Letter of
HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN XXIII

to the

MOST REVEREND ORDINARIES AND MAJOR SUPERIORS
OF THE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS OF THE CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES

(April 21, 1963)

An expression of appreciation for their
cooperation in supplying personnel
to the Church in Latin America

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In August 1961 a representative of the Holy See, Monsignor Casaroli of the Secretariat of State, addressed the Conferences of Major Superiors of the Religious Communities of Men and Women at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, on the matter of personnel for Latin America during the decade of the 1960's. At the request of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America the Sub-Committee on Recruitment of the Bishops' Committee for Latin America undertook through the Latin America Bureau a survey of the results to date of this appeal. This survey included the cooperation of the Dioceses of the United States. The detailed data from this survey is confidential and has been delivered to the Pontifical Commission.

The general results of the survey have been judged by the Pontifical Commission to be such that His Excellency Archbishop McGucken, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, was encouraged to prepare a letter to the Holy Father embodying this data. His Holiness Pope John XXIII has graciously replied to this report.

To Our Beloved Son
Richard J. Cardinal Cushing
Archbishop of Boston
Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Latin America, N.C.W.C.

With profound joy have We examined the report of the apostolic collaboration which the Dioceses and Religious Congregations of the United States of America have contributed in Latin America from August of 1961 up to January of this present year.

We cordially felicitate all those who initiated in the past and are promoting at present this collaboration, and We are heartily grateful for the ready generosity of

proposals and of actual achievements by which the Church of your country, so rich in promise and hopes, has once again responded to Our heartfelt appeals. Nor is this response surprising, since We are well aware of the eager cooperation which the American Bishops and Religious have always given to every praiseworthy undertaking.

The knowledge that this effort is not made without sacrifices touches Us deply; and this is also a guarantee of its certain success. We realize that it is not superfluous personnel that is sent to those countries, but that grave domestic needs are curtailed in order to grant laudable aid to the Church in Latin America, which you regard as a wider field of action to which the active concern of Catholics must be channelled, in order to assist a so

important and imperilled member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

It is with edification and consolation that We recall the priceless work of Our Venerable Brothers the Bishops of the United States, who not only encourage Men and Women Religious to undertake new foundations in the South, thus depriving themselves of such services, but have, with their diocesan clergy, assumed the direction of numerous parishes. We are solaced by the knowledge that forty Dioceses have already sent priests, and that fifty-two others are at present preparing projects of collaboration. Among all these initiatives special recognition is due to the Pious Society of Saint James the Apostle, founded by you, Beloved Son, which has already

furnished seventy-eight priests, half of them from your own Archdiocese.

We are also aware of what is being done by sixty-five Dioceses of the United States, who follow the laudable example of Our Beloved Son, Francis J. Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, in furnishing religious assistance to Spanish-speaking immigrants; while another important apostolic work is developed among the more than ten thousand Latin-American students who attend your Universities and Colleges.

It is, however, natural that the numerically more important contribution should be made by the Religious Congregations and Institutes, so flourishing and so rich in vocations; and We are pleased to note that Our

expectations have been satisfied and will be even more completely fulfilled. We feel confident, in the near future. In fact, We have learned with gratification that eighty-five per cent of your Clerical Congregations have shown lively interest in the pastoral ministry, and that since August of 1961 no less than forty-one new foundations have been made, and two hundred and seventy-nine priests sent, thus raising to one thousand four hundred and seventy-eight the total of Religious Priests engaged in apostolic activities on that vast continent. The Lay Congregations, too, have not been remiss in this field, being represented by an admirable group of two hundred Teaching Brothers, by six very recent foundations, and by several projects to be put into immediate execution. The thousand

four hundred and ten Sisters and the fifty-one new foundations since August of 1961 are a very eloquent testimony to the active participation of Congregations of Women Religious of the United States in some of the most important sectors of Catholic life.

We cannot pass over in silence the excellent project promoted by Our Venerable Brothers of the Hierarchy in recruiting Men and Women Volunteers, a many of whom are already carrying on their self sacrificing and hidden labors in several Dioceses.

From the consideration of these multiple activities, developed in a very few years, We are prompted to express once more Our sincere thankfulness to you, Beloved Son, to the other U. S. A. Cardinals and Bishops, and Major

Religious Superiors of Men and Women and also to send Our words of encouragement to persevere fervently therein. The most serious problem to be worked on in Latin America, namely, the shortage of clergy, is still far from its hoped-for solution. We obtained authoritative and sorrowful confirmation of this from the Latin-American Archbishops and Bishops who came to Rome for the Ecumenical Council, and who described this shortage to Us in all its extent as their urgent need and their preoccupying trouble.

