

## Vatican by Augustinus

### García and John Paul II discuss debt

*The Vatican daily prominently covered Peru's President during his trip to Rome and meeting with the Pope.*

**T**he International Monetary Fund Does Not Facilitate Third World Development" was the banner headline of *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican daily, on Nov. 13, the day when Pope John

Alan García in Rome. The front page article in *Osservatore Romano* reported at great length on García's plan to solve the Latin American debt problem.

"President of Peru Alan García," wrote *Osservatore Romano*, "yesterday accused the International Monetary Fund of being responsible for the food crisis in the Third World and defined as 'irrevocable' Peru's decision to assign only 10% of its export income to pay back its foreign debt (\$14 billion).

"In the face of hundreds of millions of people starving in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the banks can wait," declared García in his inaugural speech to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) general conference. 'Between the Monetary Fund and the FAO,'" *Osservatore Romano* continues, quoting García, "'we prefer the FAO, since the vocation of our governments is neither to pay the foreign debt nor to accept austerity policies.'

"García, President of Peru for 100 days, said that he foresees 'sanctions' against his country. 'But,' he added, 'this is the price we have to pay for having reconquered our sovereignty. This debt, due to unjust terms of exchange, made more onerous by usurious interest rates and made even

worse by the protectionism which reduced the prices of our products and blocked our exports, is unjust.'

"Alan García," continues the Vatican paper, "was speaking before the agricultural ministers of 156 countries meeting in Rome for the FAO general conference. Besides the accusations against the Monetary Fund and the criticism of the proposals recently made in Seoul to relaunch the IMF ('their aim is to consolidate the preeminence of an organization whose criteria and whose conditionalities had the effect of worsening our economic problems,' he said) García demanded a rapid conclusion to the 'agro-nutritive colonialism' to which Third World countries are subjected."

While García was speaking at the FAO general conference, Pope John Paul II gave a sermon in Saint Peter's on the 40th anniversary of the FAO, in which he asked "that the world food security treaty proposed and approved at the FAO conference not only have an ethical value, but also juridical force" in order to ensure, juridically, that every citizen of the world is assured "the primordial right to satisfy one's hunger" and called, particularly in Africa, "for development projects aimed at relaunching the productive potential and at defeating the desert and the drought."

At the same time, from the birthplace of the late Pope Paul VI, the industrial Catholic city of Brescia, came a positive article on the Schiller Institute's efforts to put an end to misery and hunger. *Il Giornale di Brescia*

published an article on the Schiller Institute's conference in Rome in honor of St. Augustine, where international support for the efforts of Alan García had been a major theme. The article was written by one of the speakers at the conference, Prof. Matteo Perrini. "In the first week of November almost a thousand people, many of them Africans and Americans, met in Rome, determined not to give in to desperation and stupidity."

"The Schiller Institute, from the name of the great German poet of freedom, is the international association which is changing politics and culture and wants to give back to politics its dimension of the art of the common good. The heart and head of the Schiller Institute is a young, educated, and determined woman, Helga Zepp, whose action is supported by many hundreds of prominent personalities who are able to supply first-hand information and elaborate it in operative proposals."

"Helga Zepp," continues the Brescia daily, "is a truly humanistic politician who fights the new racism of the international oligarchy embedded in the IMF and in other decision-making institutions who prevent the development of these poor countries, making themselves responsible for the genocide, through hunger and epidemics, of tens of millions of human beings."

"They are no less criminal than Hitler," the Brescia paper quotes Helga Zepp, "and they have more victims."

Another speaker at the Rome conference on St. Augustine, Father Cremona, the Vatican expert of the second channel of the Italian national radio, GR2, interviewed the president of the Schiller Institute in Rome, Fiorella Operto, on his national radio program with an audience of 20 million listeners.

Paul I