

Pope, in Austria, Pleads for Peace, Unity

Vienna, Austria (NC) — Pope John Paul II pleaded for East-West unity, concord among religions and Catholic spiritual renewal during his Sept. 10-13 visit to Austria, a political and cultural crossroads between Eastern and Western Europe.

He also defended human rights and urged a more just international order, emphasizing that the Church's concern in those areas is based on the Gospel and not on partisan interests in international politics.

In his first major talk, at Vienna's Heroes Square shortly after his arrival Sept. 10, the pope opened with a peace greeting to Austria and its seven neighboring nations of both Eastern and Western Europe.

To a crowd of some 100,000, including about 70 bishops from East and West, he emphasized Europe's un-

ity in "the deep Christian roots and the human and cultural values which are sacred to all Europe."

While noting the continent's history of political and religious divisions, he urged fresh efforts "for peace and justice, for the rights of man and Christian solidarity among peoples." For the Christian, he said, "love is stronger than hatred or revenge."

Apparently referring to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, Pope John Paul commented that "the Austria of today — sadly, not all Europe — is free of foreign domination and military violence, free from immediate threat from the outside."

One of the reasons for the papal trip to Austria was to mark the 300th anniversary of the breaking of the Turkish siege of Vienna by Polish Christian troops in

1683. Referring to that event, the pope noted that atrocities were committed by both sides, to their "equal shame."

"We are aware that the language of weapons is not the language of Jesus Christ," he said.

"Armed conflict," he added, "is in every case an inevitable evil, from which Christians in tragic circumstances cannot escape. But here too the Christian commandment of love of one's enemy, of mercy, is binding."

He urged Austrians to make the tricentenary observances "not a celebration of victory in war, but a celebration of the peace we now enjoy with grateful hearts."

He also urged religious toleration and understanding in contrast to the enmity of three centuries earlier. Many

Moslems living in Austria today, he said, "may serve as a model for us in their devout worship of the one God."

The holocaust of European Jews in World War II, he added, "admonishes us to seize every opportunity for promoting human and spiritual understanding, so that we can stand before God together and serve humanity in his spirit."

Speaking to thousands of young people later that evening in Vienna's soccer stadium, the pope praised their interest in human rights, peace and ecology and urged them to work for an end to human and religious divisions.

The next day, at an outdoor Mass for nearly a quarter of a million Austrian Catholics who had gathered in a drizzling rain to mark the closing of a year of spiritual renewal throughout the Austrian Church, Pope John Paul declared that technological progress has not made God "expendable."

He urged family prayer and reminded Catholics of "the Church's binding invitation to take part in the celebration of holy Mass

every Sunday." Shortly before the mid-morning Mass the pope met with leaders of other Christian churches. Lamenting the religious discord, intolerance and persecution of past ages, he declared the Catholic Church's determination to pursue Christian unity.

After centuries of hostility,

he said, "we have 're-discovered' each other in the true sense of the word" in the ecumenical movement since the Second Vatican Council.

He criticized "negative tendencies" which threaten the institutions of marriage and family "and seek to justify other forms of living together."

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Alumnae Officers

New Our Lady of Mercy High School Alumnae Association officers are (from left) Marilyn Leo Schicker, treasurer; Joyce Schuller Donnelly, president; Sister Virginia Wilson, moderator; Ellen Sajonc Fitzgerald, recording secretary; and Rosemary Gottry Wilson, vice president. Absent is Christine Kramer Doyle, corresponding secretary.

Pope to Bishops

Continued from Page 1 against God's law," the pope said.

He also asked the bishops to defend the rights of the unborn, the weak, the handicapped, the old and the poor.

While opposing homosexual activity and premarital sex, a bishop "will at the same time, with all his strength, try to assist those who are faced with difficult moral choices," the pope added.

The authenticity of Church teaching does not depend on a popular vote, the pope said. "The bishop proclaims the

Gospel of salvation not as a human consensus but as a divine revelation," the pope added.

The bishop, said the pope, "must accept the consequences of the fact that he is, with Jesus Christ, a sign of contradiction" and must "announce to the young and the old, to the rich and the poor, to the powerful and the weak the fullness of truth, which sometimes irritates and offends, even if it always liberates."

In so doing, added the pope, "the bishop will be called upon over and over

again to accept criticism and to admit failure in obtaining a consensus of doctrine acceptable to everyone."

"The renewal willed by the Second Vatican Council," said the pontiff, "depends on the ministry of bishops," meaning that a bishop must be a man who "expresses to all individuals and groups of whatever tendency — with a universal charity — the love of the good shepherd."

The love of a bishop must extend to every person in need, said the pope and, in a special way, to his priests in a love of "a friendship that knows how to communicate esteem, and through warm human exchange can help a brother priest even rise from moments of discouragement, sadness or dejection."

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Continued from Page 3 ington County. The service provides telephone intervention and referral for family crises and violence, legal difficulties, financial difficulties, housing problems, substance abuse, sexual problems and suicide. CHD funds will be used to make people aware that the service exists and is available for their use.

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