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'Christ Cannot Be Kept Out of History of Man'

By Religious News Service

(With Pope John Paul II in Poland) -- Selecting the single most important point of his trip to his homeland would be almost impossible but the emotional peak was reached when the Holy Father visited Poland's most revered shrine in Czestochowa to celebrate Mass, lead folk songs and plead for peace and human rights.

He celebrated an outdoor Mass under a red and gold canopy on the rampart of the 14th Century Jasna Gora (Bright Mountain) Monastery, which houses the Shrine of the Black Madonna.

The dark, icon-like painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Black Madonna that legend says was painted by St. Luke, has for 600 years been a symbol of Polish nationalism and religion and a major focus of pilgrimage.

His visit to Czestochowa

came after a tumultuous welcome in Warsaw which caused one Italian newspaper to dub him "King Karol the First of Poland."

From the moment the Holy Father stepped from his Boeing 727 to "Kiss the ground of Poland on which I grew up," he made clear that his historic homecoming constituted a religious mission of peace.

At the same time, the first supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church ever to visit a Communist nation also offered a challenge to authorities in the Soviet bloc, speaking out on such sensitive themes as human rights, freedom of conscience, and the Church's role in the state, and pledging his solidarity with millions of what he called "forgotten" Christians behind the Iron Curtain.

The population of Warsaw doubled to an estimated three million for the June 2 arrival of the first Polish pope in history. At

Okecie Airport, he was warmly greeted by Church and state dignitaries and a crowd of 20,000. Hundreds of thousands lined the 10-mile route to the center of Warsaw.

He struck the keynote of his visit to Poland at the very outset, declaring in a homily at his opening Mass in Warsaw's Victory Square that "man is incapable of understanding himself without Christ."

In a challenge to Poland's Communist government, the pontiff said: "Christ cannot be kept out of the history of man in any part of the globe ... the exclusion of Christ from the history of man is an act against man. Without Christ it is impossible to understand the history of Poland."

"The Church," he said, "wish to serve people also in the temporal dimension of their daily life and existence. By establishing a religious relationship with people, the Church consolidates them in their natural social bonds."



Pope John Paul greets a swarm of humanity at Gniezno, Poland. The photo belies attempts by Polish authorities to minimize the size of the crowds, claiming Western newsmen were exaggerating. (RNS)

The following days, on a visit to Gniezno, the cradle of Polish Catholicism, Pope John Paul offered a challenge to all the Communist rulers of Eastern Europe, expressing his concern for the fate of millions of Slavic Christians and Russian Orthodox believers in the Soviet bloc.

Earlier at a Mass before 300,000 in a nearby town, the pontiff departed from his

prepared homily to ask, "Is it not Christ's will, is it not what the Holy Spirit disposes that this pope this Slav pope, should at this precise moment manifest the spiritual unity of Christian Europe?"

