the perception of the priesthood as a value among these classes.

/intermediate/

b) Ideological Obstacles: Ideologies such as secularism, rationalism, and now Marxism, have had telling influence on the condition of the Church in Latin America. In most countries the Church has had to pass through a crisis, ~~whose~~ the effects of which it still feels today. Certainly the anti-clericalism of the last century was above all ideological and was the mark, in particular, of the intellectuals; oppressive measures legislated accordingly, such as Church-State separation, confiscation of Church property, limitations on the clergy's activities, etc., coinciding in some countries with the late recuperation of the hierarchy, not only overtook the Church's human resources; ~~but~~ also gradually changed the mentality of the people and contributed especially to the Church's and the priesthood's loss of esteem. Today, one notes in particular, the role Marxist ideologies are playing; they mainly penetrate the intermediate classes before going to the masses; and this they do ~~through~~ through university circles ~~and~~ and even through secondary education in certain countries. At the same time, universities, even state universities, are an especially good source of vocations. In the Seminary of Buenos Aires, for example, 50% of the students had started or finished university ~~studies~~ work before entering, and 77% of these came from state universities. Such vocations are, moreover, usually more mature than those coming through other channels and the percentage of perseverance seems to be higher among them.

/arguments used to justify such attitudes

c) Obstacles of a Religious Nature: Among religious obstacles to a young man's perception of a vocation ~~to the priesthood~~ there is above all the image he has of the Church and the priesthood. We have noted that in Latin America priests are mainly recruited from the intermediate classes which are also the most dynamic sector of a developing society. All the better as far as the basic human qualities for the priesthood are concerned. But this also means that young men of these sectors will demand a great deal of the Church and of the priesthood. In the present era of social change, if the Church does not show a profound dynamism, not only by its acceptance of changes and ~~advance~~ encouragement of these young men, but also by total revision of its pastoral action, how can it but seem to ~~plain~~ obstruct vocations? ~~By~~ Extolling the Church's past, ~~by~~ seeking prestige in outdated signs, social and pastoral conservatism are ~~powerful~~ tremendous obstacles, which it would be useless to try to hide. Furthermore, they are far from being a characteristic of the Latin American Church. Till now few studies have been made on the image young men have of the priest; but it is already clear that it may be one of the most important obstacles.

3.) Obstacles to Acceptance of a Vocation

Assuming that the obstacles mentioned above are overcome, we come to a third series, which is obviously not exclusively Latin American in character; ~~and~~ we bring it in because of our desire to be complete. Obstacles to acceptance of a vocation are usually of ~~two~~ two types: personal, that is, obstacles originating from a lack of generosity or courage, or from physical or psychological factors; or, secondly, of family, that is, parental opposition or ~~also economic~~ family circumstances (economic, health, etc.).

4.) Obstacles to Realization of a Vocation

Finally, we come to the last category of obstacles, at the moment when a young man is ready to accept the Lord's call, but when actual realization of his response ~~turns~~ runs into difficulties. These difficulties or obstacles are primarily ~~usually~~ an internal affair of the Church and consist mainly of faults in the channels of access to the priesthood or in the means of training.

a) Channels of Access: Close examination of the origin of vocations and of the curriculum followed to reach the priesthood, reveals how surprisingly little certain ~~means~~ potentially productive ~~means~~ of vocations are ~~used~~ represented. Very often this is the result of the fact that the possibility of the priesthood has never or very seldom been presented to these circles. The channel considered normal in Latin America, the minor seminary, has too often prevented people from seeing ~~that~~ many other unexploited paths by its side. To mention but a few: State schools which have developed rapidly in most countries; ever fewer countries have even 50% of their youth in Catholic secondary schools; thus while public education develops more quickly than private, the lack of specialized ~~pastoral~~ pastoral action among public school children cuts off a potential source of vocations. Academies run by Religious produce few vocations to the diocesan clergy, probably ~~because~~ in part because vocations developed are for the religious congregation in charge; ~~though~~ (this has not been proved as a reason for the more rapid increase of religious priests). /Catholic Action and other apostolic movements have become rather important channels of vocations; in fact, to some extent, especially in cities, they seem to have taken over the role originally fulfilled by minor seminaries. If important for the apostolic formation of ~~seminarians~~, ~~it/it~~ even more so for recruitment of priestly vocations in sectors not reached by traditional means -- the universities are an example of this. Many workers and farmers would not have discovered a vocation to the priesthood outside of the specialized movements.