We confidently trust, therefore, that the American Dioceses and Religious Congregations will, in the years ahead, fulfil with solicitude the various more extended programs which have been proposed. Indeed, We would

wish that the greatest efforts be made, as far as possible, during this time, so that they may assume added significance as the Ecumenical Council's priceless gift to the Catholic peoples of Western hemisphere.

We are certain that, by means of efficacious collaboration between the your various organisms set up by the Hierarchy and Religious, and Our Pontifical Commission for Latin America, so providently instituted exactly five years ago by Our Predecessor Pius XII of venerated memory, all activities will be fruitfully coordinated.

We ask you, Beloved Son, to convey to the Bishops and Religious Superiors of the United States the concern and the hopes We have expressed to you; and to examine

with them the best way of achieving ever great results.

With these sentiments, as a token of paternal benevolence, We bestow upon you, Beloved Son, upon the other Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, the Congregations and Institutes of Men and Women of your country, Our special Apostolic Blessing in pledge of heavenly graces.

From the Vatican, April 21, 1963

Ioannes XXIII

Report to His Holiness Pope John XXIII of His Excellency, Most Reverend Joseph T. McGucken, Archbishop of San Francisco, Chairman of Sub-Committee for Recruitment, Bishops' Committee for Latin America.

March 19, 1963

To His Holiness
Pope John XXIII:

Your Holiness,

At the prompting of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, whose solicitude for the Church in Latin America has been an inspiration to us, the Bishops of the United States through their Latin America Bureau have made an initial survey of the cooperation of the Church in the United States in supplying religious personnel to the Church in Latin America.

Origin of the survey

We are happy to report substantial progress to Your Holiness. The special appeal by the representative of the Holy See to the Church in the United States was made at the University of Notre Dame in August 1961 during a joint meeting of the Conferences of Major Superiors of Men and of Women Religious. At this meeting Monsignor Casaroli as representative of the Holy See offered the suggestion that each religious province consider as the ideal for aid to Latin America the contribution by 1970 of the equivalent of a "tithe" of its personnel as of 1960. In the replies to our survey just completed, it is interesting and impressive to note the frequent reference to this ideal as set by the Holy See.

The Most Reverend Ordinaries of the Dioceses of the United States as well as the Major Superiors of the religious communities recognize the gravity of the responsibility placed upon them during the decade of the sixties to answer this extraordinary call. Our communication today records the modest but promising beginnings made during the period of less than two years from August 1961 to January of 1963.

Scope of the survey

To facilitate the response to the survey questionary, the inquiry was addressed to the superior generals of the religious communities of men and women and, in the case of the religious communities with more than one province in the United States, likewise to the provincials. A special survey was addressed to the Most Reverend Ordinaries of the United States. Thus a total of 934 ordinaries and major superiors were approached, of whom 80% (747) expressed active interest in this initiative of the Pontifical Commission.

The Personnel Contribution of the Dioceses of the United States

Of the 146 Most Reverend Diocesan Ordinaries queried by the survey, 88% replied as actively concerned. A total of 40 dioceses, or 27%, indicated that they now have contributed at least one diocesan priest to Latin America. At the turn of the year approximately 125 diocesan priests from the United States were at work in Latin America. Of the remaining dioceses, a total of 52, or 36%, note that while no program has been as yet instituted, plans are in mind for future activity. Thus 92 U. S. dioceses, or 63%, have already pledged an active adherence to the call of the Holy See.

The Missionary Society of St. James The Apostle

Offering an admirable example to the nation is the program of the Archdiocese of Boston under the leadership of His Eminence Cardinal Cushing. By founding the Society of St. James for the recruitment of diocesan priests for service in Latin America, His Eminence provided a sending organization not only for volunteers from his own archdiocese but for numerous other dioceses throughout the nation. The Society of St. James at the beginning of 1963 had a membership of 78 diocesan priests, 39 from Boston and 39 from other dioceses of the nation and abroad. These priests work in 25 parishes in Bolivia (8), Peru (15) and Ecuador (2). In each of these three countries there is a local superior, one of whom is a Bostonian while the other two are from other dioceses.

Other diocesan units in Latin America

Among the prelates who very early instituted a diocesan unit in Latin America is His Eminence Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis whose clergy operate two parishes in Bolivia. His Excellency Bishop John P. Treacy of La Crosse, Wisconsin has priests also in Bolivia, while His Excellency Bishop Bernard J. Topel of Spokane has a diocesan band in Guatemala. A total of eight other archdioceses or dioceses have accepted responsibility for parishes in Latin America since the Papal appeal of 1961 while some 28 other Ordinaries have granted permission to clergy under their jurisdiction to take up work in Latin American dioceses.

