

Domine, Quo Vadis

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A CHURCH IS BORN



In the First Century of the Christian era Simon Peter found himself fleeing for his life on the Via Appia, Rome's

principal road leading out from the city gates. His mind was filled with dark disquieting thoughts, a blend of fear, doubts, weariness and shame. He looked ahead and noticed another traveller heading to Rome walking towards him. As Peter hurry-scurried along he impulsively realized that the approaching person is the risen Christ. In a state of astonishment and veneration, he trembled as he asked, *Domine, quo vadis* – (Lord, where are you going?) Christ answered that he is going to Rome *to be crucified again*. Peter was stunned to hear these words. He looked up only to find that Christ had vanished from his view. Peter once again suffered his mortal dread of being all along and frightened. With floundering steps he continued to walk away from Rome. Slowly he began to understand Christ's words to mean that it is Peter himself who is to return to Rome to be crucified. Peter is to be Christ's second crucifixion substitute – the first Vicar of Christ. Peter braced himself with newfound courage and turned back to go into the city with renewed faith and joy, glorifying God and telling his Christian brethren how he met the risen Christ who told him how he was to be crucified again in Rome. The small budding community of Christians was then being hunted down and persecuted by Imperial Rome's Emperor Nero. Peter was crucified in A.D. 67, head downwards, at the foot of the obelisk in the centre of the circus of Caligula and Nero.

THE VIA APPIA ANTICA



The Via Appia, the road which linked Rome with its expanding empire in the East, was begun in 312 B.C. It eventually stretched across the Italian peninsula to Brindisi on the Adriatic coast, 350 miles away. Today, as then, the road begins at the Porta San Sebastiano set in Rome's historic Aurelian Wall. Major Christian sights are found along its route, including the small chapel like Church of Domine Quo Vadis?, built on the spot where Peter is said to have met Christ. Of special importance is a singular road stone embedded in the entrance floor of the church. The stone bears the definite imprint of a man's footprints. These footprints appear as if they were left when the stone was melted away where someone last stood on this stone. It was until then a minor insignificant stone, the same as the millions of like stones which were used to build 350 miles of this roadway. Romans used a volcanic stone readily available to them to build their all weather permanent roads to the worlds beyond Rome. These footprint impressions are so vivid to the eye and seemingly so authentic they defy any and all other rational explanations as to how the stone came to bear these astounding imprints, other than the historical account of this meeting between Peter and Christ. It remains there today for anyone's inspection and analysis.



After 250 years of Christian suffering, persecution, torture, death and martyrdom, Peter's courageous return to Rome to be crucified eventually led to Emperor Constantine's promulgation of the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313. This new Roman policy allowed Christians to openly practice their religion and to be free from all persecution and death. Previously, Christians throughout the age of the Antonines in accordance with Emperor Trajan's decree were condemned to death if properly convicted and remained persistent in their refusal to perform the ceremonies of the pagan religion of official Rome. The harshest persecutions occurred in the middle of the third century and the beginnings of the fourth century. Their deaths were often staged to afford amusement to the crowds of Roman citizens who attended Rome's spectacular circus entertainments. Christians were wrapped in the skin of wild beasts and torn to pieces by wild dogs – others were fastened to crosses, oiled and burned alive as torches in order to light up the night performances. In A.D. 303 an edict was issued ordering all Christian churches to be destroyed and all Christian writing to be publicly burned. Christians were declared incapable of holding any public office and Christian slaves were forever deprived of any hope of future freedom. These severe measures were continued by Maximian and Galerius. The Christian church in Roman Britain was not very large, but large enough to share in the persecutions of the Roman Empire and it provided the first British martyr, St. Alban. Emperor Constantine, after his vision of the sign of the cross of victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge defending Rome, erected a Christian basilica over the site where Saint Peter was crucified in the Vatican section of Rome. He himself was baptized in the Christian faith in 337, shortly before his death. In A.D. 380 Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

CONSTANTINE'S VISION AND CONVERSION



Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

You are the salt of the earth.



You are the light of the world.

Salt is a useful thing. But if the salt itself loses its taste, how can it be seasoned again? It is good for neither soil nor manure heap. People throw it out. Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!

