

National/International Report

At Christmas, pope emphasizes prayer, fasting for peace

By John Thavis

Vatican City (NC) — Recalling the poverty of Christ's birth, Pope John Paul II urged Christians everywhere to use the poor person's methods of prayer and fasting to win peace in the world.

The pope's Christmas message, pronounced to several thousand people in St. Peter's Square and to millions who watched on television, criticized world powers that "swallow up in weapons incalculable wealth."

The message was part of a traditional "Urbi et Orbi" blessing to the city of Rome and to the world. Speaking from the central balcony window of St. Peter's Basilica, the pope also gave Christmas greetings in 52 languages, including Russian and his native Polish.

Earlier, the pope celebrated midnight Mass for thousands who packed the basilica. On December 26, he left Rome for a five-day stay at the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo.

In his "Urbi et Orbi" address, the pope said the "extreme poverty" of the birth of Christ was reflected in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He said the day of prayer in Assisi last October — which brought together Christians and non-Christians — represented this spiritual "power of weakness: only prayer and only fasting."

The Assisi meeting took place "before all

the powers of this earth, which swallow up in weapons incalculable wealth, which waste on unnecessary things precious resources and arouse fear of apocalyptic destruction," the pope said.

"Before all these menacing powers, we decided to be poor," he said — like Christ, Francis and "so many great souls who have shed light on the path of humanity."

"Should not the world listen to this voice?" he asked. "Should there not fall silent the clamor of hate and the noise of death-dealing explosions in so many places on Earth?"

The pope said Christmas should remind modern men and women of the need to "change radically the plans of human domination over the earth." Sharing and

love, he said, can "transform the face of our planet."

A relatively small crowd listened as a cold wind blew through the square. The night before, many waited hours inside and outside the church for the start of midnight Mass.

"The event of Bethlehem night unites us all," the pope said in a sermon during the two-hour ceremony. "It happens both in tropical heat and in the hard northern winter and amid snowstorms."

But, he added, "even though the conditions vary so widely, what is accomplished at this hour is always the same event. And the same 'great joy' is proclaimed by all who announce Bethlehem night, even though their words are heard in so many different languages," he said.

Vatican officials said the Mass was

broadcast to some 42 countries, including, for the first time, the pope's homeland, Poland. A delegation of Polish officials who maintain contact with the Vatican attended the Mass with diplomats from more than 100 other nations, the official said.

Speaking during a Sunday Angelus blessing at Castel Gandolfo on December 28, the feast of the Holy Family, the pope called Catholics to face "all that threatens the human family from within and without."

The contemporary world, he said, has endangered "conjugal love, faithfulness and honesty" as well as "the great dignity of human life."

The same day, the pope blessed 48 families who work as traveling catechists in European countries, presenting each with a missionary cross.

Pope sends 'get-well' telegram to recovering archbishop

Seattle (NC) — Pope John Paul II sent a telegram to Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen on December 22, to express "fraternal solicitude" for the archbishop's prompt recovery following cancer surgery, the Seattle Archdiocese's public affairs office announced December 24.

The archdiocese also announced that the archbishop had left Providence Medical

Center on December 24, earlier than anticipated, because of his quick progress after an operation for prostate cancer. He returned to his residence at the rectory of St. James Cathedral.

Father Michael Ryan, chancellor and vicar general of the archdiocese, said that officials at the Vatican embassy in Washington had advised him of the pope's personal telegram.

Last September the archbishop said that the Vatican had ordered that his administrative power in several key areas be relinquished to Auxiliary Bishop Donald Wuerl.

Sent to the archbishop's office, the papal telegram read: "I have been informed of your recent operation, and I wish to assure you of my fraternal solicitude for your speedy recovery. I shall remember you in my prayers, especially as we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnate Word of God."

According to Father Ryan, Archbishop Hunthausen was deeply touched by the pope's expression of care and support.

Vatican Embassy officials told Father Ryan that it was the pope's own idea to send the telegram. "It was something the Holy Father wanted to do," the officials said.

