

Pope Paul Visited U.S. Three Times

By RELIGIOUS NEWSERVICE

Giovanni Battista Montini made three visits to the United States — as a vacationing monsignor, as an honorary degree-recipient cardinal, and as Pope, when he addressed the United Nations.

His first U.S. visit was in August, 1951. At the time, he was Substitute (Deputy) Vatican Secretary of State and personal secretary to Pope Pius XII.

The previous Spring, Msgr. Montini's friend, the late Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate in the U.S., had urged him to get away from the Vatican and take what the archbishop said was a much-needed vacation.

With the added urging of Pope Pius, the 53-year-old monsignor flew to Canada for a few days and then on the States.

For the most part, since the press was not aware of his powerful position at the Vatican, he was able to enjoy a large measure of anonymity. He especially enjoyed slipping into a church to celebrate Mass, unrecognized and unknown, in the different cities he visited.

Once, when he was motoring through New England, he stopped at a small church, very early in the morning. The parish priest greeted him with the words, "My, I'm glad to see you. I need a priest for the eight o'clock Mass. Will you take it?" He did, delighted at the opportunity.

After four days of sight-seeing in Washington, D.C., Msgr. Montini went on a flying tour that took him to St. Louis, Chicago, Denver, and Pittsburgh. The trip ended with a four-day sight-seeing visit to New York as the guest of the late Cardinal Francis Spellman.

Montini's second visit to the United States came nine years later, in June 1960, when as Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, he flew to South Bend, Indiana to receive a doctorate of laws degree from the University of Notre Dame. He was honored as "a Prince of the Church who has brought the Christian vision to bear, with extraordinary practical success, on the harsh political and social realities of our time..."

From South Bend Cardinal Montini jetted on a round of American cities among them Philadelphia, where he visited Independence Hall and blessed the Liberty bell.

Before returning to Milan, he flew from New York to the Bahamas, Trinidad and Brazil, where he was taken on a helicopter flight over the rising new capital Brasilia.

Five years later, he made his third visit to the U.S., this time as Pope Paul VI.

He had come to make a plea for peace before representatives of 116 countries at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Arriving at New York's Kennedy Airport on the morning of Oct. 4, 1965, the pontiff, dressed in white cassock and flowing scarlet cape, travelled by motorcade through Harlem, Central Park and Fifth Avenue, jammed with cheering crowds and bright with yellow and white papal flags, to St. Patrick's Cathedral for a brief ceremony of welcome and thanksgiving.



The U.S. Flag and Papal banner fly side by side as Pope Paul VI steps along a ramp upon arriving at Kennedy Airport in 1965.

Next on a crowded schedule was a private talk with President Lyndon Johnson at a suite in the Waldorf Towers. (The two men had met twice before, in 1952 and 1963.)

Then, at the United Nations, Pope Paul, speaking in fluent French, lauded the world body because, He said, "it grants recognition of the highest ethical and juridical values" to each member nation and "guarantees them an honored international citizenship."

It is, he went on, "a bridge between peoples...a network of relations between states," and has as its goal "the reestablishment of a world authority able to act efficaciously on the juridical and political levels..."

"It is the principle object of the United Nations to be against war, in favor of peace. Listen to the lucid words of the great departed John Kennedy... 'Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind.'"

Then, in ringing voice he cried, "No more war, war never again! Peace, it is which must guide the destinies of peoples and of all mankind."

When he finished speaking, the whole assemblage gave him a standing ovation. Only the Russians, led by Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, did not applaud, though they stood with the others.

At a reception following his address, the Pope presented

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Pope Paul VI distributes Holy Communion to young boys and girls at the outdoor Mass for Peace he celebrated before some 90,000 persons in Yankee Stadium.

the whole world mourns
the loss of
His Holiness Pope Paul VI
— truly a Man of Peace

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