Luke 14: 34 - 35

When Emperor Constantine saw the sign of the Cross in the sky and decided to give Roman Christians their civil and religious freedoms, the newly born Church of Rome, which previously concerned itself and its teaching solely from a viewpoint of man's spirituality and eventual salvation and its own very survival, soon found itself indistinguishable from the world of the Roman Empire.

In the tenuous and dangerous years between the death of St. Peter in A.D. 67 and the year A.D. 313 when Constantine became a Christian the Church of Rome was solely and purely a spiritual assembly. Following Constantine's conversion and gifts of property and territory, the Church eventually became the most important religious, political and social intermediary in Europe, the occidental Near East and the new world of the Americas for the next sixteen hundred years. In 1929 the Church wisely relinquished all its patrimonial territorial and property claims in Italy. The Pope of

Rome was no longer a sovereign of any earthly realm -- save the Vatican a 110 acre site located in the middle of Rome. This near two thousand year reign of the Church gave birth to much of the world's cultural, artistic and academic treasures. It has served mankind both as the principal generator and as a repository of a host of scientific, musical, artistic, literature, law, engineering, architecture, academia, scholarship and missionary work. It also has served in developing the important work of diplomatic expertise, by maintaining legations of *papal nuncios* in most nations and international organizations. The Vatican diplomatic service has the longest uninterrupted history in the world.

All of the Church's Popes, from Silverstre I to Pope Pius XII have thought of themselves and their church as the world's most influential religious and temporal authority. It held itself to be a power apart from, at least equal, and in some respects, superior to, secular authority. Silverstre I brought this attitude about by accepting Emperor Constantine's "dowry" of territorial power, prestige and property. The one break in this two thousand year tradition of religious and temporal leadership came in 1958 with the election of Angelo Roncalli as Pope John XXIII. Pope John died in 1963, living a relatively sort papacy of five years. Yet the changes his Second Vatican Council promulgated became as important to the Church as the decision of Pope Silverstre to accept the offerings of Constantine, with all of its future significance and meaning to the Church. Pope John has said that he could not escape his growing sense that a strange disruptive dynamism was influencing the world in which he lived for the past eighty years, as student, priest, bishop, teacher, soldier, diplomat, cardinal and eventually Pope. He was determined by his work and his prayers to produce a vast Pentecostal movement of near mystical origin, which would all be to the benefit of his beloved Church, and to the world in general and to each and every person in the world -- *to renew all things human in the world.*



Saltcellar, called the "Saliera"

(Florence 1500 - 1572 Florence)

Paris, 1540 - 1543

Commissioned by King Francis I of France

Home: Kunstkammer, Vienna

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In his Autobiography Cellini says: *In order to show how the sea is connected with the Earth, I made two figures, a good palms width in height, which sat across from each other with legs crossed, just as one sees the arms of the sea flowing into the land. The sea, depicted as a man, holds a richly decorated ship, which can hold salt enough; beneath it I mounted four seahorses and put a trident in the figures right hand. The Earth I depicted as a woman, of such lovely form and as graceful as I knew how to create. Next to her I placed on the ground a richly decorated temple, which was intended to hold pepper... At her side were the loveliest creatures the Earth produces. In the curvature of the base the figures of the four winds, the times of day, and emblems of human activity complete the allegory.*

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

1980 -- 2001



Statistics: The Catholic Church -- Grand totals							
	USA			Canada		World	
	1970	1980	2001	1980	2001	1980	2001
Catholic Population	47,872,089	49,812,178	63,680,030	10,123,329	12,637,006	739,126,000	1 billion
Dioceses		138	151	51	63	1835	2040
Archdioceses		33	33	18	18	494	565
Parishes	18,224	18,794	19,544	5,729	5,589		216,614
Diocesan priests	37,272	35,418	30,655	7,623	6,831	258,000	265,012
Religious priests	21,920	23,203	15,386	5,354	3,549	147,000	139,997

