

# SALVANET

A Publication of Christians for Peace in El Salvador, CRISPAZ

## New Penal Code Offers Changes

by Marco Venegas

During the 1980s, El Salvador was a country that helplessly struggled through a bloody war paradoxically called "civil." During this time, the international media focused their eyes on the armed conflict, the case of the North American nuns cruelly assassinated with the endorsement of the armed forces and the government (and heavily supported by the United States government), the inhumane treatment of political prisoners who were tortured, often times to the death, the forced disappearances, etc.

The signing of the Peace Accords in 1992 brought an end to serious human rights violations and opened a space in which other concerns that have always affected Salvadoran

society could be brought to the forefront. One such concern is that of prisoners and the prison system. It is no secret that the Salvadoran judicial system, despite the purification process that it has undergone in recent years, inadequately meets the country's needs. The judicial system cannot meet the legal needs of the complex Salvadoran environment. Additionally, it offers impunity, inefficiency, and extreme slowness in resolving cases.

For many years there have been studies and the gathering of information regarding Penal Law tendencies and orientations. On January 1, 1998, El Salvador's new Penal Code and Penitentiary Law entered into effect. The Code that was in effect until December 31, 1997, was of an inquisition style, wherein the judge had all of the power. The judge was the person that informed, interrogated, received the evidence, and rendered judgment. This judgment was not pronounced at the end of the trial, rather much later. There was a tendency to draw out the final judgement period. The proceedings were not carried

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CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador, was founded in 1984. We are a faith-based organization dedicated to mutual accompaniment with the church of the poor and marginalized communities in El Salvador. In building bridges of solidarity between communities in El Salvador and those in our home countries, we strive together for peace, justice and human liberation.

**CRISPAZ has three programs:**

- † CRISPAZ Volunteer Program
- † El Salvador Encounter Delegation Program
- † Communication Information Network on El Salvador (CINES)

**SALVANET**, a project of CINES, is published six times per year.

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# THE PRISON SYSTEM

*Continued from page 1 . . .*

out in accord with the constitution or international human rights treaties. Furthermore the proceedings were carried out in a bureaucratic, verbose, confusing, and ineffective manner.

In recent years, the prison system has passed through numerous crises, the most notorious being the case of the Santa Ana Jail where last year the overcrowding was so bad that the inmates decided to reduce the confined population by playing "Russian Roulette." These acts sparked a great debate and thankfully the Human Rights Ombuds Office intervened in time to avoid a great tragedy.

Innumerable cases continue to collect dust for years and astounding numbers of inmates find themselves in situations of legal uncertainty. Additionally, victims of common and organized crime continue to feel that justice has not been served. Strengthening of El Salvador's justice system would require a cleansing of the personnel that work for justice (including the judges), a complete separation of the Supreme Court, improvement of the judicial system's infrastructure, and refinement of judicial processes.

Regarding the problem of the prisons and inmates who have not yet been sentenced, the last report of the Ministry of Justice in April of 1997 reported an increased total number of 9,235 inmates distributed among 18 prisons across the country. Of this total of 9,235, only 22% have been sentenced whereas almost 78% of the inmates are still being processed and lack sentences.

With the new Penal Code and Penitentiary Law in effect, new and better perspectives are offered. They include a more humanistic social vision, primarily within the confines of the prisons. The new Penitentiary Law exhibits fundamental changes such as weekend sentences, payment of fines, work (in freedom) as a form of serving time, and the improvement of cultural life for inmates inside the prisons.

It would be an innocent sin to believe that the new Penal Code is going to completely solve the justice problems, eradicate impunity, or lower the delinquency rates in El Salvador. The new Penal Code does not combat delinquency or impunity, it only combats the effects of crime. In order to combat the causes, the government would have to begin to watch out for citizen security. This would considerably raise the social cost in favor of the majorities regarding health, education, employment, respect for human rights—that is to say, the quality of life for the great marginalized majorities.✚



# 1997

## IN REVIEW

How do the Salvadoran people rate their National Reality for 1997?

### The Economy

47.7% Stayed the same  
38.8% Worsened  
11.2% Showed signs of improvement

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81.3% say that the economy favors only a few.

