

Pontiff puts heat on the West

Tells youths to defend life

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

DENVER — With World Youth Day's closing Mass falling on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope John Paul II had a perfect occasion to address two of his favorite subjects: young people, and the preservation of life for the unborn.

Speaking before a colossal crowd in the sweltering sun, the pontiff strongly reiterated the pro-life theme he had raised three days earlier with President Clinton.

"Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life," the pope declared during his homily at Cherry Creek State Park on Sunday, Aug. 15.

"The church needs your energy, your enthusiasm, your youthful ideas in order to make the Gospel of life penetrate into our society," he added.

The pontiff noted that the weakest



forms of human life "are the ones most at risk," he said, such as the unborn, sick, hungry and poor.

Celebrating most of the Mass in English, the 73-year-old pope emphasized that young Catholics must not fear the threat of opposition to their beliefs.

"Do not be afraid to go out in the streets and public places like the first apostles," he instructed. "This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel — no time."

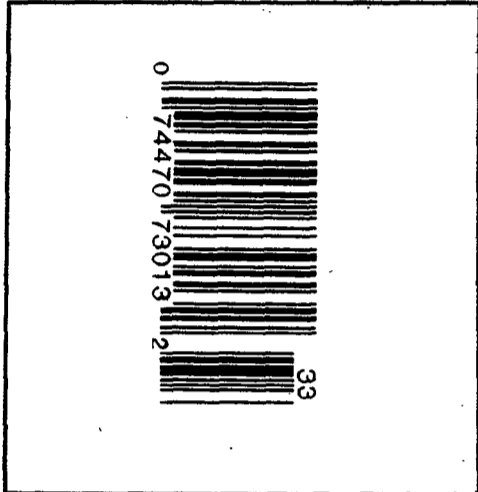
According to Catholic News Service, an estimated 375,000 people attended the closing Mass. Although he dropped several paragraphs from the

prepared text of his homily, the pope's Mass, recitation of the Angelus and farewell remarks to the crowd lasted almost four hours.

Many struggled against a relentless sun as temperatures reportedly climbed to 98 degrees. Some reports said at least 20,000 people required medical attention at the park over the two-day period which also included an evening address by the pope on Aug. 14.

According to CNS, a 61-year-old man died on the night of Aug. 14 from a heart attack and three others suffered cardiac arrests, said Arapahoe County Undersheriff Bob Allen.

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First meeting

A self-described "old pope" and a young president, relaxed and animated together, made a world tour of issues of common concern. Pope John Paul II and President Clinton, meeting for the first time Aug. 12 at Regis University in Denver, outlined their hopes for a better world. Page 6.

Spiritual guidance

Directors provide companionship along life's path

STORY BY LEE STRONG, SENIOR STAFF WRITER

In the past, Joe FitzGibbons acknowledged, he became impatient when he got stuck behind a school bus while driving.

"I would just get frustrated," noted FitzGibbons, a parishioner at Rochester's Holy Cross Church, 4492 Lake Ave. "Now I look at it as a joke between God and I."

The difference between then and now, FitzGibbons explained, is that he has received spiritual direction.

"I am more more conscious of where God is in my life, especially in the frustrations," FitzGibbons observed. "On a day-to-day basis I am more aware of the presence of God."

FitzGibbons is one of a growing number of lay people seeking out spiritual direction. These people are turning to priests and religious, spirituality and retreat centers, and even friends, in a quest to deepen their spirituality and to help them discover God in their daily activities and even the problems they face as they journey through life.

"I think there's a real hunger for a concrete awareness of how God is working in their lives," observed Father Francis E. Blighton, parochial vicar St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 3003 Dewey Ave., and director of Borromeo Prayer Center, the Greece parish's spirituality program.

"What people are hoping for is a spiritual director who can help them recognize what's already going on," Father Blighton said, "how the Lord is already present in their lives."

"It's only really in the last 10 years that people have become more aware of their need to get more centered on God in their lives," remarked Father George Hill, who teaches courses on spiritual direction at St. Bernard's Institute and the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, 1100 S.