Total priests	59,192	58,621	46,041	12,986	10,380	405,000	405,009
Bishops		357	373	73	63	2,434	3,428
Archbishops		56	45	18	18	411	891
Cardinals		10	11	4	5	127	179
Brothers	11,623	7,941	5,565	4,340	2,293	66,940	55,428
Sisters	160,931	126,517	79,462	38,858	23,300	938,881	809,351
Seminaries - Diocesan	118	92	77		Major 15		
Seminaries - Religious	407	252	141				
Seminarists - Total	28,906	13,226	4,917			61,113	110,021
Colleges & Universities		239	235		17		
Diocesan & parochial high schools		1,527	1,596				35,722
Elementary schools		8,149	7,061				89,537
Total students under Catholic instruction		8,264,717	3,444,480				41,903,337
Hospitals		633	596				6,038
Orphanages		207	165				8,711
Homes for aged/health care		497	544				13,238
Populations	203 million	220 million	300 million	23.5 million	31 million	4.5 billion	5.9 billion

The Official Catholic Directory 1980

1981 Catholic Almanac, 2002 Catholic Almanac

These disturbing statistics and their related reactions and consequences may be disheartening, difficult and somewhat frightening for the average Roman Catholic to accept and more importantly to understand. This sudden and surprising turn of events has been a devastating experience for the Church and its Faithful -- a spiritual and ecclesiastical catastrophe which can be likened to the aftermath of an overnight flash flooding of a community -- unanticipated but now very real by its presence and its devastation. After a natural flooding, the problem becomes one of social and economic recovery. How long, how much, and at what cost. The most important faith question will now be asked -- of the church -- is the community now substantially changed from what it was before their sudden inundation by the muddy waters of their fast-rising river -- will they remain and renew their faith in their future in this community or will they emigrate to higher ground to where they know they will be safe from such floods? Should they courageously decide to remain faithful they are fully aware that they will need every ounce of courage and fortitude they are able to muster. They realize that it will be much easier to rebuild their streets and dwellings than to rebuild the spirituality and faith of their community, which they know to be far more valuable and precious.

Roman Catholics have been traumatized by what they see happening to their Church. Their children are now only suspicious strangers to the Faith of their parents. This Faith must find dry land to send down its roots to once again renew itself and flourish until it manifests itself and is practised and recognizable in their families, their communities, their society, their nation and in their culture. Only then will they choose to live their lives beside the spiritually nourishing waters of the Roman Catholic

Faith.

There are many problems today in the Roman Catholic World. To mention a few -- divorce, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, sexual abuse scandals, Communism, Capitalism, Globalism, Church liturgy, and vocations. These and many other pressing problems can only be rectified and solved by a return to a Faith in something other than ourselves, our own desires and wishes. Our Catholic faith is not, has never been, and will never be an individual affair. It is only to be found in a worldwide community, which begins in Rome and comes down to our local parish and ultimately to ourselves for our own approval and acceptance. We are the ultimate voice in the Church. We are the Church!

Like all institutions, corporations, governments and political parties, the Vatican has set out its own immediate agenda and will follow *in statu quoit* for the short term, regardless of who is Pope. If this program does not reflect the generalized unwritten hopeful agenda which is found in the hearts and minds of its Faithful it will fail and the programs of renewal will fall on their own sword. To assure its ecclesiastical credibility the Vatican must now listen and listen well to the varied voices of the laity, heed their words and then act with vigour and courage. Their present day critics are not their enemies. It is their people speaking. These voices do not need admonishment and sanction. They only want their Catholic Faith to flourish and survive for future generations of their own sons and daughters. The Vatican is no longer seen to be the ultimate and sole authority when speaking on spiritual and social questions. They are at their best when they are the administrative agency of the will and desires of the Mystical Body of Christ, as formulated and willed by the bishops, clergy and laity of the various regions of the world. Catholic men and women no longer are peasants working the land. They are now educated, trained and competent workers in the fields of the humanities, the arts and sciences, and economics. They are willing and anxious to serve their Faith, rather than follow a exclusively corporate economic or political life-style. They represent a pent up spiritual force waiting to serve their Faith, humanity and society. They are builders and creators as evidenced by their families of sons and daughters and the products and services they daily give to the world. They are hesitant and overly cautious to propose or recommend their thoughts and solutions. As a result they remain silent. They are untutored in the ways of the clergy and the Church which often appears to them to be known only by the ordained or someone with political and economic status. Unorganized at best, badly organized as a rule, today's laity has no voice in the deliberations and programs of their Church. Much has been said since Vatican II in praise of the laity which has led to the formation of parish and diocesan programs inviting the participation of the congregation. New banners have been hung announcing "Parish Renewal Programs." These attempts, much like early Spring flowers, are the first to bloom, show their brilliant colours and then too quickly fade and fall back into the earth to await a new Spring.

The Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, the supreme governing body of the church, consists of the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, and the Bishops of the world joined together with him in one Apostolic College to provide for the common good of the church. The Sacred College of Cardinals, all Bishops from various areas of the world, serve as the Supreme Council or Senate of the Church. The Roman Curia consists of the Secretariat of State, the Sacred Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, and nine Congregations, three Tribunals, three Secretariats, and a complex of Commissions, Councils, and Offices, which administer church affairs at the highest level.

Although the Fathers of the Church can take comfort in the promise of Christ, according to Saint Mathew, *And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!*", no one, inside or outside the Church, can with any defining clarity or certainly forecast the future shape, size, and structure of the Roman Church. It seems certain that it will, of necessity change dramatically from its recent centuries of being a world-wide governing and law creating body, to being one of a simpler spiritual mission. The great Italian poet Dante Alegheri in his Divine Comedy writes:

Alas! Constantine!

What evil have you bore into the world!

Not by your conversion, but by your dowry

Which the first rich father took from you!

Inferno, Canto XIX

PETRUS, QUO VADIS?



A CHURCH IN ANGUISH

Roman Catholicism

was once the salt of the earth -- not hundreds or thousands of years ago, but not long ago in our own lifetime. In 1980 there were sixty-thousand priests, one hundred and twenty-six thousand sisters and eight thousand brothers of religious orders, working in the parishes, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages in the United States ministering to a Catholic population of fifty million. Many former priests, sisters and brothers saw a window of opportunity to opt out of their commitment to a religious vocation, and did so in substantial numbers in the years immediately following the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Those who were confident and comfortable with their ministry in the Church remained, but in the meantime, thirty years have been added to their biological odometer and suddenly most are now senior citizens of society and their ministry. Empty buildings -- former seminaries, convents and monasteries now dot the landscape. Vocations to a religious life have fallen dramatically and all efforts to mobilize the young in this regard have failed. It is reported that a bishop in Western Canada, imported twelve young newly ordained priests from Poland several years ago and has paid for all of their upkeep here in the hopes that he would find the number of priests he needed for his diocese. They all decided to remain in Canada. It is one answer, but is it satisfactory? The United States is not immune from this shortfall of vocations and will also be forced to import young men and women from Asia, Africa, and South America in this regard. Most young American men and women are now graduating from American Universities with Masters of Business Degrees or other lucrative social and economic disciplines. Their religion is a new one. If one wishes to see young eager religious faces in the thousands, you must go to Rome and ride one of the many buses which go to the Vatican and Saint Peter's Basilica. On these buses, crowds of religious habits are seen, symbols of their wearer's commitment to a religious life. They are here to see the wonders of Rome and the Holy See and hopefully a glimpse of John Paul II, their commander-in-chief. The only unsettling aspect of this scenario is the fact that their faces, smiling and happy, are the faces of young people born, raised and educated in Third World countries, probably to poor peasant families, who have given them the same advice that mothers have given in the past centuries -- go into the Church, son or daughter, you will be safe there. You will never go hungry, have to pay rent, and most importantly you will not have to suffer through the sorrows of a life long marriage, where much is promised but little delivered. These mothers, who have lived through wars and a world-wide depression in their youth, have been a decisive factor in the vocations to the religious life of their offsprings. In many cases, they the mothers have been the main influence in the lives of their religious offsprings and without a doubt the last female to be personally involved in the day-to-day affairs of these priests, many of whom now hold important offices in the hierarchy of the Church. What has happened here? Basically three major Catholic events took place between 1958 and 1978 -- probably one of the greatest periods of Catholic restructuring since the vision of Emperor Constantine at the Milvian Bridge in A.D. 313 in

Rome.

The first of these was the ascendancy of Angelo Roncalli, from Patriarch of Venice to being elected as Pope John XXIII on October 28, 1958. The second was the election of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, to the office of the President of the United States of America in November of 1960. The third being the election of Karol Wojtyla of Wadowice, Poland to the papacy of John Paul II, October 16, 1978. All three selections were unforeseen and not expected to happen. Roncalli was a distant choice, at best, at that 80th conclave. Others were considered far more likely *papabile*, because of their age, education and prominence in the affairs of the Church -- but Roncalli emerged as a surprise choice. It was said after the election that he would be only an interim Pope -- a compromise in these affairs; a good, kindly Pope with no expectations whatever of his having any impact on the barque of Peter as it sailed through the choppy waters of post-war Europe.