### El Salvador's Principal Problem

38.2% Crime  
18.7% Economy  
13.6% Unemployment  
11.6% Poverty  
5.7% Inflation

### The Government

Principal achievements:  
National infrastructure & education  
Failure:  
Inability to resolve problems of the economy and crime

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On a scale of 1-10 the Salvadoran government received a: 5.18

### Crime

63.4% Increased  
24.7% Remained the same  
10.8% Decreased

### Impunity

51.6% There is a lot of impunity in El Salvador  
17.2% Little or no impunity

### Poverty

53.1% Increased  
41.9% Stayed the same  
4% Diminished

*Poll conducted by the Univrsity Public Opinion Institute (IUDOP) of the José Simeon Cañas University (UCA). 1,217 rural and urban adults were surveyed throughout El Salvador's 14 departments.*

## What Can We Expect From 1998?

by *Sentir con la Iglesia*

As 1997 ends, we are left with the bitter taste of economic uncertainty for 1998. Despite international covenants that guarantee important interchanges in the macro-economic arena, the distribution at a macro-economic level continues to be in question. There are also greater levels of poverty, unemployment is on the rise, and delinquency continues to find a justification for its existence.

During the year that has just ended, many acts caused reflection for the public. The news of the millionaire fraud of FINSEPRO and INSEPRO was like a detonator which brought about a series of accusations of corruption and fraud in other governmental and private

institutions. This situation brought to light the fragility of the country's financial politics. Although some are now in jail, those guilty of the concessions were pursued but to no avail.

In this same vein arose the discussion about partial or complete forgiveness of agrarian debt. Among others, factors affecting the debate included over-sight of agro-industry and the argument that the agrarian age has already played its historic role and that it is time to seek out other alternatives for development. The discussion lasted for three months in the Legislative Assembly until it was approved, only to later suffer an executive veto.

Additionally, on November 6, the telecommunications law was approved leaving a heavy

mark. The law excludes the community radios from the playing field, and with them the possibility of communication, participation, and formation of small communities. The big fish eats the little fish. The Executive Branch has concentrated on the use of its right to veto or to make recommendations to the Assembly, brandishing in a discriminatory way the saying "constitutional or unconstitutional."

What will happen next year, above all as we find ourselves in the waiting room of the electoral campaign? It will be necessary to remember the people, many times sacrificed on the altar of economic and political interests. We hope that in 1998 there will be a plan with a public face rather than one strictly for presidential gain.✚

## Monsignor Romero: Teach Us To Pray

by Miguel Cavada Diez for **Sentir con la Iglesia**

One day his disciples came to him and said: Monsignor, teach us to pray. So he said to them: "To pray and wait for everything from God and do nothing is not prayer. This is laziness, this is alienation, this is passivism, this is to conform. This is not the time, dear brothers and sisters, to say: it is the will of God. Many things happen that are not the will of God. When one can give of him or herself to improve the circumstances and then ask God for the courage to do so, then prayer exists." (July 20, 1979 *Homily VII95*)

When he finished speaking these words, a very pious disciple said to him: What you say is all very fine, but "human weakness is the strength of God," we must pray. Monsignor answered him: "For this reason I insist that we pray frequently. Let us pray.

But not a prayer that alienates us, not a prayer that causes us to escape reality. We should never go to the Church fleeing our duties on earth. We should go to the Church to gain strength and clarity, to better comply with the duties of the home, political duties, organizational duties, a healthy orientation regarding these earthly things. They are the true liberators." (November 11, 1979 *Homily VII428*)

Then one of the disciples, who belonged to the Charismatic Renovation, asked him if it was okay to speak in tongues. Monsignor, somewhat annoyed because he did not understand exactly of what he was speaking, said: "It is very nice to live a piety of only songs and prayers, of only spiritual meditations, of only contemplation. This will come in the hour of Heaven . . . for now we are here below, we must work." (November 19, 1979 *Homily V308*)✠



"God is life. God is evolution. God is recent news. God walks with the history of the people. And those that believe in God should not cling to traditions or to customs, above all when these customs and traditions tarnish the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must always be attentive to the voice of the spirit. "

*June 11, 1978*

## Prison Youth Find Hope in OPERA Program

by Marco Venegas

In one of my many conversations with my friends at OPERA, one of them said to me in a reflective tone, "What would become of us if you weren't here?" This reflection made me think about my situation

as the coordinator of an inmate program at the Quetzaltepeque Prison.

