

# Pope: Lent is time to deepen love

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Lent is a precious time of prayer and penance meant to lead Christians to a deeper love for God and for one's neighbors, Pope John Paul II said.

"We cannot let this time of special graces pass in vain," he said at his weekly general audience on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 24).

The pope asked Catholics to join him in "opening ourselves to beginning this journey of spiritual renewal, welcoming the invitation of the church to turn inward and seek a deeper contact with the Lord through regularly listening to his Word, a more intense commitment to prayer and penance, and greater attention to the poor and suffering."

Also at the audience, the pope greeted the bishops of Lithuania who were in Rome for their "ad limina" visits, which bishops make every five years to report on the status of the church in their dioceses.

The pope told the crowd that he would be making his first and long-



Pope John Paul II

File photo

awaited papal visit to Lithuania and the other Baltic nations in September.

In his main audience talk, the pope continued his teaching on the role of

the pope.

Papal power, he said, like all power in the church "is essentially ministerial and is required for the pope to carry out his mission of service as the supreme shepherd of Christ's flock."

The pope explained that the church's teaching on papal authority and especially about the primacy of the bishop of Rome over other bishops was raised by the Eastern churches separated from the Roman Catholic Church.

When the Council of Florence in the 1400s tried to bring about the reunification of the churches of the East and West, primacy was one of the questions it addressed.

The council said primacy gives the pope the authority he needs to serve the universal church, Pope John Paul said; it is part of his "full power to pastor, rule and govern" the church in a way that does not diminish the privileges and rights of the Eastern patriarchs.

The pope said church tradition clearly shows that it was not Christ's will that papal authority be "simply one of arbitration in conflicts between local churches or of giving only a general direction to the autonomous activity of the churches and of Christians with advice and exhortations."

Collection on April 1 and 2 to benefit care agencies

ROCHESTER — Bishop Gene Conroy announced today that the United Way of Rochester will be collecting money for care agencies on April 1 and 2. The collection will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the following locations: St. Vincent's Methodist Church, 815 Dewey Ave.; Gates Alliance Church, 125 Spencerport Road; Henrietta Wesleyan Church, Thompson Road (near East Babcock Plaza); Monroe Community College Child Care Center, 100 E. Henrietta Road; Holy Spirit Church, 1355 Hatch Road, Webster; St. Ambrose Church, 25 Empire Blvd.; and St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St., Pittsford.

The April 1 event is part of United Way of Rochester's Day of Caring to help Rochester-area care agencies.

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