

## Holy Father sends pre-visit greetings

Washington (NC) — The following is the text of Pope John Paul II's pre-arrival message for his September 10-19 visit to the United States. The text was released August 25 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Dear People of the United States of America:

I greet all of you with joy and affection: Catholics, Protestants and Jews, believers and non-believers alike. I greet you all in the love of God, and I look forward to being with you again.

Eight years ago I made my first pastoral visit to your country. How vividly I recall the warmth and kindness with which you welcomed me! How eagerly I anticipate returning to your great land!

An important theme has been proposed for my second visit: "Unity in the Work of Service." It leads us to consider the ways in which the followers of Jesus Christ can serve the world by selfless deeds. For, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men and women of our time — "especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted" — are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of all the followers of the Lord.

This theme also leads us to consider another reality: I mean the growth in unity that takes place among Christ's followers precisely through the service they render to others. The Church's identity as a community of faith and love shines forth in the loving deeds of her members. Through their ministries and apostolates the church's unity is built up and made stronger.

The apostle Paul shares this vision with us when he speaks in this way of the community of followers of the Lord: "It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's Son..." (Ephesians 4:11-13).

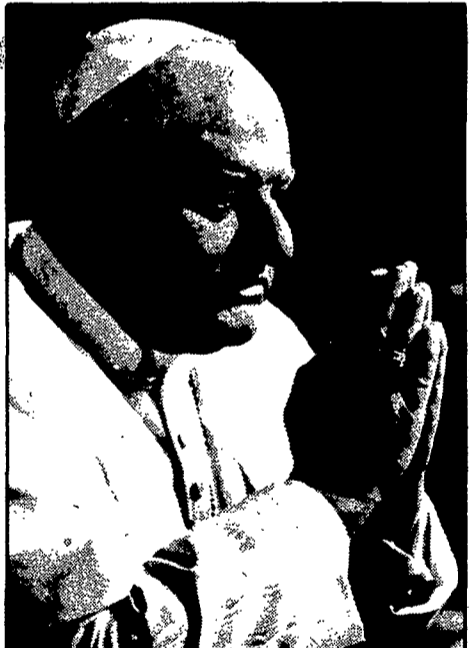
In this spirit, then, I return to you and your beloved land — a pilgrim pope, who wishes to join with you in celebrating these noble works of service and in building up our unity in the Lord. May God, who is the Father of us all, bless the United States richly now and in the days to come. May he bring us together once again in truth and peace, in justice, love and service.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The above message — delivered by the pope — is available on videocassette tape from: Office of Public Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; or call (202)659-6700.



**U · N · I · T · Y**  
**IN THE WORK OF SERVICE**  
 SECOND PASTORAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, SEPTEMBER 1987

## One-man show depicting Pope John XXIII to air on PBS during papal visit



Possessing something of the portly girth of the late pontiff, Charles Durning needed to apply only a bit of putty to his nose to resemble Pope John XXIII.

By Henry Herx  
 New York (NC) — As Pope John Paul II journeys in America next week, the story of a predecessor who ended the tradition of the pope being "prisoner of the Vatican" will air on television. Charles Durning will portray Angelo Roncalli in the one-man show, "I Would Be Called John: Pope John XXIII," broadcast by PBS on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 9-10:30 p.m. EDT.

The program begins in Rome as cardinals from around the world assemble to elect a successor to Pope Pius XII. Durning, in the role of Cardinal Roncalli, speaks to an unseen visitor (the viewer), explaining the procedures of a conclave and reflecting on how, at 77, he has come to be a member of the conclave.

After describing Cardinal Roncalli's compromise election as pope, the program details his various activities — especially ecumenical — that led to the calling of the Second Vatican Council. Learning that he has terminal cancer before the work of the council can be completed, the pontiff writes his encyclical "Pacem in Terris" to motivate the bishops to move forward with Church reforms.

Pope John XXIII's is a great role, and Durning plays it well. Since he possesses something of the portly girth of the late

pope, all Durning needs is a little bit of putty for the nose to physically fit the part.

However, it is not so much the look as the spirit of the churchman that Durning captures. In spite of all his learning and sophistication, Pope John was the son of a poor tenant farmer. He remained practical and down-to-earth — someone who understood and genuinely liked people. Put simply, he was a pope with the common touch so important to making others feel comfortable.

That sense of humanity is what Durning projects warmly in his performance, and it is one of the reasons that a program about religious faith, moral values and Church structures may be of interest to a wide — and presumably even non-Catholic — audience.

The fact that Durning is a Catholic undoubtedly lent conviction to his portrayal. But the program is also based upon a well-constructed, nuanced script that is knowledgeable about matters temporal as well as spiritual.

Written by Eugene Kennedy, award-winning author and lecturer on psychology and theology, the script neatly encompasses the necessary biographical background (Roncalli had an interesting career in the diplomatic corps), the personality of the man, and his accomplishments in the chair of

Peter. Sprinkled throughout the narrative is evidence of Roncalli's pastoral sense, his belief that most people are not "great sinners," and that "not failings but discouragement is the sin." Referring to the problems people have in their lives, he quotes a Jewish adage which says, "Do not try to be more than human... or less than human."

In calling Vatican II, Pope John is pitted in the script against the Curia, the Church administrators of the Vatican. That group did not share his vision of updating the Church and bringing it into the contemporary world. Thus, the pope put the matter before the bishops of the world at Vatican II.

Doubtless this sequence is oversimplified, but in a popularization such as this it serves to indicate that institutional changes do not come easily. Some may find the idea of Church politics disedifying, but they are not depicted in mean-spirited fashion.

Pope John did not live to see the results of Vatican II and the changes that it initiated. However one feels about those changes — and the reviews are mixed — one of the breaks with tradition has brought John Paul II to America and the world.

"I Would Be Called John: Pope John XXIII" was directed by Charles Jarrot and produced by David Susskind.

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**PAPAL VISIT '87**  
 Pope John Paul II's pastoral visit to the United States, September 10-19, 1987, is being broadcast on television. The program is being broadcast by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) on the Home & Away Television Network (HAWN) on Wednesday, September 16, 9-10:30 p.m. EDT.

For more information, contact:  
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