My participation in this program has helped me to grow as a person, to look at life from another perspective, to be more generous and more Christian, to minimize my own prejudices against others and above all to believe in the human value of those individuals deprived of their freedom.

In early 1996, I attended a conference at the University of El Salvador. The theme was "juvenile violence" and among those presenting were two psychology students who were participating in a mental health program with the inmates of Quetzaltepeque Prison.

After talking with them, I asked if I could accompany them to the prison. I was very curious to learn more about the mental health program.

To go into a prison in El Salvador for the first time is not easy. After passing through a rigorous entry routine, I had to overcome an even greater obstacle: my own prejudices against the prison system and the inmates themselves. The visit lasted for more than two very intense hours. I thought that I was going to meet apathetic beings, people that felt sorry for themselves. But I was surprised to find that it wasn't like that. Rather I found a dynamic human group, enthusiastic and hopeful for the future despite the fact that they were deprived of their freedom. I left the prison with a great enthusiasm to return and to involve myself in the mental health program. That is how I started going every week. Eventually my curiosity and enthusiasm evolved into a more concrete work plan.

Together with the inmates, we began to organize a permanent group and that is how the OPERA (Optimism, Peace, Hope, Renovation, and Harmony) Youth began doing different activities. One of the most notable was the creation of a library inside the prison. The library, which has been in existence for more than a year and a half now, is administered by the members of the OPERA Youth. More than 40 inmates actively participate in the group and together they organize numerous cultural, sports, educational and other types of activities.

The group is organized in different commissions that work with the hope of offering a rehabilitation program that prison authorities cannot provide.

The psychology students no longer go to the prison (they completed their required social service hours), but I continue to coordinate this group of individuals that wants to continue to overcome obstacles as long as they are given the chance to do so. My enthusiasm has not waned and on the contrary I feel that we have a group with a lot of potential. This effort has been a great challenge in my life both privately and professionally and I think that my life would be different if I had not had the great privilege of being a member and coordinator of the OPERA Youth. ❖

*Marco and members of the OPERA Youth*

## Fast and Vigil for Father Carney in Honduras

by Matthew Eisen,  
CRISPAZ Volunteer

I recently participated in an action unlike anything that I have been involved with in my life. I have participated in various human rights struggles for the past six years and am currently working as a CRISPAZ volunteer at the Generation XXI Youth Movement. Yet, on October 29, I began an action that would change my life. As a result of this powerful experience, I feel closer to people who have been victims of abuses and I have been led to think more about humanity, religion, and life itself.

I was asked to participate in an action in front of the US Embassy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras concerning the disappearance of Father James “Guadalupe” Carney. Fr. Carney worked in Honduras for 18 years, serving the poor and speaking out for their human rights. Because of his love for the poor and oppressed, Fr. Carney put his own life on the line on various occasions. As is the case in most of Central America, the Honduran military in the 1980s did not tolerate anyone speaking the truth about injustices and, as Fr. Carney saw it, working to realize God’s reign on earth. Fr. Carney, a US-born, naturalized Honduran citizen, was illegally deported because of his love for the poor. In 1983 he was disappeared after re-entering Honduras as chaplain to a column of a Honduran revolutionary army. Honduran military officials, in various testimonies, say that Fr. Carney was captured, tortured, and thrown to his death from a helicopter. There is evidence that this may have been done by the Honduran military with the assistance of US Government and CIA officials.

Fr. Carney is one of thousands of Central America’s Cold War victims.

*“The Carney case is dead. Front Office does not want it to remain active. We are not telling this to the family.”*

**—US State Department memo  
written in 1986, declassified in 1997**

The question is raised as to whether or not the U.S. Government’s “drawing the line against Communism” included the murder and torture of priests serving the poor. It is a question the Carney family has been asking for more than 14 years now. Their questions have consistently been met by bureaucratic stonewalling on the part of the US Government.

This past October, the Carneys were ready to use alternative tactics to call attention to the situation. I was invited by friends and family members of Fr. Carney to participate in a 45-day fast and vigil in front of the US Embassy. We received daily headlines in the Honduran press as well as international coverage from the *National Catholic Reporter*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Miami Herald*. Nobel Peace Prize winner of Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Don Samuel Ruiz of Chiapas, Mexico, and three US Congresspersons were among the many who sent letters of support to us in our quest for the truth.