A group of priests with special skill in catechetics has for some years been contributed by Archbishop Lucey of San Antonio for the promotion of the C.C.D. in Latin America.

Religious facilities for the Spanish-speaking

A notable work undertaken by a large number of Ordinaries in the United States is the provision of special religious facilities for the Spanish-speaking Catholics living within the borders of the United States. This work is directed by the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish-Speaking and the Bishops' Committee for Migrant Workers. These Catholics total over eight

million souls, an overwhelming majority of them from Latin America. Such special provision is provided currently in 65 dioceses.

The total number of priests engaged in full-time work among Spanish-speaking Catholics is 604 while 112 priests are reported as engaged in part-time assistance. The largest single staff is provided by the Archdiocese of New York, where His Eminence Cardinal Spellman has assigned more than 200 priests to the 750,000 Spanish-speaking under his jurisdiction.

A special tribute is due to Right Reverend Ordinaries such as His Excellency Bishop Coleman Carroll of Miami, Florida, who have met so well the extraordinary crisis of caring for tens of thousands of Cubans and Puerto Ricans who have concentrated within their jurisdictions under circumstances which have required great material as well as spiritual assistance to meet the needs.

The Personnel Contribution of the Religious Communities of Priests

The Conference of Male Religious of the United States of America, which includes the communities of priests and brothers, and the Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Women's Institutes of the United States of America cooperated actively in this survey. Considering first the communities of priests, of the 231 generalates and provincialates approached in the survey, 85% indicated active interest.

The replies establish that at the beginning of 1963, 81 generalates or provincialates of American religious communities of priests are at work in Latin America, 35% of the total. Of these, 13 have initiated their labors since the Papal appeal of 1961. Another 44 have specific plans which will put them in the field shortly. These latter represent 19% of the total and thus 54% of the communities of priests will shortly be at work in Latin America.

The increase in priest religious in Latin America since the Papal appeal of 1961 is 279, a rise of 23% over the previous figure. The new total is 1478. New foundations in Latin America since 1961 opened by our priest religious total 41.

Comments of Major Superiors

Through the replies of the major superiors to the survey inquiry runs the note of deep concern for the desires of the Holy See. A few who made comments may be cited.

"We hope to be able to supply personnel so that within 10 years we shall number 10% of our Province in South America."—Very Rev. Francis J. Cavanaugh, O.S.A., Provincial of the Illinois Province of the Augustinians.

"We hope to supply 10% of the community during the 10 year period as requested earlier by the Holy See."—Assumption Abbey of the Benedictines of Richardton, North Dakota.

"Because of the large size of our missionary endeavor in South America (Santiago, Lima, Prelature of Sicuani) we expect to build up to well over 10% of our personnel."—Very Rev. Brendan Gilmore, O.Carm., Provincial of the Carmelites of Chicago.

"The General Chapter of the Society in July 1962 passed a resolution that, in the field of expansion, priority should be given to Latin America."—Very Rev. Daniel Boland, American Provincial, St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society.

The Maryknoll Fathers reported 265 of its members in Latin America, or more than 25% of its total enrollment of priests. "We hope to be able to send some 15 members to Latin America each year," wrote Bishop John W. Comber, the Superior General.

"It is our firm determination to send 10% of the personnel of the American Province to Latin America by 1972."—Very Rev. John E. Byrne, C.PP.S., Provincial of the Precious Blood Fathers.

Six of the provinces of the Society of Jesus in the United States now have missions in Latin America and report heavy increases to a new total of 223 members in the field. The Redemptorists report 221 members in Latin America with new developments in training Latin American personnel. The Franciscans report a total of 216.

"We have pledged 10% of the Province personnel to Latin America during the next ten years."—Very Rev. Kevin R. Keelan, Provincial, Franciscans, T.O.R., Loretto, Pennsylvania.

The Personnel Contribution of Communities of Brothers

A total of 28 generalates and provincialates of Brothers participated in the survey. Of these 29% have personnel in Latin America and another 21% announce plans for participation. Thus 50% of the total organizations have already declared themselves for the program.

Of particular promise in the strengthening of our Brothers' work in Latin America is the growth of Latin American vocations. Brother Ireneus Philip, F.S.C., Provincial of the St. Louis Province, makes reference to this: "We have started getting vocations from our Central American school and now have about 20 of them in formation. This will help our supply."

