

Pope is 'heartbroken' after Sarajevo attack

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II, saying his heart was broken by news of a lethal mortar attack on a Sarajevo market, urged international leaders to "try everything" to reach an effective cease-fire in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The pope spoke while praying the rosary Feb. 5, several hours after a mortar shell slammed into the main outdoor market in the Bosnian capital, killing 68 people and injuring 200.

The day before, the pope met with Croatia's foreign minister at the Vatican and pleaded with him to take steps to stop the killing in Bosnia.

The pope, who has made countless appeals for peace in the former Yugoslavia, appeared to be deeply moved by the marketplace bombing. Television news reports in Italy and around the world showed bodies of civilians lying in pools of blood, with hysterical family members trying to find help.

"With a broken heart, I am forced to recall the slaughter that occurred today at Sarajevo. Criminal hands continue to systematically destroy and massacre," he told several hundred people present for the rosary recital.

"No one and no cause can justify such abominable actions. I beseech those responsible for such an unworthy act to end these crimes: They will answer to God for this," he said.

Bosnian leaders immediately blamed Serbs for the massacre. Bosnian Serbs denied responsibility and accused Muslims of massacring their own people to derail peace talks. U.N. officials could not immediately determine who fired the shell into the marketplace.

The pope said the carnage in the market only increases pressure on the international community to "try everything, even at the price of the greatest sacrifices, so that an effective cease-fire can be reached."

The Balkans are moving "toward the abyss," he said, and Europe cannot tolerate whole cities being destroyed and populations exterminated.

On Feb. 4, the pope met privately with Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic and explored the chances for peace.

"The Holy Father pleaded with Granic to do everything possible to arrive at a cease-fire, which is an indispensable condition for arriving at stability in the area," said Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

For his part, Granic thanked the pope for his peace efforts in the former Yugoslavian republics, the spokesman said.

On Feb. 7, speaking to students of the NATO Defense College, the pope reflected with disappointment on the excuses sometimes given for the fighting in ex-Yugoslavia.

"We are told that the indescribable horrors being perpetrated daily on innocent people are the inevitable result of longstanding ethnic hostility and hatred — the hatred of one group for another," he said.

"But this cannot be the whole explanation. War is not inevitable: It is the result of a series of concrete policies and decisions. Someone, somewhere makes the decisions which bring a terrible aftermath of death, injury, destruction and sorrow," he said.

He added that the cruel and dehumanizing conflict shaking Europe shows that the continent is unsure of itself and needs to "recover its soul."

English-language catechism gets long-awaited approval

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

JERUSALEM — The English-language "Catechism of the Catholic Church," under review and revision for more than a year, was approved in late January, said Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's doctrinal congregation.

Cardinal Ratzinger spoke to Catholic News Service Feb. 3 in Jerusalem, where he was attending the Feb. 1-4 Jewish-Christian conference on Religious Leadership in Secular Society. During his speech, he quoted from the catechism in English.

In Washington a spokesman for the U.S. bishops said Feb. 3 that only part of the final text had come in from Rome.

"Until we receive the full text we can't say when it will be published," said Monsignor Francis J. Maniscalco, the bishops' director of media relations.

"We need the full thing in hand" to determine the final layout before printing can begin, he said.

"It's always been a minimum of 10 to 12 weeks from reception to publication," he added.

Cardinal Ratzinger said it would be available in bookstores by Easter, which is April 3 this year.

"I think we're looking more for Pentecost than Easter," said Claire Dube, director of Publications Service for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Ottawa. Pentecost will be celebrated May 22.

Dube, who said she thought the Australian and U.S. bishops' publishers were targeting the same date, said they had received two of four parts of the catechism on diskette and hard copy. However, she noted that cross-referencing was done on the hard copy, not on the computer version.

The new catechism was formally issued in its original French edition by Pope John Paul II in December 1992. Since then it has been published in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Catalan, Slovenian, Maltese and, in part, in Romanian.

English is the only major Western language in which it has not appeared. A draft was completed and submitted to Rome for approval in early 1993, but Vatican officials were dissatisfied with the translation and have been redoing it since then.

The U.S. Catholic Conference Office of Publishing and Promotion Services holds all U.S. publication rights for the English text. It has signed on 12 other U.S. publishing companies as co-publishers.

Daniel E. Juday, director of the publishing office, said the first U.S. printing would be more than 300,000 copies, since 265,000 were already on order and several co-publishers have recently said they plan to increase their orders.

Juday also declined to predict a date of publication. "We have less than half the text right now and no description of what's still to come or any confirmation of when it will come," he said.

Rain-swelled rivers



AP/Wide World Photos

An unidentified woman Feb. 1 waits to be rescued in Florida, Colombia, 170 miles southwest of Bogota. According to police officials, at least 10 people were killed and 3,000 more were left homeless when rain-swelled rivers formed mud slides that swept away hundreds of homes in southwestern Colombia.

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