

# Pope's Canadian Trip a Testament to Faith

By Jerry Filteau  
NC News Service

Pope John Paul II repeatedly condemned threats to human life and dignity as he toured Canada Sept. 9-20. Just as often, he called for a renewed faith as the most needed response to such threats.

Abortion, the arms race and stark issues of global economic injustice were the targets of ringing papal denunciations.

In messages directed more specifically to Catholics in Canada, Pope John Paul encouraged them to recover the roots of their faith, not to separate faith from their life in modern society and to infuse Canadian culture with the values of faith.

He urged laity to be active witnesses to the faith in their lives and to attend Mass regularly and receive the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist frequently.

He asked nuns to live their life of consecration fully as a

witness of the Gospel to the world.

Priests were called on to strengthen their people's sacramental life and formation in an adult faith.

Speaking to the nation's bishops in Ottawa, Canada's capital, on the last day, Pope John Paul urged a broad range of pastoral ministry, asking them to teach and instill faith in their people.

Pope John Paul's 12-day trip across Canada was one of the longest of his 23 trips abroad as pope, matched only by his 1980 trip to Brazil.

Starting with three days in French-speaking Quebec Province, chiefly in Quebec City and Montreal, the pope then moved on to the Maritime provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

On Sept. 14 he began a long westward sweep that took him to Toronto, then into Manitoba, Alberta, and Northwest Territories and

British Columbia near the shores of the Pacific. He flew back east Sept. 19 to spend a day and a half in Ottawa before returning to Rome.

Weather was a constant factor in the trip. Although he arrived under clear, calm skies in Quebec, gray skies and rain plagued most of his first week.

Then came strong winds in Canada's central plains and western mountains. The bad weather brought good-natured papal jokes about rain as a sign of baptism and wind as the breath of the Holy Spirit.

There was no joking, however, when heavy fog in Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, forced the pope to cancel one of the focal points of his trip, a third and climactic meeting with Native Americans. Unable to land there and participate personally in the ceremonies, the pope was forced to tape his message of support for Native American cultures and their oft-denied political rights. As he left Canada the pope said he had attached "great importance to this encounter" and hoped to meet with those he had missed on another occasion. He then joked that as he was leaving Canada he had just invited himself to a second visit.

Despite the frequent bad weather, hundreds of thousands of Canadians turned out to see the pope, especially along motorcade routes from one event to the next and at the outdoor Masses he celebrated almost every day of the trip.

For the millions of Canadians who were unable to see the pontiff in person, Canadian television carried several hours of live coverage daily, plus nightly wrap-ups, on French and English channels.

For many, especially children and the sick and handicapped, the highlight of the trip was a few personal words and a direct touch, kiss or caress from the pope. At most major stops the pope had at least one meeting with young people or with the sick and handicapped, so that he met with those groups more frequently in Canada than he has in any other country he has visited.

Ecumenism was another highlight of the papal trip. Representatives of other Christian churches were frequently guests of honor at papal events and met with the pope, even though the events were not specifically ecumenical. At his one major ecumenical meeting, the pope strongly encouraged the high degree of collaboration among Canadian churches and challenged them to do even more.

In speeches at his two meetings with Native Ameri-

cans and in the broadcast text of his cancelled meeting, the pope strongly endorsed in principle their political efforts to redress past injustices. He backed their desires to regain control of their cultural heritage and their children's education, to be assured a sufficient land base and economic base for their development, and to achieve a greater degree of self-government.

The pope also urged, however, that the native peoples work for those goals in a spirit of dialogue and love, with an eye toward the common good as well as their own good.

Twice he apologized for past insensitivities of the church in dealing with native cultures and declared that the church is now seeking to rectify those past mistakes.

One of the strongest papal messages on social justice issues came during the Sept. 12 visit to the small fishing town of Flatrock, Newfoundland, where Pope John Paul called for "a restructuring of the economy" to place human needs before profits, questioned the concentration of power over food production and distribution in the hands of large corporations, and challenged the morality of policies that accept unemployment as a cost for economic goals. He also urged worker participation in employer decision-making through unions, cooperatives or "joint ownership or partnership," and suggested that new approaches are needed to international trade, food aid and Third World development.

Earlier in Quebec and subsequently in Toronto the pope challenged presuppositions of a growing "technological mentality which challenges Gospel values."

Technology, he told leaders of Canadian churches in Toronto Sept. 14, runs the risk of becoming "an autonomous force" guided by "the logic of profit" and the "pursuit or maintenance of power."

"United in the name of Christ, we need to ask critical questions and assert basic moral principles which have a bearing on technological development," the pope said.

In Edmonton, Alberta, Sept. 17 the pope denounced the rich-poor gap between the world's developed North and underdeveloped South.

"This poor South will judge the rich North... those people who take these goods away from them, amassing to themselves the imperialistic monopoly of economic and political supremacy and the expense of others," the pope declared.

Near Winnipeg, Manitoba, the day before, the pope had

warned sharply against "the split between the Gospel and culture" — and on Sept. 18 in Vancouver, British Columbia, he linked the whole range of social issues he had been discussing as part of the "many threats to life which exist in our technological society."

Calling abortion an "unspeakable crime" and "incalculable danger to all humanity," the pope declared that "the sacredness of human life" must be proclaimed and defended against all onslaughts.

"If the weak are vulnerable from the time of conception, then they are vulnerable in old age, and they are vulnerable before the might of an aggressor and the power of nuclear weapons," he said.

