IN THE MAELSTREAM OF LATIN AMERICA

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In 1979, John Paul II visited Latin America for the first time for the Bishops' conference. The dialogue between a Pope who had grown up behind the Iron Curtain and the majority of the clergy from Latin America couldn't have been more difficult.

The place of Marxism was at the centre of the debate, for some it was a factor of liberation, for the Pope it was a factor of servitude. While JPII was fully supportive of the clergy's commitment to the poor, he fermly condemned any theology of liberation. From the early years of his pontificate he confirmed his views by replacing the liberal clergy with more conservative elements.

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