

The government is severely admonished to respect the Church's God-given right to evangelize by forming Basic Christian Communities, which the government should not misunderstand by looking at them as a threat to the existence of the state. The least the Bishops ask for is that "at all times due process be observed in all cases of arrests and deportation of Workers of Evangelization, be they priests, religious or lay workers."

These seem to be bold demands but their restraint would be better appreciated if we notice that not a word is said directly against martial law. Compare this with the position paper of the 17 Bishops, "Ut Omnes Unum Sint" — that all may be one. You will conclude that something must have happened during the Conference to convince the 17 Bishops to abandon their belligerent attitude towards martial law."

At the same time, something must have happened to convince the pacific Bishops that the Church has to "strongly deplore and condemn" certain government practices protected by martial law.

What happened? Through prayer and the Holy Spirit the Bishops came to the deeper awareness that "The Church embraces all men as brothers under the Fatherhood of God. She is not partial to any group. She has a motherly sympathy for the poor and voiceless. She has love for all, no malice towards any one."

May these truths become more deeply a part of ourselves each day.

## In This Issue

Justice and peace continue to elude us but we must not give up hope. We must explore new ways of working for them. We must examine ourselves to find out whether we have been neglecting some of the means needed for our task. Have we sufficiently counted on the contribution of lay leaders? Recent developments connected with the Theology of Liberation show a trend towards excessive clericalism in temporal matters. We must let the laity undertake their rightful role of uplifting the temporal order. For this reason we welcome the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio "Apostolatus Peragendi"* which transforms the Council of the Laity to a Pontifical Council for the Laity and enhances its competence: it will not only deal with matters concerning the apostolate of the

lalty but it will also look after the proper orientation of their lives as lay Christians and see to it that ecclesiastical laws concerning them are properly followed.

The Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace becomes a permanent body of the Holy See through the new Constitution given to it in the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio "Justitiam et Pacem"*. This shows once more the great importance the Church attaches to fostering and defending justice and peace.

Drawing up the balance sheet of the Church's activities and problems connected with her commitment for the **Peace and Progress of Mankind** in the year 1976, Pope Paul VI sees how urgently we have to seek peace and put all our resources at the service of integral human development.

Justice and Peace can never become a reality if we do not cultivate the **Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News**. This is the point our Bishops make in their Joint Pastoral Letter.

Peace takes the particular form of Unity when ecumenical problems are discussed. It is this peace and unity that Fr. Jelly pursues in his article on **The Significance of Mary in the Problem of Christian Unity**.

Basil Meeking reports on the **Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches**, and he says that a Joint Working Group is promoting a study on the unity of Church. It calls for reflection on the nature and extent of the real but imperfect bond of communion between the Catholic Church and the member churches of the World Council of Churches. The Group also seeks to strengthen the common witness of Christians before the world.

"Where has all the clearness gone?" asks Cormac Burke when analysing the Church's **Magisterium vis-a-vis Freedom**. This, for him, is a crucial question because the Christian way, though not always easy, must be a clear way and it must make people **absolutely sure** they are going towards happiness in God.

Fr. Leonardo Medroso studies how the Church in the modern world copes with the **Protection of Subjective Rights Against the Acts of the Ordinary of the Place**. This task is entrusted to the Supreme Apostolic Signature Tribunal in Rome. Fr. Medroso suggests that branches of this Tribunal be set up on a regional or provincial basis, and that the constitution "*Regimini Ecclesiae Sanctae*" be amended so that aggrieved persons could have easier access to such Tribunals.