/sectors/

/Meanwhile,

they are

b.) Means of Education:

The means of educating ~~a~~ priests can also be an obstacle ~~to the~~ realization of a vocation. We should face the facts. <sup>In effect,</sup> The great difficulty comes from, ~~in effect,~~ the fact that we are in a society that is <sup>rapidly changing</sup> transforming rapidly. Systems which yesterday were efficient, are no longer so today. What is valid for/rural populations <sup>the illiterate</sup> is ~~in contradiction with~~ <sup>contrary to</sup> the ambitions of young people in urban areas.

~~At that~~ Thus we come to ~~We will not treat~~ the problem of minor seminaries. It is necessary to ~~confirm~~ <sup>state,</sup> in the first place, the very <sup>low rate of</sup> ~~weak~~ perseverance in ~~the~~ minor seminaries. It does not exceed <sup>5%</sup> according to the data we have, ~~and~~ <sup>alone</sup> frequently it is ~~still~~ <sup>even</sup> lower. This ~~sole~~ fact <sup>alone</sup> should make one reflect on the efficiency of the system and on the means of drafting of priests ~~investment~~ investment this/means for the Church. In some countries, for ex., Venezuela, a very laudable effort has been made ~~to~~ religiously and apostolically <sup>to</sup> follow <sup>up</sup> those who have not become priests. But then ~~it~~ would/be more logical to ~~consider~~ a diocesan college where young people could be trained in a Christian and apostolic spirit, rather than an institution destined to train future priests?

The atmosphere of numerous minor seminaries is not favorable to ~~the~~ recruitment of vocations, <sup>especially</sup> above all in urban areas. <sup>Of course one must not</sup> ~~It is undoubtedly necessary, not to~~ generalize but <sup>at the same time someone must</sup> ~~it is also necessary to~~ have the courage to ~~present~~ <sup>state</sup> the problems.

In Brazil, according to many witnesses, the pedagogical system of many minor seminaries is such that young men who have a little more personality, cannot <sup>finish their</sup> arrive at the end of ~~the~~ studies. In Argentina, according to <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ report already <sup>referred to,</sup> mentioned, <sup>minor</sup> the structure of the seminaries <sup>are said</sup> ~~is mentioned~~ by ~~the~~ seminarians <sup>to have</sup> as ~~being~~ third place, after the image of the priest and ~~de-Christianization~~ de-Christianization, <sup>among</sup> the causes of <sup>a</sup> lack of vocations. In Cuba it has recently been shown that many young men trained by their Parish priests, have opposed entering a minor seminary, upon <sup>learning</sup> ~~stating~~ that they would have to wear a cassack. They did not want to become "little priests," <sup>A</sup> and said they would prefer to wait and enter the seminary later.

Since ~~there is~~ no systematic study ~~in~~ existence on this question, we give these examples to show simply that <sup>there is a</sup> ~~the~~ problem, ~~exists, but~~ without being able to determine how far-reaching it is.

In ~~the~~ major seminaries there also exist a ~~certain~~ number of problems of which it is difficult, for the same reasons, to determine the importance. We do not have all the pertinent ~~ones~~ figures regarding perseverance, but it is affirmed that it is relatively low in comparison with other seminaries of the world.

In Central America and the Caribbean, a poll ~~realized on 10~~ seminaries, <sup>showed</sup> a percentage of perseverance of almost 50% with ~~extremes~~ <sup>up to a high</sup> of 95% in Haiti and <sup>a low of</sup> 33% in El Salvador. In Mexico the figures ~~reach xxxxxx~~ go from 25% to 75%. A poll made by <sup>Canon</sup> ~~Geo.~~ Boulard on a certain number of seminaries <sup>es, most in</sup> ~~located in~~ <sup>throughout</sup> South America, gave a figure of ~~only~~ a ~~little~~ little over 40% of perseverance. The causes of this phenomenon are evidently too complex for treatment here, and it would be over-simplification to attribute them to ~~the~~ major seminaries themselves.

Among the deficiencies manifested many times, are above all, the lack of education in natural virtues and the artificial character of the education; the absence of spiritual training is <sup>persists</sup> continuous and the intellectual level <sup>is</sup> deficient. Where there has been an effort to <sup>on</sup> improve these three points, it seems that the level of perseverance has very much <sup>improved.</sup> But it is evident that a situation such as that mentioned, in a certain number of ~~seminaries~~ seminaries, is a real obstacle <sup>to</sup> ~~in the way of~~ becoming a priest, ~~maybe even~~ <sup>perhaps even</sup> for the best of them.

Finally, we want to emphasize the importance of seminaries for late vocations, <sup>that is,</sup> or in other words, adult vocations. There, where with an open spirit experiments have been made, the results have been very encouraging. The Seminary of La Ceja, in Colombia, for example, comes to mind. Their ~~inexistence or their inadaptation~~ <sup>absence or failure to adapt</sup> where they exist, are also obstacles for many vocations.

