

# INTERVENTIONS OF THE FATHERS

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## ARCHBISHOP ANTONIO MABUTAS

Archbishop Antonio Mabutas y Lloren recalled some difficulties in the way of development in the newly independent countries. Among these are low agricultural production, lack of planning and equipment, selfishness of the "masters," political corruption, sharp increase in population, the flight from the land, poor wages and the consequent state of misery. International and natural institutions that fight these evils should be supported.

The various political, economic, educational and religious factors sometimes seem to conspire together, forming so-called systems that prevent human progress. In our case, this has given rise to the saying that religion is the opium of the people.

This consideration led the speaker to formulate the following conclusions:

1. Since the goods of the earth are for the progress of all men, the present "system" has to be radically changed.
2. Since the very systems are corrected, it is not enough to correct one but all have to be reformed together. This has led some people to advocate a violent overthrow of all systems.
3. The reform of one particular system can help remove obstacles in the way of the reform of all other systems.

## BISHOP JULIO LABAYEN

Bishop Labayan stressed that in the pre-synodal document, there is an excellent suggestion about promoting concerted action to influence public opinion.

The speaker suggested that the Synod itself should undertake such an action. This should be along the lines suggested in Mexico in May 1971 by the Latin American Bishops and by the Asian Bishops Meeting in Manila in 1970. It is most important that the Church take a stand against those forces that keep millions of people in a state of dependence by the use of commercial and political pressures.

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<sup>1</sup> He spoke at the 22nd Congregation in the evening of Oct. 20.

<sup>2</sup> He spoke at the 23rd Congregation in the morning of Oct. 21.

He mentioned the injustices in international trade between the rich and poor nations. Only the Synod, representing the Bishops of the world, in unity with the Pope who has been called the Apostle of Justice and Peace, can do something to remedy the situation.

All the efforts made by the Bishops in the Third World are of no avail because the centers of powers are found in the Atlantic. The Bishops of those countries are invited to unite their efforts to those of the Bishops of the Third World.

The Synod should make a declaration on this point. It could be composed by a committee made up of the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences, Superiors General of Religious Orders, Priests and Laymen. The Justice and Peace Commission can help them in this work. So can some other Roman Congregations—the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Congregation of Bishops, of Religious and Secular Institutes, of Rites, and the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples and the Commission for social Communications together with the Council on the Laity and "Cor Unum".

### BISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Mariano Gaviola, speaking personally, said that he fully endorsed the observation given which stressed the doctrinal and pastoral role of the Church in the establishment and promotion of social justice and integral development.

The proper role of the institutional Church vis-a-vis the proper role of the State is based on the principle of the sovereignty of both institutions. Both the Church and the State need one another in striking up the needed balance and necessary link between the transcendental and the temporal. To them also applies the saying that no man is an island. Within the Church, itself, an actively personalized involvement in promoting social justice and development belongs more properly to the laity as a right and a duty. This is so because they are citizens both of the City of God and of their countries.

In this same field of involvement the role of the Bishops, the clergy, and to a certain degree, the religious is that of teacher, an animator and that of moral leadership. Too long have we been acting like baby-sitters for the laity.

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<sup>1</sup> He spoke at the 26th Congregation in the morning of Oct. 23.

The laity are persons as responsible as we are. We must count on them and work with them as such.

However where the laity is not yet duly prepared or organized, our moral leadership may consist in heading, organizing or initiating a pilot-project for example, in socio-economic development. But as soon as lay leaders are formed we must give way to them.

Collaboration of the Church with all men of good will, whether they are baptized or not, as well as the enlistment by the Church of their collaboration is also indispensable. Such collaboration is called for even more, where and when such men are already engaged in endeavours towards our common goal for social justice and development.

We shall be digging our own graves in our zeal for promoting social justice and integral development of peoples unless we be guided by the said principles. To do otherwise would only lead us to a forfeiture of the very nature of our vocation not to mention the frustrations that would inexorably follow the false expectations that we shall have engendered in the minds and hearts of peoples which we can never satisfy. Soon enough, the Bishops and priests will be regarded as Santa Claus. Soon enough, we shall have converted the Church into another United Nations, a Rockefeller or Ford Foundation. Worse still, we will instill into the heart of man the impossible dream of converting this valley of tears into a paradise, and thus make him forget the life hereafter. Our working paper shows an apparent oneness. In its pages powerful countries appear as the only villains in the dreams of human struggle for social justice and development. Yet to mention just one example, big businessmen, politicians and mass media men in poor countries also connive sometimes with foreign powers for the sake of material gains, at the expense of their fellow countrymen. Indeed, there are no tyrants where there are no slaves.

On the other hand, the working paper also projects the embarrassing image that poor countries are mere recipients and dependents, and therefore by their own selves cannot be the arbiters and the architects of their own destinies. Certainly poor countries also have much to give, and in fact they do give to the opulent ones, such as their cultures, moral values, technically skilled manpower and so on.

Nevertheless, such a manner of presentation however valid, might only arouse a strong reaction and bitter resentment on the part of many and in their bitterness they would only close their eyes to the injustices of which they may be guilty. Above all, such an unbalanced presenta-

tion might also lead the poor and the weak to remain beggarly in their lives. Self-respect and self-development are basic in any community development.

The document should show that social justice and integral development are demanded of every baptized person, rich and poor, young and old, by the very nature of the Church which is missionary. Wanting in knowledge and conviction in this regard many of our crusaders for validly needed social reforms only betray their purely secularistic and materialistic motivations, as evidenced by the fact that as they heroically crusade for social justice and development, they also patronize drugs, pornography, licentiousness, gambling casinos and other moral vices.

### EPISCOPAL ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Let us pray for our Bishops on the occasion of their ordination anniversaries.

Most Rev. Salvador Lazo  
February 3, 1970

Most Rev. Clovis Thibault  
February 11, 1955

Most Rev. Antonio Fortich  
February 24, 1967

Most Rev. Artemio Casas  
February 24, 1962