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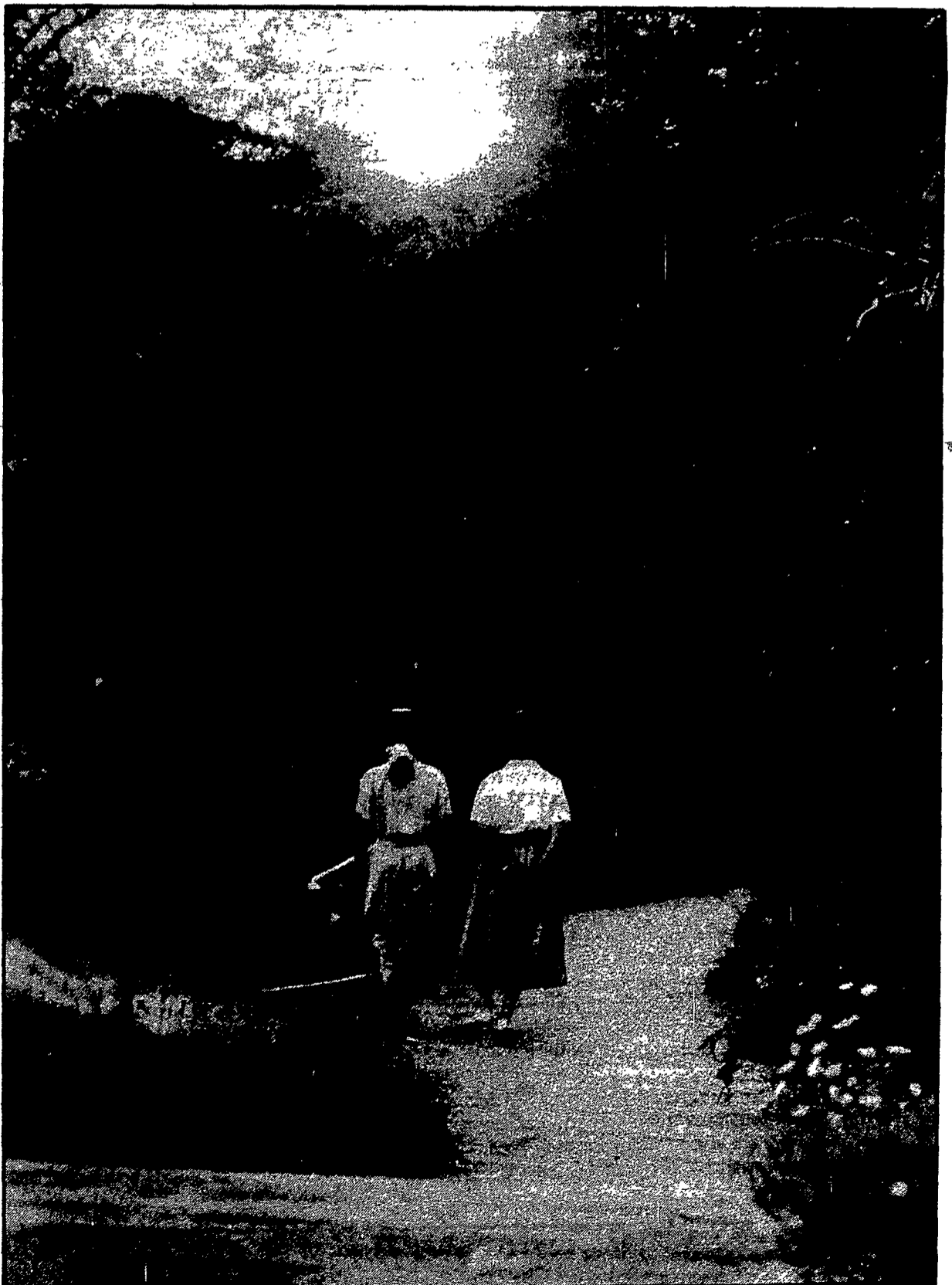


Photo illustration by
S. John Wilkin