Pope John Paul II, being Polish, was not mentioned as a possibility in 1978, as Italians had an unbroken string of successions to this important office and expectations were that another Italian Cardinal would be again selected, as they have been since Adrian Florensz, born in Utrecht, became Pope Adrian VI, in 1522.

Kennedy's election, although won by the narrowest of margins, was like a bombshell exploding in the United States in 1960, as the political party system then in place designed the system so that no Catholic could possibly make a successful run at this office. The last Catholic to try was Al Smith, who was overwhelmingly defeated in 1928 -- no Catholic had dared since then. One obstacle they faced was the reality that America has been dominated by Freemasonry since its inception in 1776. Its first President, George Washington laid the cornerstone of the Capitol Building in September 18, 1793, with imposing Masonic ceremonies. The Lodge in question that day, of which Washington was a past Grand Master, was that of Alexandria which still preserves the trowel used on that occasion. Most, if not every president, other than John F. Kennedy, has been a Mason. Catholicism and Freemasonry have not seen eye to eye on practically every area of human and social activity through the centuries. One is overt, the other covert.

The elections of both Johns, the Pope and the President and their deaths in 1963 will forever be seen as important events in history and major turning points in two of society's most important arenas of human activity -- religion and politics. They support each other and derive their authority, in the human scheme of things, from the same source -- the people of God and the people of a nation.

First, Roncalli freed the Church from its many social and religious constraints of recent past centuries, which if left in place would have caused only confusion, anxiety, and frustration in its membership to a far greater degree than ever before. Especially those who had taken their final vows of religious life, whether because of a mistaken interpretation of a "call," or family pressure, or just a plain and simple "silly" decision made early in life; in many cases far too early, barely into their teens. They were not happy with their vocations to a life of denial, service, and unshakeable faith. Also, being young, they in some cases, were attracted to someone, fell in love, but were compelled to suffer through a life of agony and denial and to live in a community where men and women were separated by an ecclesiastical wall, without any hope of ever freeing themselves from this unfortunate intractable dilemma.

The Second Vatican Council, whether knowingly or unknowingly, gave these persons trapped in the misery of a false or weak vocation, an opportunity to disrobe themselves, figuratively and literally, and to leave Mother Church to take on new and meaningful pursuits in life, whether that included marriage or not. They were freed from their obligations and vows and the Church was freed from its painful experience with unfulfilled and discontented priests and religious brothers and sisters. John's insight into these *"signs of the times"* led him to his totally unexpected, yet very profound and courageous decision to convene the Bishops of the Church in Rome for a Second Vatican Council. This decision was based on his observation and personal belief that *"now more than ever, our purpose is to serve man as such, and not only Catholics. It is not the Gospel that changes, but rather, we who begin to understand it better. The moment has arrived to recognize the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity to look far ahead."*

New hope, new direction, new clarity, and new aspirations were the promises of the Council. It presented to Catholics and to the world a blueprint of a new golden age for man, society, families, the Church, and especially the downtrodden of the economic systems, then in contention for the hearts and minds of men. The Council was an immense, vast undertaking, probably greater and more meaningful than any other meeting that religious mankind has ever held. A new road map for the world. A new Via Appia, where the question would certainly be asked once again "*Petrus, Quo Vadis?*"

Sadly, before John died on June 3, 1963 he saw that his council was in the hands of those who would destroy what he loved.

Before the Council convened for its deliberations in Rome, another first for Catholicism had taken place in the United States. John F. Kennedy a practicing Roman Catholic was elected President. The system had failed; it was designed so that this possibility could never happen. Other men were allowed their own religious life, and still be the President, but not a Roman Catholic. The common myth was that if a Catholic was elected to this office, it would only be a matter of time before the Pope was running the affairs of the United States Government. The separation of church and state was guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Yet happen it did, by the narrowest of margins, and John F. Kennedy was sworn in as the 35th President in January of 1961.