"Life from conception onwards must be defended against all that attacks it, such as hunger and war; it must be healed of what weakens or dishonors it, such as disease and the abuse of alcohol and of drugs; it must be protected from what degrades it, such as violence, subhuman living conditions, unworthy working conditions," Pope John Paul said.

Speaking to government officials and diplomats in Ottawa Sept. 19, the pope struck out again at threats to human life and dignity. He said it is a lack of "the ethical dimensions" of society and culture which underlies the arms race, wars, abortion, experimentation on human embryos, starvation and malnourishment in the world. He said the ethical gap also underlies the lack of basic health care, the ill effects of rapid urbanization and losses of human liberty, including freedom of religion.

"A new vision of humanity" is needed to "produce the political will" that can resolve such problems, the pope said.

He climaxed his series of appeals for social justice at his final Mass in Canada, where, speaking on the theme of peace, he declared that "to build peace we must establish justice.... The way to justice and peace begins with the redemption of the world which Christ accomplished by the power of his cross and resurrection."

## 'Symbol of Faith'

Rome (NC) — Ukrainian Cardinal Joseph Slipyj, who died Sept. 7 at age 92, was called a "symbol of faithfulness" at a funeral Mass concelebrated by Archbishop Stephen Sulyk of the Ukrainian Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The funeral for the leader of the Ukrainian church drew more than 1,000 Ukrainian Catholics, including about 100 Americans who attended the open-air Mass outside the Rome church of St. Sophia, a small-scale copy of St. Sophia Church in Kiev, Ukraine. In a eulogy, Archbishop Miroslav Lubachivsky, the new head of the Ukrainian church, called Cardinal Slipyj "a symbol of faithfulness, sacrifice, constancy and courage."

Twice during his trip the pope also linked respect for human life and dignity to the atmosphere of love with church teaching on the sacredness and indissolubility of marriage and on the need for the conjugal act to be open always to new life.

The papal attacks on social ills — from divorce, contraception and abortion to the arms race and a wide range of economic injustices and the cultural injustices to Native Americans — dominated media coverage of the papal trip.

Less easy for news media to explain, but of equal or greater importance for the church's response to such issues, was the persistent papal teaching that the Gospel's message of love, redemption and the sacredness of the human person must infuse culture if that culture is to deal adequately with the ills that afflict its people.

He urged young people in Montreal not to drop out of society out of discouragement, but instead to find the hope and courage in the Gospel to take an active role in society and try to change it.

Speaking to Catholic educators in Newfoundland, he defended Newfoundland schools and declared that education is not only a matter of "intellectual development" but of formation in "the meaning of life." It is impossible in this context, he said, to "ignore the centrality of God in the believer's outlook on life.... We cannot leave God at the schoolhouse door."

To various ethnic Canadian groups, he stressed the value of retaining their cultural heritage and roots, insisting frequently on the role the Catholic faith has played in the development of those cultures.

Even as he apologized to Native Americans for past missionary mistakes, he stressed that the Gospel itself was not at fault. He told Indians in the Huronia region north of Toronto that the Gospel, "far from destroying their (native peoples') authentic values and customs, had the power to purify and uplift the cultural heritage which they had received."

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

## Personality Problems

Dear Reader,

When we were doing our commentary on the causes of marriage breakups, one of the areas we did not explore sufficiently is also one of the principle problems.

That is, the lack of self esteem or the inability of a human being to love himself or herself.

It has been rightly said that the individual who is not able to love himself is quite incapable of loving someone else. The sequence of happening goes something like this: an individual from his earliest years is not given love for one reason or another. Perhaps there has been the problem of neglect as an infant, not receiving enough tender affection, hugs, caresses which are so necessary in the earliest stages of life. Or it may be a history of being constantly put down by a parent who demands a perfection which is simply unattainable. Or it may be a comparison with a sibling with the individual ending up on the tail end of the comparison.

Whatever the cause may be, that individual acquires an attitude which is all pervasive and it says, "I am not lovable. There is nothing about me which would make people care for me." This calls for an automatic rejection which, again, takes various forms.

All of the forms are reduceable to self centeredness of one sort or another because a person who believes he is not lovable, must go to unconscionable lengths to prove that he is. He also needs to fill the terrible emptiness which is the lack of love.

One of the most common forms of this is a kind of possessiveness which masquerades as love. It is so overwhelming and so overriding that the person who is the object of it can hardly breathe anymore. It

becomes a totally intolerable situation for that person.

Another form which it takes is an overdeveloped need to succeed. Such an individual is so absorbed in being accepted and appreciated that he is unable to pay attention to anyone else. Many workaholics fall under this classification, or people who are addicted to athletics of one sort or another and need to excel just for the sake of excelling.

Another form it takes is a massively aggressive or boastful personality. All of these things turn the individual so back in upon himself that he is quite unable to relate to another human being in any giving or sharing way, if such a person enters a marriage the life for the partner is disastrous and becomes, fairly rapidly, unbearable.

It is interesting that the need for self esteem has become so widely advertised that advertisers have begun to use it as a way of selling products. The trouble is that they are not really talking about self esteem, but rather about the very self centeredness which is the net result of lack of self esteem. They refer to this product as being for "me." Or they make a big thing of "I'm worth it." At first glance that may seem like legitimate self esteem, but in reality it is self centeredness.

It says you must pay attention to me. You must give me what I want because I'm worth it. rather the person who has real self esteem realizes that he or she is not only lovable but actually loved, first of all by God and then by other people.

Once the person is secure in this self esteem it is no problem at all to deny self, to give oneself to another because that giving does not diminish the person nor does it empty the person of what is there in the first place.



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