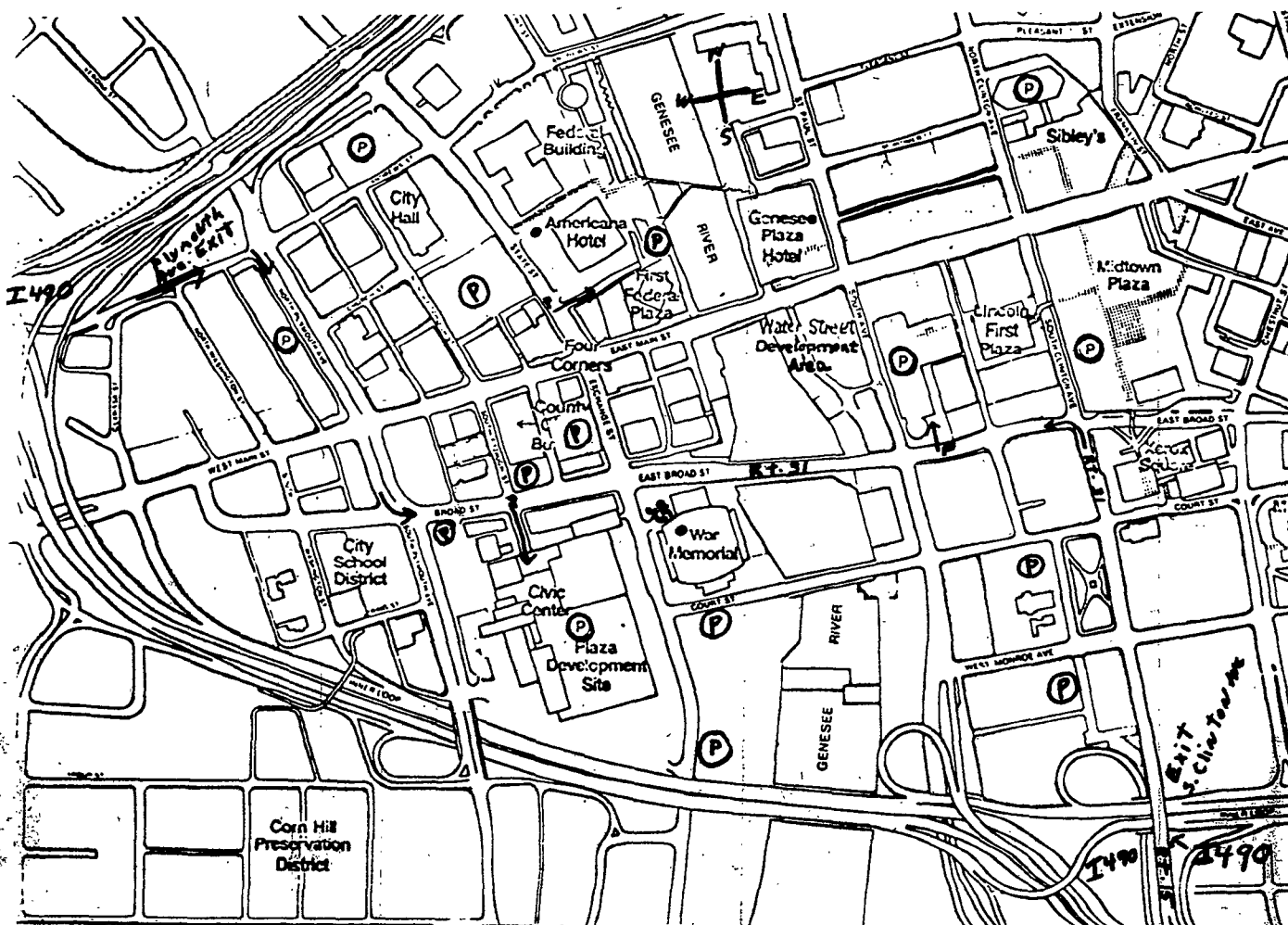
In another departure from his prepared text, Pope John Paul also drew attention to the need for freedom of speech -- restricted in Communist-ruled nations --

by saying he was distressed that in a time of "declared freedom and expression of information," there might be East Europeans who could not hear him speak.

"It would be sad to believe that any Pole and Slav in any part of the world is unable to hear the words of the first Slav Pope," he said.

But it was in Czestochowa

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This map of downtown Rochester shows the location of the Community War Memorial Areas labeled "P" indicate parking lots.

Traffic in Line For Installation

Traffic control will be no problem at the forthcoming installation ceremonies for Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Thomas Wheeland asserted last week.

He cited plans for access and parking that should accommodate the crowds anticipated for the event.

"Both the Police Department and the City of Rochester," he said, "have been both very cooperative and interested," in the rites.

More than 4,000 parking spaces are available for those attending the installation, Father Wheeland said, citing the nearness of both municipal and private parking lots.

Buses bearing pilgrims from both the Southern Tier and the city will park along Court and Broad Streets. Private cars have many options:

Free parking is available for

1200 at South Avenue Garage and for 140 at St. Mary's Church Lots.

For a fee, motorists will be

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Tickets

All tickets for the installation of Bishop Matthew H. Clark have been distributed either to parishes, groups or individuals, according to a spokesman for the installation committee.

Anyone wishing tickets should contact his or her parish. The excellent response to the ticket offering indicates high interest in the installation, the spokesman said.

Bishop Clark will be installed as the eighth bishop of the diocese at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 26.