A young, 44 years old, handsome man with an attractive wife and with two small children in the White House gave Americans, not all but most, a new look at their government, and their nation. They were excited by and pleased with his election. They were excited about their country, its future, their future and this new era of politics. He carried a new standard, bearing new and different concepts and ideas, especially and foremost America's age-old festering problem of racial inequality and hatred. He attacked this problem quickly and with great fervor. He challenged unconstitutional laws and practices with a vigor and a resolve never seen in any other President.

Black Americans were assured they would have the same civil rights, economic status, and social privileges as enjoyed by white Americans -- for the first time in their lives. The full weight and authority of the Office of the President and its Cabinet guaranteed these Constitutional Rights for the first time.

He did economic battle with the then very powerful American Steel Industry, with the military and the covert operations of the US Government intelligence agencies. He created a company of young Americans to aide and assist poor Third World countries in their efforts to improve the lives of their people -- The Peace Corp. He promised the country to have an American on the moon and freed European Nations from the threat of military and economic domination by the Soviet Socialist Republic. He went outside of political circles of influence to recruit learned men of renown in Industry and Academia and the Arts to serve in the most sensitive posts in his cabinet of administrators and advisors. He assaulted some of the country's long held myths and convictions and recognized the importance of science and art to the country and smiled at all of the vicious rumors about his political motives, his religion, his family, his marriage, and his loyalty to America. He was much loved and admired around the world, and much hated in some circles at home. This hatred manifested itself in Dallas, Texas, Friday, November 22, 1963 when he had his head blown apart, while visiting Dallas in an open air limousine, fully protected by Presidential Secret Service and the Dallas Police Force. Those bullets ended the second Catholic event which began in 1960.

This period of Catholic renewal, from John XXIII's election in 1958 to Kennedy's assassination in 1963, was in many respects a time of great social salting. A preservation of man's human rights, preventing any inroads of decay and contamination to diminish these human requirements. Salt, found abundantly in nature, used today as common table salt, was in the past one of man's most highly prized mineral resources because of its preservative and healing characteristics and properties. It is associated with life giving foods, as is bread, and it took on a religious significance found in Jewish, Arabic and Christian scriptures with the idea of connecting salt with a covenant with God and humans. At one time newborn babes were rubbed with salt to welcome them into the world. It is still a custom in many areas of the world to offer a guest salt upon entering a home or its presentation to newlyweds along with wine and bread, as life giving and sustaining substances.

After two brief and somewhat painful papacies, those of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I, the third in this Catholic calendar of events begins in 1978 with the election of Karol Wojtyla, the 58 year old Cardinal Archbishop of Cracow, Poland as Pope. He took the papal name of John Paul II. Within hours of his election the news that the College of Cardinals had selected the first non-Italian Pope in memory surprised the world and millions of Slavonic hearts cried out with joy that one of their own was now the 265th successor to Saint Peter, to whom Christ gave the keys to heaven's door. Nothing was known of Karol Wojtyla, but it soon became evident that he was a man of the world, a linguist, undeveloped thespian and poet playwright, who had lived and survived the Nazi and the Soviet Communist occupation of his native Poland. He knew the western world better than most eastern European prelates, having visited the United States and Canada on several occasions, mainly concerned with religious affairs of his own ancestry as manifested in national Polish seminaries; all the while learning the ways and the culture of modern America.

By necessity, it did not take him long to unfurl his standard of Papacy position. He was forced to travel to Puebla, Mexico in January of 1979, to put a stop to a new "Magna Carta" of religious, economic, political and social rights, which was to be tabled at a Conference of the Catholic Hierarchy of South and Central America, which has been developed during the past ten years, since their last meeting in Medellin, Colombia. This report promised to be a scathing condemnation of the brutality and economic deprivation South and Central America have suffered since the early 1920s by the United States Government, and especially the illegal activities of the C.I.A. and Nelson Rockefeller's private and corporate rape of most of the lands and crops of this area of the world; along with the religious propaganda of William Townsend's Wycliffe Bible translators, used by both Rockefeller and the United States Government to subvert the will of the Indian natives that still inhabited much of the profitable land areas of this region. The Medellin Report was a call-to-action on behalf of all the Catholic Nations of South and Central America, against all of the scheming and maneuvering of the United States and the maintenance of its regional committee of hired dictators, then governing these nations. Its best known phrase to describe the philosophy behind the urgency of this required action was "Liberation Theology."

