

World, Nation, People . . . in Brief

Provided by NC News Service

World

Christmas First in Vatican

Vatican City — For the first time in history, a Nativity scene is planned for St. Peter's Square. The scene is composed of historical 19th Century pieces with figures that are more than twice life-size. Vatican sources said that in November Pope John Paul II decided that his front yard, the sprawling St. Peter's Square which is the size of several football fields, should have a crib scene as a site for admiration for the nearly million visitors expected during the Christmas season.

D'Amato Wrong, Aide Says

Vatican City — The director of the Vatican Press Office, Father Romeo Panciroli, denied the allegations of U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato that the Soviet Union was behind the 1981 attempt to kill Pope John Paul II. In an interview in the Italian weekly Panorama, D'Amato said that the Soviet government was upset at a personal papal letter to the late Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev warning him that the pope would return to his people if the Russians invaded Poland. D'Amato said the letter's content was "confirmed to me personally by the monsignor who took the letter to Moscow and then returned to get the response of the Kremlin."

Nation

Expects 'Sound' Pastoral

New York — Bishop John J. O'Connor, former chief of Navy chaplains, and now auxiliary bishop of the U.S. Military Vicariate, said that he expects the final war and peace pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops to be "theologically sound" and "balanced in every way." A key member of the bishops' ad hoc Committee on War and Peace responsible for drafting the letter, Bishop O'Connor said he saw "three major areas in which extra work will be required": theological principles and moral conclusions, including the question of deterrence; Scripture sections, and "the whole purpose, style and tone."

Helping Homeless Urged

Washington — The administrative committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for the "continuing commitment of the American people as a whole to alleviate the conditions of the world's homeless." In a statement in connection with the third annual National Migration Week, Jan. 2-8, the committee cited "hundreds of thousands of starving Cambodians who have fled the slaughter . . . in their shattered homeland." It also cited the difficulties faced by migrant workers and illegal aliens of all nationalities now living in the United States. (More details, Page 6.)

Catholics in Congress

Washington — The 98th Congress convening in January will have a record 141 Catholics, according to a survey by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The previous record, 135, was set at the beginning of the 97th Congress. The largest state delegation of Catholics will come from New York (15 of 36) but the highest percentage will come from New Mexico — all three congressmen and one of its two senators. Catholics continue to be the largest faith group in Congress.

U.N. Warm to Freeze

United Nations — The U.N. General Assembly added its collective voice to the nuclear disarmament controversy Dec. 13 by adopting two resolutions in support of a nuclear freeze. The Soviet Union voted for them while the United States, Great Britain and France and most of the NATO allies voted against them. The main resolution, calling on the United States and the Soviet Union to proclaim an immediate freeze on manufacturing and deploying nuclear arms and their delivery systems, was adopted 119-17 with five abstentions. The second resolution called on all nations with nuclear weapons to freeze production. It passed 122-12 with six abstentions.

Plan Irks Pro-Lifers

Washington — Pro-life leaders are protesting two proposed rules changes in the House of Representatives which, according to pro-life groups, would make it more difficult for the House to consider new anti-abortion legislation. (More details on Page 6.)

People

Names Make News

Mrs. Anwar Sadat, the widow of the slain Egyptian president, has been named to the international panel of judges for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. The prize, created by Presbyterian layman John M. Templeton, is increased in value whenever necessary to keep it ahead of all other international awards. The 1982 award was \$200,000, given to the Rev. Billy Graham . . . The seventh African-American bishop of the Catholic Church, Father Moses Anderson, will become auxiliary bishop of the Detroit archdiocese on Jan. 30.

Focus on Today's World



◀ Franciszek Gajowniczek, left, is greeted by a former Auschwitz prison mate, Franciszek Mleczek, at a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Gajowniczek is the man whose life was spared when St. Maximilian Kolbe offered to take his place in a prison death house. Dressed in a prisoner uniform, Mleczek, who now lives in Massachusetts, attended the Mass along with other former Nazi prisoners. (NC photo)



▶ Patrick Adamson doesn't let a bit of snow on the ground keep him and a few schoolmates from playing soccer during recess at Holy Trinity School in Racine, Wis. (NC photo)



◀ Sabah, left, and Shaista Azad from Afghanistan check out an ornament at a Christmas party sponsored by St. Louis Catholic Charities. The international tree was decorated with ornaments representing the countries of refugees attending the party. About 200 refugees from throughout the world have been resettled in the St. Louis area with the help of the archdiocesan refugee program. (NC photo)

the Saints *by Luke*

JOHN WAS BORN ON JUNE 23, 1390, IN KANTI, POLAND. ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN OF KANTI, HE STUDIED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CRACOW, WAS ORDAINED, AND THEN WAS APPOINTED SCRIPTURE LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY. ALTHOUGH HE BECAME FAMOUS FOR HIS PREACHING, HE WAS FORCED FROM HIS POSITION BY JEALOUS ASSOCIATES AND BECAME A PARISH PRIEST AT OLKUSZ. FEARFUL OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CARING FOR SOULS, HE RETURNED TO CRACOW AS PROFESSOR OF SCRIPTURE, A POSITION HE HELD UNTIL HIS DEATH ON DEC. 24, 1473.

NOTED FOR HIS SCHOLARSHIP, LEARNING, AUSTERITIES AND CONCERN FOR THE POOR, JOHN WAS DECLARED THE PATRON OF POLAND AND LITHUANIA BY POPE CLEMENT XII IN 1737 AND WAS CANONIZED IN 1767 BY POPE CLEMENT XIII. THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN CANTIUS IS CELEBRATED ON DEC. 23.

ST. JOHN CANTIUS



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