Though we have yet to receive anything more than the 2,000 pages of "declassified" materials released in early 1997 (over 50% of which is completely blacked out), there are growing demands on the US government to come clean and finally tell the truth about what really happened to Fr. Carney. I have never felt more patriotic or closer to the spirit in my life as I did while I participated in this fast and vigil. The youth that I work with in El Salvador sponsored an event in solidarity with our action in Honduras. For the first time, many of them admitted to "disappearances" within their own family during the Salvadoran civil war.

Though the fast and vigil have now ended, the struggle has not. We are planning April 1-3, 1998 as International Days of Action for not only the Carney case but for all the disappeared in Central America. It is time for the US government to come clean and to inform its citizens about what has been done in our name. There will be thousands of people involved, with a presence in front of US Embassies across Central America and other activities in cities across the US. I urge you to become involved and to speak out. The goal of the government and those responsible for the disappearances is that the people will forget. ***We will not forget! We demand justice!✚***

For more information about the **International Days of Action**, contact Matthew care of CRISPAZ, Apdo. Postal 2944, Centro de Gobierno, San Salvador, El Salvador, 011-503-226-0829, [pazsal@netcomsa.com](mailto:pazsal@netcomsa.com).



## Become a CRISPAZ Volunteer!

**The Quetzaltepeque Prison  
is looking for volunteers to work  
with the Opera Youth (see page 5).**

**If you are interested in finding out  
more about this project or other  
projects working with**

**Education • Human Rights •  
Community Development • Women  
• Youth • Agriculture**

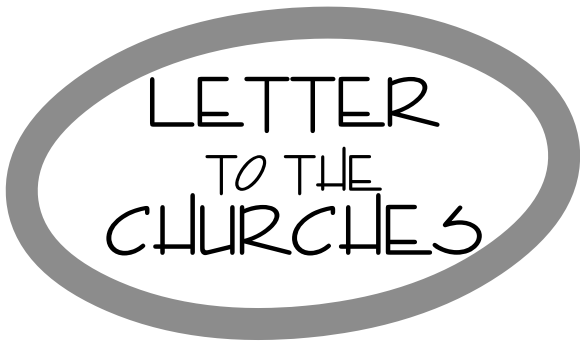
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# from El Salvador

We are persecuted but never abandoned;  
struck down, but never left to die.

(2 Corinthians 4:7-8)

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□ INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE PASTORAL CENTER, CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, SAN SALVADOR □  
EDITED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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*Letter to the Churches is a bimonthly publication of the Archbishop Oscar Romero Pastoral Center, Central American University (UCA), San Salvador. These are letters of flesh and spirit, written from one Salvadoran community to another and from the Salvadoran Church to the Universal Church. The following are excerpts from this publication.*

*On November 16, El Salvador remembered the 8th anniversary of the martyrdom of the six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. The following letter, in commemoration of this date, is written by Jon Sobrino, theologian, author, and director of the UCA's Pastoral Center, to martyr Ignacio Ellacuría.*

## Letter to Ignacio Ellacuría from Jon Sobrino

Dear Ellacu,

On this the eighth anniversary, we continue to remember you all. I want to share with you of one more year of our fortunes and misfortunes. Above all, I want to tell you that “we have not forgotten you,” though of course not everyone remembers. Modernization of the country facilitates tolerance, but there is not the courage to make the official and powerful structures to remember you and be thankful for the contributions of your lives and the love of your deaths. My temptation is to be angry at this, but I have accepted it as part of the mystery of darkness and iniquity. To the best, they offered death. Now they want to keep you well buried. We have improved to some extent, Ellacu, but the improvements do not begin to do the honor of asking forgiveness and even less so—after all, forgiveness has been granted—the honor of expressing gratitude.

All of this brings to mind the great inquisitor Dostoyeski. It is clear that this high ecclesiastical functionary knew Jesus Christ. One day, Jesus appeared to him in person. They spoke and at the end the inquisitor said to him: “God, do not return.” This “do not return” seems to me one of the great evils of our country and our world. When the

“great” gather at the United Nations or other international forums, those of you who are martyrs are not present. You are not asked to “return.”

And not only in these forums. The official Church does little to remember you. In 1992, in the preparatory document for the Santo Domingo meeting there were beautiful writings about the Latin American martyrs and it is true that among them appeared Monsignor Romero, Julia Elba, and those of you from the UCA. But later, as if a mysterious invisible hand was returning things to normal, in the final document you all practically disappeared. For the first time in the history of the Church there is now going to be a Synod of all of the Americas, from Canada to Patagonia, and again the preparatory document does not take you all seriously. By coincidence, the Synod begins in Rome on November 16, the same time at which we will be celebrating the vigil here.



