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Most Reverend Joseph L. Bernardin, Archbishop of Cincinnati  
*President*

MOST REV. JAMES S. RAUSCH  
*General Secretary*

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*Associate General Secretary*

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*Assistant General Secretary*

February 23, 1976

His Excellency  
Juan Maria Bordaberry  
President of the Republic  
Montevideo, Uruguay

Dear Mr. President:

For well over half a year now we have sought to learn the reasons for the forced and evidently permanent closing by your government of one of the Catholic world's preeminent journals of opinion, the lay-edited monthly Vispera.

After several unsuccessful attempts to communicate with your ambassador in Washington, I finally addressed our concern directly to you in a letter sent on January 21st of this year.

We have still heard nothing on this matter but we have learned that yet another major Catholic publication, the distinguished Jesuit journal, Perspectivas de Dialogo, was on February 2nd of this year ordered to cease publication. We do not know the reasons given by your government for closing down this important magazine although we have read published reports alleging that an article published in the August, 1975 issue, "Otro Viernes Santo de Verdad" (Another Good Friday Indeed) was offered as excuse for this drastic measure.

Other measures restricting religious liberty and freedom of expression have also become known in recent months: the closing of the Waldensian publication, Mensajero Valdense; the arrest of Juan Artola, a young Catholic layman and regional secretary for the World Student Christian Federation (FUMEC); the proscription of FUMEC and the Frontier Internship program from continuing their activities in the country; and the almost unprecedented act of interfering with the Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter of October 12.

His Excellency  
Juaan Maria Bordaberry

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These and other acts restricting the free exercise of religion are serious matters and we protest them in the strongest terms. As one specific expression of our concern in this area, I have directed the Latin American Documentation service (LADOC) of the U.S. Catholic Conference to translate and publish the article, "Otro Viernes Santo de Verdad" and to send copies to the appropriate persons in our government.

These verifiable facts, however, serious as they are, can hardly be compared to the numerous allegations that have been made for several years and still continue concerning widespread, systematic and brutal repression of many Uruguayan citizens. These allegations of arrests, torture and even death constitute, if even partially accurate, the kind of gross violation of fundamental human rights that demands universal condemnation and sanction.

I join therefore with many others at this time in calling upon your government to allow an independent international body to investigate these allegations, especially including allegations of torture.

Sincerely yours,



(Most Rev.) James S. Rausch  
General Secretary

bcc: J. Bryan Hehir