He told the delegates in Pueblo, that *"we do not need priests or want priests who take up arms in revolutionary movements."* He deflated in one address, ten years of work by people who knew what they were doing. He destroyed thousands of hopes and ambitions for the Catholic people of these nations. It would not be known for many years later in his papacy that he personally directed large sums of Vatican money to the Solidarity political movement of Lech Walesa, in order to deter and eventually to topple the Community Party in his native Poland.

He then began an open warfare with and against the best known and most learned of the world's theologians. It was these same theologians whose work and advice were the basis of all the Documents of the Second Vatican Council. The Bishops of the world were the official delegates to the council and cast their ballots for each of the Documents, but they are not theologians and admitted they needed the advice and the knowledge of known and trusted theologians, who defined the issues and advised them; it was the theologians of the Catholic world who were the real authors of the new Church as reflected in this Council. Names such as Wolfgang Bartholomäus, Leonardo Boff, Edward Schillebeeckx, Charles E. Curran, Hans Küng, Norbert Greinacher, Bernard Häring bring to one's mind the idea that theology is a fine blending of art and science. It is not pastoral in function but it is the hierarchy of all Religious Studies; a pursuit of a knowledge of God. They are philosophers concerned with one premise -- a lifetime encounter of Christian reflection and knowledge, as known in the past and is now manifest in modern thought and movements. Without Catholic theologians guiding the Church, the Roman church would be just another fundamental faith based on the bible, with no interpretation and analysis needed in the case of Christian Scriptures, pure and simple. Today, as when he first became Pope, John Paul II and the majority of his bishops, as well as the intellectuals and theologians of his church, are in opposition to one another -- but as he has often said, *"I am the Pope... the Church is not a democratic institution. What I say and do is the ultimate verdict in these matters."*

He knows several things well. One being the financial needs of the Vatican and the Church Universal, and the simple fact that the vast majority of this funding comes directly from the Church in the United States and from the Vatican's financial investments in American assets and properties. He knows also that large donations are given by rich American Catholics who would not like to hear too much talk about Liberation Theology and the like. As in Poland these days the three most holy

TOO MUCH TALK ABOUT LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE LIKE. AS IN POLAND THESE DAYS THE THREE MOST HOLY words are Constitution, Democracy and Free Markets. Theologians contribute no money, only knowledge and research, which are costly items in themselves. Without funding from the American Church his Church would then, once again be forced to hear and listen to the words of St. Francis of Assisi, and all priests and popes, along with bishops and cardinals and sisters and brothers to once again become itinerant mendicant preachers of the Good News of Jesus Christ, wherever they can find a crowd to listen. This would never do! Too much would be lost in the translation. The United States is as important to John Paul II as it is to the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and the United Nations and the State of Israel. To hell with the theologians and to their rants and raves. One must live.

To his credit he can draw a crowd; much like Frank Sinatra, forty years ago, and like Madonna and Mick Jagger today. When he leaves the crowd, after visiting for a day or two, what then are they supposed to do; has anything real happened there? But he is old now, eighty-two, and quite frail of body; he deserves the highest marks for his valiant efforts to reach out from the Vatican to people in most parts of the world and quite marvellously speak to them in their own language. A very smart man, and probably a very holy man.

What is next? Who will fate select as the next Pontiff? Which road beckons the Church and its people? *Quo Vadis, Peter?*

As scripture tells us, once salt loses its taste, its ability to preserve and cure, what is to be done with it? Saint Luke advises: *"Salt is a good thing; but if the salt itself becomes tasteless, what is there left to give taste to it? It is of no use either to the soil or to the dung-heap; it will be thrown away altogether. Listen, you that have ears to hear with. (Luke 14: 34)."*

Catholic people today wonder if they now have a Church in anguish, and ask the question -- has the Vatican betrayed Vatican II? What appears to many Catholics, and some non-Catholics, is an attempt by the present leadership in the Vatican to reverse the momentous gains in maturity that were made at the Second Vatican Council. Present day Vatican bureaucracy never did want and never did like the Council. This stance calls for a reorientation of not only individuals, but also of structures, programs and institutions.

IT HAS BECOME A QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS AND HUMAN SURVIVAL IN A CORPORATE, POLITICAL, AND STATE DOMINATION OF HUMAN LIFE!