These are small things that I unload, Ellacu, in order to remember what we very well know. I do it

in good humor, as González Faus wisely suggests. I also do it with a sense of impotency, because it is very difficult to tear down the wall of silence, indifference, and lies that the great modern inventions called modernization and globalization have built up in order to hide the humane and to clearly hide what is yours: great love. I also say this with Salvadoran and Christian persistence.

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**“Woe to the people that forget their martyrs!”**

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It says something that from within the country we remember you. Every year the number of visitors, songs, prayers, tears, and joys increase. It is possible that it would not be this way, but it is this way. From this small country—from which many things have been stolen from body and soul—gratitude has not disappeared. It is the best of Salvadoran persistence. With Monsignor at the head, you all are present.

We also maintain the Christian persistence. “Remember Israel,” said God to the people of God. “Do this in my memory,” said Jesus breaking the bread before giving of himself in the same manner. We are certain that as long as we have the courage to remember, we will also have the blessing of hope. Poor and unfortunate are those that forget! They believe—or at least they say—that they are constructing a different society in which the scars of the past will diminish or disappear. Hopefully they are right! But they remain in darkness, without enthusiasm, without hope, without the courage to look in the distance and see everyone. Don Pedro Casaldáliga, a great poet, expressed this well when he said: “Woe to the people that forget their martyrs!”

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And what is there to remember? Julia Elba, industrious and helpful, Amando’s goodness, Polín’s charisma, the preaching of that campesino Jesus, of whom Monsignor called “the man of the Gospel,” the passion for the truth of Monsignor Romero . . . and so many other things . . . about you, Ellacu, I want to remember only two things. One, regarding our history. The other, regarding our Church.

In Barcelona, one week before you were assassinated, you said these words: “We have to revert history.” Step by step, and among all of us.

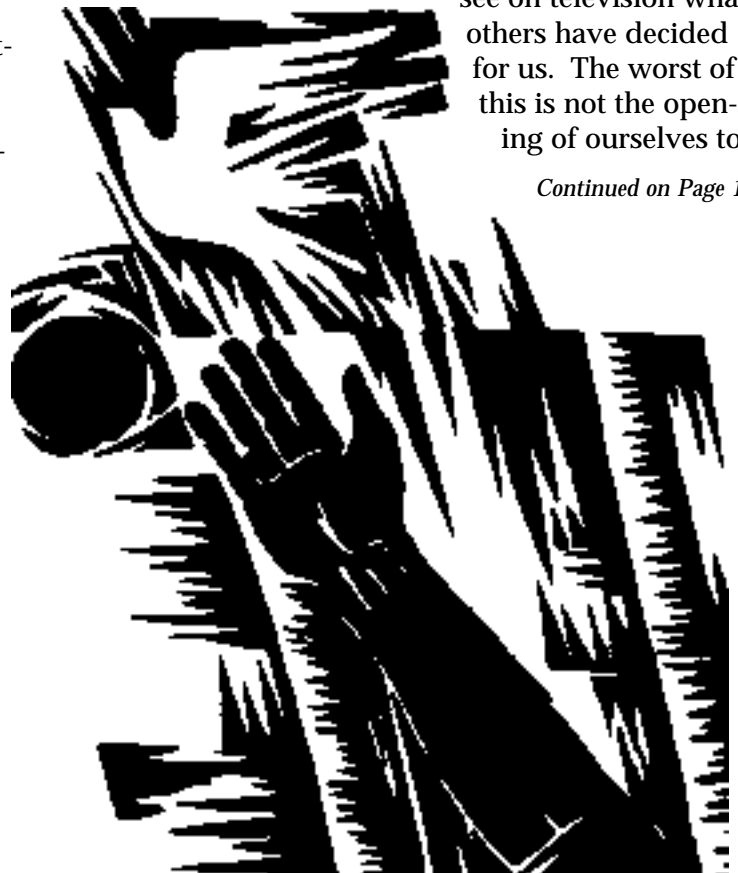
You were not naive or idealistic, as we are told today by those who want to bury what they call the utopian enthusiasts. Nor were you a cynic or uncompassionate and for that reason, in rhythm with the heart’s pain, you called things by their names. To “revert” is not simply to change, or to apply cosmetic changes, or to change so that all things are equal.

