

Pope Speaks About World Peace Despite 'Flu'

Vatican City (RNS) — Twice during the New Year's weekend, Pope Paul acted against the explicit wishes of physicians treating him for influenza by carrying his personal crusade for peace to the people.

But the 75-year-old pontiff bowed to his doctors by canceling a New Year's Day trip to a suburban Rome hospital for polio-crippled children where he was to have celebrated Mass.

On Saturday, Dec. 30, it had been agreed that the Pope, suffering with a slight fever due to the attack of flu, would cancel all appearances and audiences for a week of rest and recuperation.

However, on Sunday he insisted, Vatican sources said, on speaking to thousands of pilgrims gathered in the cold rain in St. Peter's Square.

He spoke of his delight at learning that President Nixon had suspended the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong and had set a date for resumption of peace talks.

The next day — New Year's Day — the pontiff agreed to forego the visit to the children's hospital, on doctor's orders, but at the last minute, appeared at the window of his apartment to remind the world of his fourth World Day of Peace which this year follows the theme that "Peace is Possible."

Vatican sources said the pontiff apparently picked up the flu during fatigue suffered during a visit to a mine excavation

site in the mountains 50 miles from Rome on Christmas Eve.

The Pope inspected and prayed inside the damp, cold mine shaft and then offered a Mass and spoke at a temporary altar set up under the stars in the biting cold mountain area.

In his talks both Sunday and New Year's Day, the pontiff's voice sounded strained and hoarse at times. Otherwise, however, he appeared in good spirits and his color was described as "fine."

Speaking on Dec. 31, the Pope said he looked on the Nixon announcement on Vietnam as "a ray of light that comes to brighten the darkness that sadly threatened to close 1972 and dangerously open the New Year."

Despite that, he warned that much more must be done, and done quickly, if the cause of peace and justice is to be served in Southeast Asia.

In an obvious reference to the stepped-up bombings by U.S. planes, the Pope said:

"The announced resolutions (Nixon's) were not enough to cancel the deep bitterness for the too numerous victims of this long conflict and in particular those sacrificed to the recent and terri-

fyng aggravation of the hostilities."

In his New Year's Day address, the Pope steered clear of mentioning Vietnam or any other troubled area by name, speaking instead of peace in general.

This talk followed the "Peace is Possible" theme of the Peace Day aimed at keeping mankind from ever despairing of realizing world peace.

"Just as it should be possible to defeat epidemics, illiteracy, misery and hunger, so it should be possible to exclude the dangers, menaces and ruptures which compromise the peaceful existence of humanity on the earth," he said.

"It is vital that peace should become evermore a necessity in the conscience of mankind. It will become possible."

He reminded leaders on both sides in the Southeast Asia war of what he termed "the necessity — moral and even political — to proceed without tiring in clear and honest negotiations until reaching an accord which can

guarantee each side a just peace."

"With them, we weep for their dead," the Pope said. "The many innocent victims of war, of hate, of revenge, the destruction of their homes, the ruin of their cities and villages."

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Pontiff Recovering

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul canceled a scheduled general audience on Jan. 2, on doctor's orders but was described as making a "complete recovery" from an attack of influenza.

The papal physicians said the pontiff had all but shaken off the effects of the illness that struck him on Dec. 28.

Federico Alessandrini, Vatican spokesman, said, the Pope had been advised by his physicians to rest Jan. 2-3, to avoid a possible relapse.

The pontiff canceled all private and other audiences and has been keeping work at his desk to a minimum.

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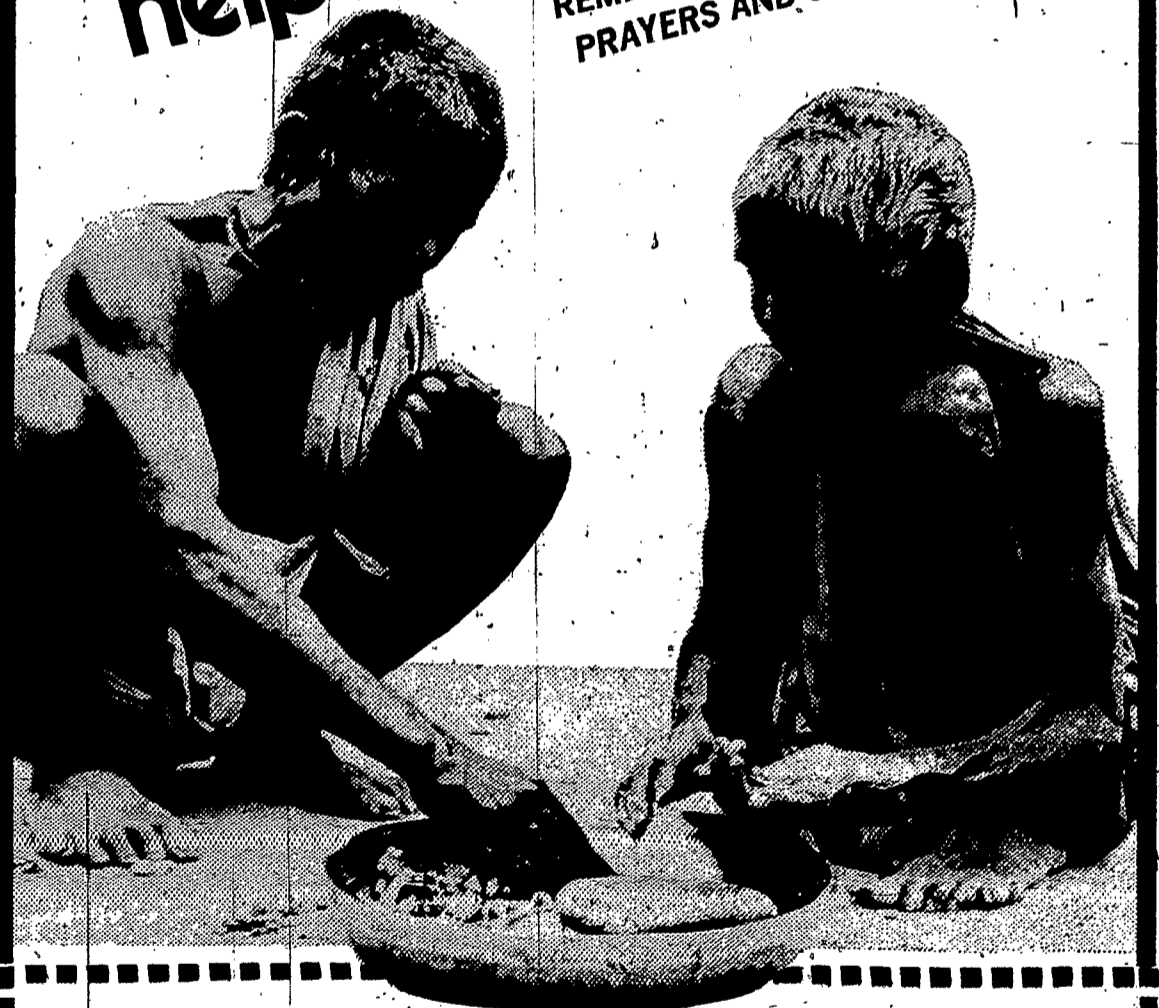
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