

'Old pope,' young Clinton tour world of issues

Meeting touches upon life issues

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

DENVER — 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 Jesuit-run Regis University in Denver, outlined their hopes for a better world.

Among the troubled nations Clinton reported talking about were Bosnia, Somalia, Sudan, Cambodia, Haiti and countries of the Middle East.

The 73-year-old pope said the discussion touched on issues related to human dignity, "in the first place the right to life and the defense of life."

The two leaders seemed reluctant to stop talking to each other, although Pope John Paul took time out for an aside to reporters about the difference between his age and that of the 46-year-old president. The pope joked that one of the reasons the Vatican chose the United States for the celebration of World Youth Day was because the country has "a very young president."

He had called himself an "old pope" during a press conference on the plane from Rome to Jamaica, where he began his 60th papal visit, culminating in World Youth Day celebrations.

The pope said his comments to the president were motivated by the church's concern for life, "as well as the well-being and full human development of individuals and peoples."

"Essentially, these are the themes on which the church seeks a sincere and constructive dialogue with the leaders of the world's nations and representatives of the international community," he said.

Both men said they were committed to continued good relations between the Vatican and the United States.

The two, personally, seemed to have no trouble talking to each other as they posed for pictures and later walked to the podium. After their final remarks



President Clinton points out people in the crowd to Pope John Paul II as the pontiff arrived in Denver Aug. 12 for World Youth Day. AP/Wide World Photos

to journalists they continued chatting with each other as the cameras snapped away.

Clinton, a Southern Baptist, was taught by nuns in elementary school and attended Jesuit-run Georgetown University. He made mention of that fact in his welcoming remarks on the pope's arrival at Denver's Stapleton International Airport.

The pope had outlined some of his concerns — abortion, assistance to developing countries and the U.S. leadership role in international affairs — in his airport address.

He addressed Clinton with full awareness of "the privileged position which the United States holds in the international community."

The president said the United States

is striving to achieve the goal of promoting a social order that respects people's dignity.

Although the pope did not use the word abortion when he called on Americans to protect human life, "he is speaking very clearly about defending human life from conception to natural death," said Joaquin Navarro-Valls, Vatican spokesman.

After the private meeting, the pope posed for photographs with the president, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and their daughter, Chelsea.

Pope John Paul gave the president a Bible, and President Clinton gave the pope a walking stick with an angel carved into the grip.

In his remarks to reporters after the meeting, the president read a quote

from the Bible that he said described the pope's ministry and what he hoped would in time describe his own work.

"Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart," the president quoted from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Clinton described the meeting as cordial, productive and the basis of a constructive relationship in the future.

The president did not mention abortion in his remarks, and the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Raymond Flynn, said he did not think the two men discussed their differing positions on the issue during their 35-minute private meeting.

"We shared many values and perspectives," Clinton said.

Those common concerns included the problems facing young people throughout the world, the need to strengthen families and the problems of drugs and violence in the United States, he said.

The president also said they shared "a recognition that we need in this nation and throughout the world both more individual responsibility and community action."

Throughout the meeting, Clinton said, "I, like every other person who has ever met him, was profoundly impressed by the depth of His Holiness' conviction, the depth of his faith, and the depth of his commitment to continue on his mission."

The president praised the Vatican's activities on behalf of human rights around the world and said he welcomed the progress being made in forging ties between the Vatican and Israel.

"That can only help as we seek to pursue peace in the Middle East," Clinton said.

The Vatican and Israel established a joint commission in July 1992 to discuss church-state problems that have prevented full diplomatic relations.

Leaving by U.S. government helicopter for his first appearance at World Youth Day, the pope told the president, "I pray each day for the leaders of governments, that they may be wise and far-seeing servants of the common good, and that their decisions and actions may bring genuine justice and peace to the world."

Douglas C. Meeson "Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years" Robert E. Vay

Vay-Schleich & Meeson
Funeral Home, Inc.

2692 Dewey Avenue 663-2100 1075 Long Pond Road

It pays to advertise in the Catholic Courier

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

<p>IRONDEQUOIT</p> <p>Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc. Edwin Sulewski 2100 St. Paul Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 342-3400</p>	<p>Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home 1270 Norton Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 544-5000</p>
<p>ELMIRA</p> <p>HOLLY-KECK & BAKER, INC. James A. Baker, Sr., V.P. 640 W. Gray St., Elmira (607) 732-5273</p>	<p>GATES</p> <p>DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc. (Across from St. Theodore's Church) 219 Spencerport Road Rochester, N.Y. 14606 429-6700</p>
<p>ROCHESTER</p> <p>Crawford Funeral Home, Inc. "Our Family Serving Your Family" Located at 495 N. Winton Rd. (Between Atlantic & Humboldt) (716) 482-0400</p>	<p>Lucey Funeral Home, Inc. 301 W. Main St. Victor, N.Y. 924-5730 2309 Culver Rd. 342-0470 Michael W. Lucey Lic. Mgr.</p>

MONUMENTS

HART MONUMENT CO.
2301 Dewey Avenue
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
Since 1856
865-6746

ARNDT FUNERAL HOME
Family Owned & Operated

RONALD JOHN ARNDT
ROBERT J. ARNDT
Funeral Directors
225-6350
1118 Long Pond Road
(South of Maiden Lane)