The truth is that there have been changes in our country with the end of the war and the Peace Accords. These changes are certainly acts made possible in good part by your martyrdom, something which is no longer remembered. With these changes, “the democracy game” has a greater effect. The word “game” is used without irony. There is a greater freedom of expression, or at least there is less fear of expressing one’s self. Above all, the official barbarity and the terrorist activities have practically disappeared.

But together with these changes, there are things that continue to be the same. Whatever the case, there has not been a “reverting of history.” The violence gallops ahead, poverty and misery are just as cruel, many Salvadorans have to continue to emigrate, there continues to be a dependence upon the exterior, the World Bank, the IMF, and globalization from and for one part of society. Inculturation to the inverse is maintained and grows: every day we are less Salvadoran. We sing, dress, long for, and

see on television what others have decided for us. The worst of this is not the opening of ourselves to

*Continued on Page 10*



the exterior, but rather the fundamental reason for which these things are imposed from the outside: money. We are not seen as individuals, rather as a country we are considered to be “consumer objects.”

There are changes, but very little has been done to “revert” history. The powerful do not even want to talk of this possibility. Nevertheless it continues to be necessary. There are things that must not only be changed, but reverted. We have to revert the devaluation of the word, so that everything cannot be said with impunity. “Everything is fine,” say some. “We are not doing well,” say the majority. We have to revert the parable of the rich Epulon and the poor Lazarus. This is the prolonged historic expression—before, during, and after the war—of our situation.

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The other thing that I want to remember about you, however briefly, is regarding the Church. Your happiness with Vatican II, Medellín, Monsignor Romero, and the base communities was clear. You were, after all, ecclesiastical. But this said, you were demanding and you were critical when you saw that the Church was not the Church of Jesus or, even worse, when it was contrary to Jesus. You said:

“The Church should claim as its universal historic mission to return to those with eyes of misery, to the exploited and massacred humanity . . .



perhaps in this way there can be a new humanity and a resplendent rebirth of the Church, with fewer wrinkles and stains, with a more prophetic impetus, with greater likeness to Jesus who died for our sins, killed by the atheists and assassins of always.”

We have to revert the sinful tendencies of the Church: distance from the poor, proximity to the powerful, inter-ecclesiastical discrimination, the existing fear of fraternal dialog and speaking the truth to one another.

We are also reminded that things have changed in the ecclesiastical realm. We are told that we don't have to be anachronistic, foolish, or masochistic. To this we respond that neither do we have to fool or be fooled. We do not have to maintain a watered-down Christianity that speaks equally about victims and executioners. We do not have to turn Christianity into cheap grace. From our high official and clerical levels we have to revert the tendency that the Church is not truly Salvadoran, that is to say that it does not suffer the anguishes of the poor and does not enjoy its happiness.

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When we remember you all, Ellacu, we remember a Church that was—and should be—above all Salvadoran and real. We remember a holy church, sanctified by daily work and surrender, sanctified by the blood of love.

Ellacua, I end with a few words that I heard you say in a course on ecclesiology in 1980: “The last weapon of the Church of the poor is holiness.” I think that there is holiness among us, although perhaps not like it is painted in spiritual books. I think that there are people who are dedicated to construct a Church of the poor, to make community, to participate in personal training and instruction and to share and exercise the prophecy. I believe that there continues to be holiness.

What I ask of you all, especially the Salvadoran martyrs, is that you do not let go of our hands in the tasks of reverting history and constructing a Church of the poor that is truly Salvadoran.

—Jon

# The Weapons Problem

by José M. Tojeira

There are people in this country who are more concerned about proving that we are not the most violent people of Latin America than they are about combating the violence. The truth, regardless of whether we are the first, second, or third most violent, is that in our country there exists an excess of violence. A friend recently told me that 50% of casual conversation among members of diplomatic corps revolved around the excess of delinquent violence that they perceive in our country. This comes from the diplomatic corps which is one of the sectors of society best protected against violence. Thanks to a job well done on the part of the National Civilian Police, even the systematic robbing of cars with diplomatic tags which recently plagued the country has ended. But it is clear that violence exists in our country and it exists in excess.

