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Pope John Paul II praises a little boy during his Jan. 14 visit to St. Maria Liberatrice parish in Rome, after the youngster finished reading a Roman dialect poem. The title of the poem is "This Pope Is Better Than a Roman."

'The Whole World Loves You'

Pope John Paul II is back in Rome, safe and sound, perhaps with the words of a Mexican prelate ringing in his heart.

"The whole world loves you because you have been Christ for us Mexicans," Archbishop Ernesto Corripio Ahumada of Puebla de los Angeles declared, as the pope was saying his last goodbyes at Mexico City's international airport.

Hundreds of white doves were released as the crowd broke into a traditional song of farewell, "The Swallows," and the pope turned several times from the steps of the Aero-Mexico DC-10 to say "Adios."

Before his plane finally landed in Rome, the pontiff spoke briefly to reporters and remarked on the necessity in Latin America "to consider the social situations and the diversity of people, respecting each in his humanity and uniqueness."

He spoke of the "great vitality in the Mexican Church," which he attributed to "its roots in the people." The pontiff said that he thought the Mexican Church was similar to his native Polish Church. He later referred to Mexico as a "noble and dear land."

While the Pope was in Mexico, an interview appeared in a Milan newspaper, Corriere della Sera, which quoted the Polish Minister of Cults as saying that "no obstacle" exists to the pontiff's making a trip to his homeland in May.

Kazimierz Kakol was quoted: "There exists no obstacle of a political nature which could impede the visit of the pope. If Pope John Paul II comes to Poland, he will be received with all the honors and in a solemn style, both by the people and the authorities. We know that Pope Wojtyla has expressed the desire to come in May, though the date of his trip has not yet been fixed."

The Polish official added later: "Foreign newspapers have amused themselves by inventing unlikely difficulties, but I repeat: no impediment, whether political or diplomatic, exists. The entire Polish nation received the news of the election of Pope Wojtyla with great joy and satisfaction. Joy and enthusiasm certainly do not create political problems."

The pope's last hours on Mexican soil were spent in the country's industrial capital of Monterrey, where he told an immense crowd that "the Spirit of Jesus lives in workers."

He told the assembly that as sons of God and Christian workers they must pursue more secure, humane and just living and working conditions. And the pontiff pledged the cooperation of the Church in reaffirming their "basic right" to form labor unions to improve their lives and "to fight pollution of the planet's atmosphere."



Photos by Susan McKinney

Schools Mass

Youngsters, parents, teachers and others from throughout the diocese, left, took part in the Catholic Schools Week Mass in Sacred Heart Cathedral Sunday. At right, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan accepts the offertory gifts from David Leahy, while David's father, Timothy, who just resigned as superintendent of diocesan schools, looks on. Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty, who concelebrated with Bishop Hogan, stands in rear. Related photo, Page 18.



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CHOICE