Brother Thomas More of the Xaverians notes other problems: "Supplying personnel is not as difficult as (a) financing a mission, and (b) getting maximum use out of personnel within a well-developed Latin American plan."

The Personnel Contribution of the Religious Communities of Sisters

Of the 529 generalates and provincialates of the religious communities of Sisters in the United States approached by the survey, 415 or 79% indicated active interest. A total of 119 generalates or provincialates are now at work in Latin America, 35 of which have initiated their work there since the Papal appeal of 1961. An additional 97 communities have made specific commitments to begin work in Latin America. Thus a total of 41% of the 529 generalates and provincialates approached through the survey have already entered the field or made specific commitments to do so shortly.

Comments of Major Superiors

Notable in the reports of the Sisters are the evidences in many cases of substantial programs for Latin America, with frequent reference to the ideal of making a contribution of 10% of their personnel during the 1960's.

"Thirteen Sisters of our Congregation on January 4, 1963, went to Bogota, Colombia, to teach at Colegio San Carlos. It is the plan of the separate priories to establish schools, hospitals or clinics in various Latin American countries at the end of the two year commitment to San Carlos."—Benedictine Sisters of St. Gertrude the Great, Cottonwood, Idaho.

"We are planning to construct a 50-bed hospital in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and to supply additional staff."—Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Mother Mary Colman, General of the Maryknoll Sisters who have 197 members in Latin America, writes: "Keeping our 34 houses in Latin America adequately staffed to meet continual development demands annual additional personnel. New houses will be opened as personnel becomes available."

"In accordance with the directives of the Holy See we plan to send additional Sisters regularly so as to reach the 10% of our membership as suggested by His Holiness."—School Sisters of St. Francis, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"Beginning with the fall of 1964, we shall send, if possible, a few Sisters yearly until we reach 10% of the total active personnel. We have already sent 12 Sisters."—Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, South Bend, Indiana.

"We hope to supply 10% of our personnel in 10 years as promised by the Superior General at the University of Notre Dame."—Sisters of St. Joseph, Bartlett, Illinois.

"We shall continue to increase our personnel until we have complied with the wishes of the Holy Father—and more than that if possible."—Mother M. Lorenza, C.PP.S., Mother General, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, Missouri.

"We propose to send four Sisters in 1964 and to continue to send Sisters until our quota of 10% of our membership (427) is fulfilled."—Rev. Mother M. Cyril, R.S.M., Sisters of Mercy, Burlingame, California.

"We shall send four more Sisters to our present mission and will continue to give to reach the 10% requested."—Mother Mary Naomi, R.S.M., Sisters of Mercy, Brooklyn, New York.

"Each year the community will strive to send additional personnel in compliance with the wishes of the Holy Father."—Mother Kathryn Marie, C.S.C., Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.

"We wish to comply with the desires of the Holy Father and hope to be able to extend our work in Latin America during the next ten years."—Mother M. Joan, F.S.P.A., Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

"We are aiming at our quota of 10% but feel it is necessary to send well-qualified missionaries."—Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Little Falls, Minnesota.

"It is hoped that by 1971 we shall have supplied the 'tithe' for Latin America, that is, 50 Sisters, as requested by the Holy See in 1961."—Sisters of Mercy, Windham, New Hampshire.

Conclusions from this First Survey

This first survey of the response to the Papal appeal of 1961 established the fact very strongly that the Most Reverend Ordinaries of the United States and the Superior Generals and Provincials of the religious communities of men and women in the United States have reacted in great numbers with concern and decision and have already demonstrated the readiness of these leaders in our Church to cooperate loyally in this extraordinary effort. This spirit of zealous generosity is reflected within the rank and file of the clerical and religious forces in the United States. Hundreds of our clergy and thousands of our religious Sisters have expressed an apostolic desire to serve the Church in Latin America.

It is notable in the United States at the present moment that this growing movement to serve the Church in Latin America does not represent the assignment of superfluous personnel. No such superfluity exists. It represents, rather, an admirable readiness on the part of Ordinaries and Superiors to sacrifice great needs in the homeland to serve the far larger needs of the Church in a neighboring region which throughout great areas suffers grave jeopardy through a shortage of personnel. The actual contribution to date is modest but the preparations for more substantial assignments of personnel are clearly evident.

With respectful homage to Your Holiness, this report is submitted for the Bishops' Committee for Latin America, the Chairman of which is His Eminence Richard Cardinal Cushing, by your humble servant, Chairman of the Sub-Committee for Recruitment.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

+ Joseph T. McGucken

Joseph T. McGucken
Archbishop of San Francisco

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