In this context it is amazing to see the quantity of weapons that circulate in the country and the slowness and inefficiency on the part of the legislators in confronting the problem. According to Colonel Martínez Orellana there are 125,000 weapons duly registered among the civilian population. Beyond that, and most likely based on conservative estimates, there are approximately 250,000 weapons that are illegally in the hands of the population. According to journalistic data, eight out of every ten crimes are committed with the use of non-registered arms.

The politics surrounding arms possession are equally disastrous. A young person of 18 years of age, if he or she has money, can obtain a weapon without parental permission, without psychological evaluation, and, in practice, without a criminal record. The sanctions for illegal possession of weapons do not truly punish the confiscation. Possession of a weapon in the state of inebriety (another of the great causes of the criminal act) goes practically unpunished. The media promotes a culture of violence in which possession of a weapon is made to be something important. This reinforces patterns of machista behavior.

In the face of this reality, it is time that our legislators come out of their lethargy and, rather than give away millions of debt to a few millionaires in our country, offer the peaceful citizens a law that

regulates arms ownership and which restricts legal possession and pursues illegal possession.

I believe that in our country, with the exception of the National Police and the Army, no one younger than 25 years of age should be allowed to carry a weapon, not even private security guards. Civilians that wish to carry a weapon should be required to take a psychological test administered by a psychologist and should ideally have to provide a guarantor, at least in the case that an illegal act should occur.

Illegal possession of arms should be punished with high fines or with jail time without bail (two or three weeks) based on the case and the level of reoccurrence. The sale of unregistered weapons should also be severely punished.

All of these legal efforts should be accompanied by an intense national education campaign for peace and sensitization in the face of armed violence. The exemplary effort of the patriotic movement against delinquency that has tried to offer food in exchange for arms should be officially readopted for a period of several months.

It is impossible to speak of democracy when a great portion of the population not only preserves an authoritarian and aggressive standard, but unites this type of behavior with the legal or illegal possession of arms. Recently I was a witness to a common act. A driver of a car yelled "idiot" to the driver of another car that ran a red light and almost provoked an accident. The person who ran the red light did not hesitate. He stopped his car and showed his gun through the window. The passenger in the car of the threatened driver wanted to write down the tag number of the vehicle in order to report the "macho" with the gun. But the threatened driver told him that it wasn't worth it, that no one was going to do anything and that to report the armed man was only going to bring about problems.

The common citizen should have the guarantee that such a case would be punished by law and in the event that the gun-owner was licensed, that his license would be automatically revoked. As long as this is not the reality, talk of security and democracy continues to be just a discussion.✚

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## Jesuits Demand Apology

El Salvador's Jesuits have demanded that the country's military ask forgiveness for the murder of six priests in 1989.

During a November 16 Mass to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the priests' assassination the Rev. José Adán Cuadra, Central American Jesuit Provincial, said "the Jesuits continue to demand the truth about what happened on November 16, 1989," the day the priests were killed on the campus of the Central American University.

"The people and institutions involved in this massacre must admit to their participation and ask the Salvadoran people for forgiveness for this and other crimes committed in the past," Cuadra said.

The priests were killed at the height of fighting between the Salvadoran government and Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front guerrillas.

Right before the murders the government and military had been accusing the Jesuits of aiding the guerrillas.

"Their (Jesuits) innocent blood shook the national conscience, leading the two sides in the conflict to negotiate a settlement . . . their martyrdom bore immediate fruit," Cuadra said.✙

## Extreme Poverty Persists

Millions of Latin Americans continue to live in conditions of extreme poverty, unable to meet basic food needs.

| Country     | Population (millions) | % living in extreme poverty |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Uruguay     | 3.2                   | 1.9                         |
| Argentina   | 34.3                  | 5.5                         |
| Paraguay    | 4.9                   | 6.6                         |
| Costa Rica  | 3.3                   | 6.9                         |
| Chile       | 14.2                  | 8.0                         |
| Colombia    | 35.1                  | 14.9                        |
| Mexico      | 49.9                  | 16.2                        |
| Panama      | 2.6                   | 18.1                        |
| Peru        | 24.0                  | 18.7                        |
| Venezuela   | 23.5                  | 19.9                        |
| El Salvador | 5.1                   | 21.6                        |
| Bolivia     | 8.0                   | 36.5                        |
| Nicaragua   | 4.2                   | 39.9                        |

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