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Pope Greeted by Nuns

Pope Paul is greeted by hundreds of nuns as he enters St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney to celebrate a Mass shortly after his arrival. (RNS Photo)
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Tour Over, Pope Paul Returns to Vatican

From Courier-Journal Services

Vatican City—(RNS) — Pope Paul VI, apparently none the worse for wear, has returned to more routine pursuits here after a rousing 10-day, 28,000-mile tour of the largely non-Christian Far East.

The pontiff gave his usual noon blessing Sunday to a larger-than-normal crowd in St. Peter's Square.

The indefatigable Holy Father, 73, had celebrated a private Mass in his chapel a scant 6½ hours after returning from his journey.

Huge throngs which turned out to bid the pontiff farewell in Sydney, Australia, rivaled the spectacular scenes of his visit to the Philippines.

After leaving Sydney, the Pope spent a day in Hong Kong where he delivered a speech broadcast to the China mainland. Reportedly, it was milder in tone than the pontiff had originally planned.

As the papal entourage traveled the nine-mile route through Sydney to the airport before his departure for Indonesia, 500,000 Australians turned out in a rousing tribute bringing work in the city to a standstill.

Men, women and children wept openly and knelt by the side of the street. Time and again well-wishers broke through barricades to approach the Holy Father, once bringing the motorcade to a halt.

Despite having just completed a rugged three-day round of activities, the pontiff stood in his open car waving to the masses and seemed buoyed by the demonstrations.

Three times the number who had greeted him on his arrival Nov. 30 were on hand.

Upon his arrival at the Indonesian capital, Djakarta, the Pope looked tanned and fit and was warmly welcomed by President Suharto and other Indonesian leaders.

While the reception among the Indonesians was not as enthusiastic as at other stops on the trip, officials pointed out that the day was the Moslem New Year. Only about 3 million of 112 million Indonesians are Catholic.

Using crowd turnouts and enthusiasm as criteria, the pontiff's visit to Australia will have to be judged as a stirring success.

According to Religious News Service special correspondent Leo W. Basser, Sydney, in its 200-year history has never seen such a moving demonstration of faith as the bicentennial Mass celebrated by Pope Paul at the Randwick Racecourse at night Dec. 1.

State's Bishops Reaffirm Stand Against Abortion

In language as strong as any used in the past, the Bishops of all eight New York State dioceses have labeled abortionists practitioners of "an unspeakable crime."

In a joint pastoral statement read in every Catholic punit in the state last Sunday, the Bishops vigorously condemned the growing "death dealing trade" in abortions now going on in New York.

Each "child is fashioned in God's image" they point out, yet is it now legal to mount a "ruthless assault on human beings in the first stages of life."

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women from outside the state.

The Bishops contrasted the preparations in home and family "looking forward to Christmas and the coming of the Christ Child" with the preparations in clinics and hospitals for the "unspeakable acts of abortion" promoted by a movement that "belittles human life and urges the destruction of unborn children."

The Bishops condemn the abortionists who day by day "grow wealthier from the killing of unborn children". Statistics being gathered throughout the state show at present estimates close to 300,000 children are likely to be aborted during the first year under the new law.

The Bishops charge that the abortionists are making New York the "abortion capital of America" is also supported by these projected statistics. First estimates of abortions from all around the state show two out of three are performed on non residents . . . leading to a projection that 200,000 of the 300,000 abortions predicted for this year will be performed on

The law, the laxest in the nation, is called a "ruthless assault on human beings" by the Bishops since it makes it legal to "destroy the baby cradled in his mother's womb" at any time up to six months.

The Bishops remark that each of these aborted children "is fashioned in God's image, and as Christians we believe that he is destined to be a son of God".

Reminding Catholics that abortion is an unspeakable crime, they urge all their listeners, "and through you all men of good will" not to be deceived by the civil law which permits abortion. God's law says "THOU SHALT NOT KILL" they point out and "civil law can never displace God's commandment".

Their most chilling words come when they ask New Yorkers to realize the "terrible consequences of legalized abortion".

They point out:

1) The principle has been written into law that a simple majority may set up standards under which life is to be denied a portion of the people.

2) Once it is permitted to set standards which people must meet if they are to remain alive, a simple majority may decide that life is to be denied the defective, the aged, the incorrigible.

Citing the sanction of "immediate excommunication for any Catholic who deliberately procures an abortion or helps someone else to do so" as an example of the strong stand of the Catholic Church, they urge all their listeners to oppose and reject abortion in every possible way.

Buffalo Diocese

In Huge Cutback

Bishop James A. McNulty of Buffalo has announced drastic reductions in operations because of financial problems.

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