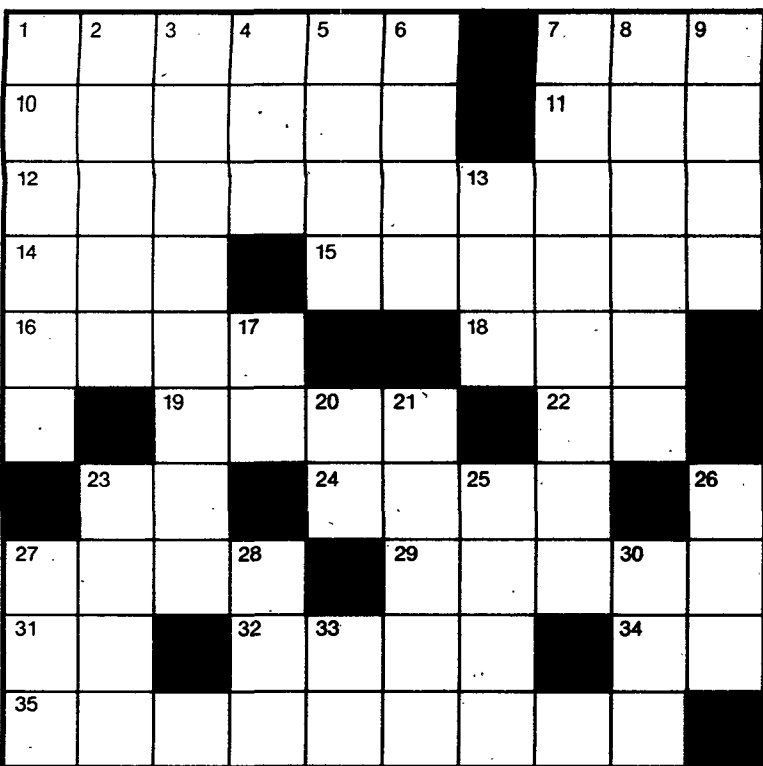
The officials told Father Ryan that a personal papal telegram "is a very rare kind of thing" because most papal telegrams are sent either through a country's apostolic nuncio or directly from the Vatican secretariat of state.

Father Ryan added that since the surgery, Archbishop Hunthausen has received a large outpouring of good wishes, including hundreds of cards from individuals, parishes and organizations.

At a news conference after the operation, the archbishop's doctor, Dr. Jerry Minzel, said that he expected his patient to make a total recovery and be able to return to work by late January. It would take another two or three months for Archbishop Hunthausen to be able to resume all the activities he handled before the surgery, the doctor said.

Courier-Crossword

Our monthly crossword puzzle! Give it a try and see how well you do. Answers will be printed in our next issue. Good Luck!



ACROSS

1. Paul's first letter in NT.
7. "The _____ and I"
McMurray, Colbert comedy.
10. _____ of the Americas, NYC.
11. Hawaiian musical instrument.
12. Feast celebrated on the Sunday after Christmas
14. Diminutive of Lion Hearted.
15. Popular ice cream drink.
16. M____N, angry chicken.
18. Common article. OR _____
Le or La in France.
19. Part of the eye.
22. Year such as 1987.
23. Monopoly command.
24. Kowalski or Musial.
27. Saints coach, Jim _____
29. Where 12 across fled to.
31. "_____ shucks"
32. 1509, Caesar Augustus style.
34. A sleep in the H_____
35. December 28 victims of Herod

DOWN

1. Kind of college spirit.
2. Egg Shaped body.
3. Companion of Caspar.
4. "Tennis _____ one?"
5. "_____ said" (slang)
6. Scorch.
7. Feast of the Magi.
8. Wolfed, as food.
9. Entertainer, Maryin _____
13. Where Hulk Hogan excels.
17. Hesitation in speech.
20. "It____I, do not be afraid"
Jolu OR — common verb.
21. Nickname for first martyr, December 26.
23. Fancy Dress.
25. "Say that _____, Bub" (slang).
26. Where Prodigal Son hit the pits.
27. Miss Britt.
28. "_____, amas, amat".
30. A dance step.
33. National capital.

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