C. CONCLUSIONS

First of all, ~~we will bear in mind~~ <sup>among</sup> the obstacles ~~confronting~~ <sup>blocking access to the</sup> possible priesthood, ~~among~~ <sup>under-</sup> which we ~~had found~~ <sup>FIND</sup> essentially, social and cultural ~~sub-~~ development of the ~~large~~ masses of Latin Americans and the lack of pastoral structures. The causes of the non-perception of the priesthood as a value should be looked for both in the mentality of the ~~high or middle~~ <sup>upper or intermediate</sup> classes and in the image of the Church, which is forced, in part at least, ~~because of its pastoral type or because of the priest,~~ <sup>(Forzada) by its type of pastoral action or by priests themselves.</sup> The obstacles ~~of~~ <sup>of a vocation</sup> acceptance are of a personal and ~~familiar order and those concerning~~ <sup>or family character and obstacles</sup> the realization of ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> vocation ~~should~~ <sup>are to/</sup> be found in the Church itself, ~~whether~~ <sup>be</sup> this is because of ~~pastoral insufficiency~~ <sup>inadequate pastoral action</sup> or ~~insufficiency in pastoral vocations,~~ <sup>for</sup> or because of ~~deficiencies in educational means.~~ <sup>the means of formation.</sup> Now we must consider, ~~but~~ <sup>best</sup> without developing them, ~~conclusions~~ <sup>the foregoing with a view to</sup> to bring out ~~in view of~~ <sup>to be drawn</sup> action:

1.) I. Conclusions concerning the crisis in Vocations

Before ~~beginning~~ <sup>giving</sup> the ~~therapeutic~~ <sup>remedy</sup> it is necessary to ~~diagnose~~ <sup>give a</sup> and ~~give~~ <sup>also come to</sup> conclusions ~~on it.~~ <sup>on it.</sup> in this regard.

a) There is a crisis, since there ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> certainly too few priests and too few vocations to accomplish ~~the~~ present and future tasks. But this should not lead us to pessimism, because structural, ~~obstacles~~ social and pastoral obstacles, have been the dominant ones and some of them have ~~progressively~~ <sup>gradually</sup> been overcome. ~~If we are~~ <sup>it is indeed</sup> in a period of crisis, ~~a dynamic period~~ <sup>entered a dynamic</sup> in Latin America, with few exceptions, has ~~been evident~~ <sup>period,</sup> on the contrary, at least ~~with regard to numbers,~~ <sup>numerically, to what is happening</sup> in the large part of Europe ~~where vocations/~~ <sup>where vocations/</sup> countries ~~they~~ have entered ~~into~~ a phase of regression, although they are evidently at an incomparably ~~high~~ <sup>high</sup> level.

b) But we ~~cannot~~ <sup>must not fool ourselves.</sup> live under ~~an illusion.~~ The demographic increase will not ~~permit~~ <sup>make possible,</sup> in the foreseeable ~~period,~~ <sup>future, conservation of the present ratio</sup> to conserve the ~~same proportion~~ of inhabitants per priest.)

The relative ~~situation~~ <sup>critical</sup> ~~of crisis~~ will be permanent, at least ~~in~~ <sup>by</sup> the next two generations. For this reason it is indispensable not to concentrate solely on the problem of priestly vocations, but also to realize pastoral tasks with new duties, which may

in the sense of experiments now

eventually <sup>to</sup> carried out by deacons, laymen or Religious judging by ~~the~~ actual <sup>in progress</sup> experience of various countries.

c)- In these circumstances, when social <sup>and cultural change in</sup> transformations of the continent ~~are~~ is more important ~~than~~ than numerical changes, a purely quantitative viewpoint of the problem carries with it a policy which is condemned <sup>to failure.</sup> beforehand. It is, in <sup>facts,</sup> effect, human <sup>quality</sup> quality and spirituality of the priests that ~~is necessary to~~ <sup>must be</sup> consider <sup>the</sup> ~~in the~~ first place, <sup>of all.</sup> This becomes more important <sup>as</sup> when the priest's mission ~~is~~ becoming more and more difficult, <sup>as</sup> when a pastoral ~~of a framework~~ <sup>reconciliation</sup> with the masses is <sup>desired</sup> ~~needed~~ everywhere, and <sup>as the</sup> when a task of Christian formation ~~becomes~~ <sup>becomes</sup> more necessary; in an era also, in which the evangelization of the new world, born in suffering, ~~asks~~ demands a specialized action withing difficult surroundings, among students, workers, campesinos; and <sup>finally, at a time</sup> ~~in sum, upon~~ decentralizing pastoral tasks, <sup>one must know how to</sup> ~~a team should know how to work~~ <sup>in a team</sup> together and organize the ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> of others.

