

Pope Speaks of Faith, Freedom

Pope John Paul II, in the sixth week since he left behind the title of Cardinal Wojtyla, met multitudes of people and spoke of many things — matters of faith and morals, of religious freedom and political oppression, of the "unity in diversity" of the Roman Church.

Already, his innovation in the matter of the regular Wednesday audience has become his custom: he divides this public audience into two parts. On Nov. 22, for example, he addressed Italian young people in St. Peter's Basilica, and spoke to the rest of that day's pilgrims in the hall that Pope Paul VI commissioned, the Aula Nervi, which was built to accommodate 13,000, but on Nov. 22, held at least 20,000 people.

Aware of the presence of many newlyweds among the tourists, the pope reminded them of the indissolubility of Catholic marriage, described and recommended the virtue of temperance and worked in a warning against alcohol and drugs.

The Church would not be fully itself without the religious orders and members' fidelity to their triple vow, he told 90 superiors of male orders two days later.

Meanwhile, the pontiff had accepted the ad limina reports of six American bishops representing the Byzantine, Maronite and Ruthenian rites. These United States prelates, being "in communion with Rome, must account periodically for the state of their dioceses.

"I do most heartily respect and appreciate the venerable traditions to which you

belong, and I desire to see them flourish," Pope John Paul said.

"The Church is indeed enriched by such venerable traditions..." as the six United States bishops represent, the pope told them.

"Their variety contributes in no small measure to her splendor," he continued. "They enshrine many great artistic and cultural values, the loss of which would be sorely felt. Each of them is in itself worthy of great admiration and wonder."

The variety of rites within the Church is not disruptive of unity, he continued, but rather manifests the unity by "showing how all peoples and cultures are called to be organically united in the Holy Spirit through the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government."

He added a prayerful reference to war-torn Lebanon, the ancestral homeland of most American Maronites.

On Nov. 26, the Feast of Christ the King, Pope John Paul's audience in St. Peter's Square was counted as 60,000, and to them he spoke about "civic death," the fate of many people around the world.

"We pray every day that Christ's reign may come," he said. "We must never forget those who pay for their fidelity to the reign of God with condemnation, discrimination, with suffering and death."

He recalled the words of the Savior to Pontius Pilate — "My kingdom is not of this world" and "It is you who say

I am a king. The reason I was born, the reason I came into the world, is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears my voice."

"Every Christian," said the pope, "must reflect on this affirmation. So must every person, who is always a citizen and therefore belongs to a definite political, economic, national and international community."

He then cited a Vatican II statement that the Church "in no manner becomes merged with the political community and is not tied to any political system," and so is the

safeguard of "the transcendent character of the human person.

"This," he continued, "is how the contemporary Church thinks and speaks... It is appropriate, therefore, that these thoughts take us to our brothers who are tried and, perhaps, condemned to death — if not corporeal death, then at least civic death — because they profess their faith, because they are faithful to the truth, because they defend true justice. One must recognize that even in today's world such situations unfortunately exist."

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Retreat League Installs Officers

William E. Finn of Pittsford was installed as president of the Notre Dame Retreat League at the annual meeting Dec. 3 at the retreat house in Canandaigua. Bishop John E. McCafferty gave a homily on the spiritual benefits of "retreating" from daily routines.

Officers installed by Father Thomas F. Schmidt, CSSR, include Al Matekis, secretary,

and the following vice presidents:

John Madden, Auburn; Tony Valvo, Mt. Morris; Edward Harvey, Lima; Rod Discavage, Penfield; Neil Harkenrider, Shortsville; Rudy Schneider, Hornell; Al Rescori, Seneca Falls; John T. Pearson, Ithaca; Richard McGill, Elmira Heights; James Gauck, Bergen; Michael Petocchi, William Jones; Robert Rose and Peter L. Pecora, Rochester.

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