

Pope calls for prayers after Israeli shootings

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II condemned what he called a "situation of injustice" in Israel and its occupied territories and prayed for Palestinians shot Oct. 8 by Israeli police.

The pope asked people attending his Oct. 10 general audience in St. Peter's Square "to remember and pray in a particular way for the Holy Land, for the Christian communities and for the peoples there."

Israeli police opened fire on a crowd of Palestinians at the Muslim holy site of Temple Mount who were throwing rocks at Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall. Police killed 19 and injured an estimated 150 others.

"The sad events," the pope said, are even made worse by the fact that "they happened in places considered sacred by the great religions and in Jerusalem, the Holy City for Hebrews, Christians and Muslims."

"Together with condemning the violence which has caused more dead and injured, it is not possible to remain indifferent and not condemn a situation of injustice which has lasted too long and which sees the opposition of two peoples, the Palestinians and the Israelis," the pope said.

"Both are called to live in a just and lasting peace, each in their own country and on that land so dear to them and to all believers throughout the world," he said.

"I am particularly near to the suffering of all those who mourn the victims of this violence and, in a special way, I want to express again my deepest solidarity with the pastors of those Christian churches," the pope said.

Christian leaders, he said, "have the delicate task of guiding and sustaining their faithful in situations and circumstances more difficult now than ever."

The pope asked for prayers for "those responsible for the destiny of peoples," that they would work to give "the Middle East the desired peace in justice and security."

Such efforts, he said, could make Jerusalem "the crossroad and source of a true reconciliation."



AP/Wide World Photos
An armed policeman at the Israeli border over a group of Moslems praying in one of Jerusalem's old city alleys after police barred the them from joining Oct. 12 prayers on the Temple Mount. Police said their action was intended to prevent further violence in the wake of Oct. 8 rioting that killed 19 Palestinians.

Court supports religious access to public school

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Supreme Court Oct. 9 let stand a federal appeals court ruling which said a public high school cannot refuse access to religious groups if it permits other community groups to rent school space.

Without comment, the court turned down an appeal by Centennial (Pa.) School District to reverse a 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling last summer. The ruling said school officials could not deny weekend rental of a high school auditorium in Centennial to Student Venture, a subsidiary of Campus Crusade for Christ.

The circuit court had said that by renting space to local civic clubs, unions, adult ed-

ucation classes and other groups, the school district had established William Tennent High School in Centennial as an "open public forum," making it unconstitutional to deny access to a group with a religious message.

In other church-state decisions Oct. 9 the Supreme Court:

- Turned down an appeal by Love Church, a small fundamentalist church in Evanston, Ill., challenging a local zoning ordinance. The church claimed it had undue difficulty obtaining a permanent home because of the ordinance.

- Rejected an appeal by a church, the Presbytery of Seattle, seeking payment from King County for the county's refusal to let the church use land it owned. The high court let stand a ruling by the Washington state Supreme Court that the church had failed to exhaust administrative remedies because it had not even applied for a building permit.

The Pennsylvania case fell in an area between two other high court decisions on

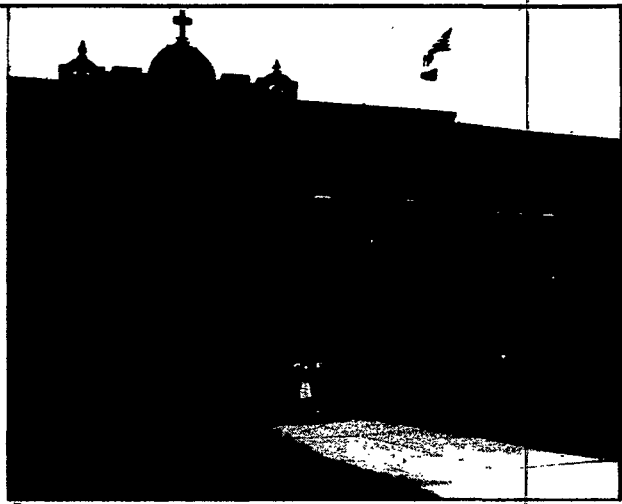
access of religious groups to public educational facilities.

In 1981 the Supreme Court ruled that state-run universities cannot bar student groups from using campus facilities for religious meetings and worship, because such a ban would violate the students' rights of free speech and use of an open public forum.

Last June, ruling on a challenge to the federal 1984 Equal Access Act, the high court said that if a public secondary school permits any other "non-curriculum-related student group to meet" on its premises, it may not deny similar access to student groups which wish to meet for religious purposes.

While both high court decisions referred to student groups, the 3rd circuit court's ruling relied in part on the "open public forum" language of the 1981 ruling to determine that a public high school which opens its doors to other non-student groups in the community may not exclude non-student religious groups.

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