Therefore, the great temptation would be to consider the <sup>quantity</sup> ~~number~~ and not the quality, an understandable temptation <sup>among</sup> ~~in experienced~~ pastors who are preoccupied with ~~main~~ <sup>among</sup> pastoral problems <sup>in</sup> their particular ~~town.~~ <sup>people.</sup> This temptation could express itself in <sup>the</sup> ~~A~~ drafting of personnel poorly selected <sup>in more and more minor</sup> ~~from lesser~~ seminaries. It could also manifest itself by the <sup>impetuous</sup> ~~impetuous~~ sending of priests to other countries, who are ~~inadequately~~ insufficiently educated in ~~the needs of the~~ Latin American <sup>needs.</sup> pastoral ~~work.~~

Why multiply the number of priests if not to respond to the fundamental need for evangelization of 600 million inhabitants who will populate <sup>a completely transformed</sup> Latin America in 35 years, ~~and which will have been completely transformed?~~

d)- Finally, we want ~~to~~ to make a technical observation. If we want to carry on a truly <sup>vocational</sup> ~~vocational~~ pastoral, <sup>action for vocations</sup> in different countries, it is indispensable to <sup>be able to</sup> know ~~better~~ <sup>the</sup> the problem better. How many times we ~~rely~~ <sup>rely</sup> on mere impressions and, even in the present exposition, on partial data. In the framework of a vocational organism, <sup>be it</sup> ~~whether~~ on a ~~local~~ diocesan or continental level, it is indispensable to have precise data, compiled annually on the movement of vocations, the state of the

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clergy, its <sup>functions,</sup> duties, nationality, etc.

2.) <sup>Four</sup> Conclusions for Action

We will give 4 principal conclusions

a) - Action in favor of development :)

The analysis we have made on ~~the~~ vocations in Latin America has clearly shown that the first human conditioning for ~~the~~ access to the priesthood is the constitution of a people with a <sup>human</sup> level of ~~social~~ social and cultural life. In other words, the increase of the number of vocations is, in the long run, dependent on the <sup>potential</sup> development of ~~the~~ the masses. This is perfectly normal since the Lord uses ~~the~~ <sup>ordinary</sup> channels of His creation ~~in order~~ to give ~~His Grace~~ His Grace. A priest is a man chosen by God and not an inferior human being, except for an exceptional action on his part. (litual - ~~the~~ - God's? or what)

The orientation of Christians toward ~~development~~ economic, social, cultural and political developmant, is, therefore, <sup>related</sup> ~~in relation~~ to the problem which now preoccupies us. It would be dangerous not to see this. <sup>Even recruitment/</sup> ~~Even for the drafting~~ of priests, <sup>important that</sup> ~~it is not of indifference~~ to the Church ~~to~~ be interested in ~~the~~ development,

b) - Dynamic Pastoral action

Vocations depend also, as we have seen, on the image of the Church in the Latin American World. The achievement of many vocations will depend on the dynamism of the <sup>Obtaining</sup> ~~pastoral~~ <sup>Church's</sup> ~~of the~~ Church <sup>action.</sup>

This dynamism is expressed, in the first place, by ~~the~~ attention given to the poor <sup>as well as</sup> ~~and~~ social action <sup>favoring</sup> in favor of development; it ~~would~~ <sup>will</sup> be a sign of charity which <sup>Jesus</sup> ~~would~~ show; that this is the true Church of Christ. Pastoral action is also expressed <sup>action at</sup> in the key points of development of society and the new culture, such as universities, <sup>groups,</sup> workers, rural organizations. This dynamism <sup>of</sup> ~~is~~ manifested <sup>will be</sup> by ~~the realization~~ <sup>in the measure that</sup> of a true ~~decent~~

*is realized. A good day will shine, in the end there will finally dawn the to the degree that priests integrated in dynamic, pastoral action make their priesthood shine.*

de-centralization of pastoral tasks

2) - A pastoral action of vocations

The two elements we have mentioned, form the ~~principal~~ <sup>principal</sup> conclusions ~~which~~ <sup>that</sup> will ~~work~~ <sup>operate</sup> especially in the long range over a long term.

