

There can be no doubt that Pope John Paul II has had an unprecedented impact on the modern world. The media took him to their heart. They loved his infectious smile, his gregariousness. Here was a Pope who hugged and kissed babies, who was a poet, playwright, a member of the underground, a swimmer, a skier. Moreover he was a non-Italian and there has been a vague desire in the church for a change. Wherever John Paul went he mesmerized the masses. In Mexico, the United States, Ireland and of course in his native Poland, he manifested uncanny ability, as one author said, to captivate vast crowds and to achieve a charismatic kind of rapport with every person in the crowd.

priests. It has begun to dawn on the enthusiastic liberals that John Paul II is no liberal at all of the kind they want.

The *Times Journal* in October last year reported on the Synod of Bishops held at Rome, as follows. Under a headline which read: "Pope Ignores Proposals of Bishops" it went on to say: "Even before he sits down to study proposals, he's preempting the field," said a high-ranking Rome-based cleric, who asked not to be identified. "A cynic would say that you didn't need the Synod for that. Some of the Bishops were pretty disappointed." That is vague enough to defy checking, but it hints at growing disillusionment among the liberals. The same paper in

expected the new Pope to establish something like a constitutional monarchy in Rome. Italians throughout Italy looked to him as the leader against Austria. The new pope was a patriotic Italian, critical of the old conservatism, naturally inclined to be liberal and willing to effect basic reforms in the Papal states.

It was soon clear to Pius IX that the liberals were demanding from him much more than he was prepared to give. Mazzini, the movement's leader, and his radical followers seized Rome and set up a revolutionary government. The Pope's prime minister, Pellegrino Rossi, was murdered, and the Pope himself had to flee from Rome in disguise. As it seems to be happening in the cases of John Paul II, the enthusiasm of the liberals for the Pope faded when he was found to be less "liberal" than they hoped. Pius IX ended his pontificate as the Prisoner of the Vatican, in a checkmate with the very forces which so enthusiastically greeted his election. This situation lasted until Mussolini and the Lateran Treaty of 1929, Sic transit Gloria Mundi.

What the liberals ultimately want is that the Pope should not be Pope. One day a man said of a priest: "He's a great fellow; you would never know he was a priest." This is an accolade which no priest should wish to receive. If his priestly vocation does not set him apart from the "world," he is not living up to his priesthood. His witness is nil. The liberals seem to want something similar; to be able to say of John Paul II "He is a great fellow; you would never know he was Pope."

It should not trouble Catholics that there is a note of disfavor creeping into published comment on the Pope. In fact they should feel rather relieved... Our Lord said: "Alas for you when the world speaks well of you; this was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets." Again he said "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, because my choice withdrew you from

## Is the honeymoon over?

Pope John Paul II is not overawed by influences within or without the church, not by theologians, liturgists, canonists, the media. He is his own man, that is, Christ's man.

But the world found that this man of incredible warmth and adaptability, of universal sympathy, of ready emotion, is steel within. They have found out that however much he may differ in external appearances and manner from his more austere looking predecessor Paul VI, he differs in no way from him in matters of principle. He is consistent and unambiguous. In no uncertain terms he condemns abortion, contraception, divorce, violence, pre-marital sex, homosexuality. He has shown himself adamant with regard to the ordination of women. He is very slow in processing the laicization of

reporting the Pope's reaffirmation of his previous statement that marital relations between spouses could be adulterous said: "He did it again." One cannot miss the note of resentment.

Newsweek reported of the Synod: "The discussions were largely dominated by the conservative views of the Pope."

This situation is strongly reminiscent of the papacy of Pope Pius IX. The news of his election in 1846 was received by Italians with wild enthusiasm. As Bishop of Imola, he had earned the reputation of being a "liberal." Citizens of the papal states,

# The week Martial Law bade us goodbye

On the day Martial Law bid goodbye to 47,000,000 Filipinos, most of the people were too busy with their livelihoods and lovehoods to wave a hand to it in fond adieu. For it happened to be near noontime on a Saturday, and only the lazy folk who could afford to loll on their sofas, a beer bottle in hand, eyes wavering between the television and the mouth of the bottle, thus received the later morning news of the departure of Martial Law. Judging from their eyes, the television viewers were no reliable indicia of whether or not the people were relieved over the departure of Martial Law or the departure of the liquid in the beer bottles. So we made an away-from-the-spot assessment that week following the announcement that Martial Law, the people's bad friend or the people's good enemy,

the world, therefore the world hates you." So Catholics should not be disturbed if they think they see the early enthusiasm for the Pope fading in the "world." And the media especially will echo the voice of the world, namely that view of life which gives priority to power, pleasure and wealth which feel uncomfortable under the law, prefers the transitory things of this existence and ignores or opposes the things of the next. It is not to be expected that such a weltanschauung would find palatable the hard sayings of Christ's vicar.

We have above described John Paul II as "his own man." He makes his own decisions, not of course without advice and help — he has in fact gone further than any Pope in his insistence on collegiality or sharing his government with the bishops. But his final action is his, as he sees the truth, not overawed by influences within or with-



depending more on the status of one's digestion, was leaving the country. There were no indications as to whether Martial Law would in the

out the Church, not by theologians, liturgists, canonists, the media, "liberals." He is his own man, that is Christ's man.

The present posture of the secular press has been well described in a cartoon which portrays Jeremias, the prophet declaiming to a large crowd. A man viewing the scene says: "I like Jeremias. It is his Jeremiahs that I do not like." Similarly the secular press and the wider "liberal" world, in an out of the Church, are saying "we like Joh Paul II; it is his papal teaching we don't like."

The Catholic people as a whole do not share these misgivings. They are happy to have a strong, clear guide and are confident that his is the way of Christ. They will continue to give him their love, loyalty and respect, as in Poland, Ireland, the USA. The same is certain to take place in the Philippines. ●

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future come again as Balikbakitaran. The reactions of various strata of society are recounted hereunder.

Two men were enjoying their delayed noonday meal when they learned that Martial Law was a thing of the past. Carried away by the far-reaching news, their appetites were whetted, and they ordered enough food for four people and gobbled every morsel up. The men elevated their thoughts. A teen-age boy approached them and begged for alms, but they were too engrossed in their meal to dig into their pockets for a coin. They just told the boy to leave them, in a gruff voice that made the beggar quail.

Feeling expansive after their repast, one of the two men then reached into his pocket: but lo and behold nothing! For the man's pocketbook was gone. He dug into all his pockets, he looked under and beside and behind the chair he sat on, but nowhere could be seen any billfold.

"Pare, I've been robbed! I've lost my money! Someone must have