This does not mean that ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> is not necessary to carry on a pastoral <sup>action</sup> of vocations. This ~~is~~ <sup>should, it seems, be</sup> based on the following factors:

*The intermediate especially in cities?*  
i.) ~~the~~ <sup>intermediate</sup> Middle Classes, ~~above all urban~~

most important <sup>amount</sup> ~~supply~~ of solid vocations. This means an immediate transformation of the means of drafting and formation, <sup>(education)</sup> of which we will speak further on. In fact,

~~effect~~ <sup>are generally later</sup> vocations in urban areas ~~are~~ <sup>shown up in childhood, the</sup> take longer to find. In Argentina, while 78% rural

of ~~the~~ vocations have been manifested in infancy, this figure, in medium and small localities is 32% and in the cities <sup>(7% only)</sup>. Vocations there ~~are~~ <sup>ever</sup> more ~~are~~ <sup>are awakened / and more /</sup> in adolescence, and even ~~at~~ <sup>toward</sup> the end of it.

ii.) ~~the~~ <sup>and especially in state institutions</sup> Apostolic Movements: Very particularly among high school ~~students~~ <sup>and especially in state institutions</sup> and university students, We observe <sup>equally</sup> that in practice, the only

way to obtain vocations ~~among~~ <sup>among</sup> workers and ~~in~~ <sup>the</sup> rural proletariat ~~areas~~, is through Catholic Action, above all, the specialized ~~one~~ <sup>groups</sup>.

iii.) ~~the~~ <sup>Only in</sup> last ~~places~~ <sup>places</sup>, ~~only~~ <sup>are</sup> the minor seminaries, at least in <sup>as they are</sup>

their present form! This solution is still necessary only where the socio-cultural ~~resources~~ <sup>resources are</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>medium</sup> so deficient that ~~there is~~ <sup>there is</sup> no ~~poss~~ <sup>poss</sup> other/possibility ~~other~~ <sup>other</sup> than the creation at great expense, of ~~xxxxxxx~~ an artificial ~~xxxxxxx~~ socio-cultural ~~medium~~ <sup>milieu</sup>.

d) 4. A Renovation of means of formation <sup>(education)</sup>

The final conclusion ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> consists of reflecting on means of education <sup>+ formation</sup> of the priest. The problem is complex and we cannot treat it ~~here~~ <sup>completely</sup> here. We wish to underline the necessity of ~~this transformation~~ <sup>change</sup>.

For the minor seminaries it is possible that in cities it ~~will be~~ <sup>is</sup> necessary to orient <sup>these seminaries</sup> towards ~~the~~ transformation of ~~them~~ <sup>in</sup> diocesan colleges; or also <sup>near to</sup> ~~near~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>nearby</sup> residences ~~of the~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~teaching~~ <sup>teaching</sup> institutions, Catholic or ~~even~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~government~~ <sup>public</sup>.

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Present experiences in Santiago, La Paz, Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia seem to indicate clearly that ~~it is in this~~ <sup>it is in this</sup> direction <sup>taken by</sup> that ~~orients~~ those who have reflected particularly on the problem. <sup>that those who have thought about the problem specifically have gone.</sup>

With regard to the major seminaries, unanimously, as we have shown, there is the necessity of a more intense human education, of a more developed intellectual level, of <sup>a more accentuated</sup> spiritual and apostolic orientation, ~~that is more accentuated~~. It is <sup>almost</sup> superfluous to repeat this, but some of these demands require ~~their~~ <sup>very</sup> translation into ~~concrete~~ concrete measures, such as regional groups, for example, or in the change of internal ~~rulings~~ <sup>in the apostolate and</sup> which would permit ~~a~~ <sup>some</sup> greater ~~participa~~ <sup>spiritual</sup> participation, or the full-time dedication of ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> priests to the ~~orientation~~ <sup>orientation</sup> of the seminarians.

Finally, there remains the institution of seminaries for adult vocations. In a certain number of countries it would be desirable that these be created, <sup>bearing in mind,</sup> ~~having~~, of course, <sup>in mind</sup> the particular conditions needed to educate <sup>+ forms</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>these persons</sup>, <sup>Experiments</sup> exist as models.

\* \* \* \*

Already too long, this exposition may seem ~~short~~ nevertheless a bit underdeveloped.

It is inevitable with a such a complex theme of such vast dimensions. But I ~~think~~ <sup>should</sup> thought the questions ~~have~~ be set down as clearly as possible, leaving till later the more precise presentation of them.

The Lord asks of us great fidelity to the facts, the humility to accept them, the intelligence to interpret them, the courage to change them, and the boldness to believe in His grace. But on ~~his~~ <sup>it</sup> depends the ~~evangelization~~ <sup>evangelization</sup> of Latin America; and this is truly worthwhile.