

Papal message to China stresses authority

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

MANILA, Philippines — Unity with the pope is an essential part of being Catholic, Pope John Paul II said Jan. 14 in a message broadcast to China, where the communist government has banned contacts with the Vatican.

"A Catholic who wishes to remain such and to be recognized as such cannot reject the principle of communion with the successor of Peter," he said.

The message, addressed to "all Chinese Catholics," was broadcast by the church-run Radio Veritas during Pope John Paul's stay in Manila.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the message was meant for underground Catholics faithful to the pope as well as to members of the government-approved Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

The message to China, broadcast in English with translations into Chinese dialects, reaffirmed the Vatican's longstanding insistence that if Catholics in China truly had freedom to profess their faith, they would be able to maintain contact with the Vatican and accept the Vatican's appointment of their bishops.

It also acknowledged the faith and sacrifice of those Catholics who have suffered for their loyalty to the church.

The pope praised those who "make present and visible on Chinese soil the church of Christ: one, holy, catholic and apostolic, a community of faith, hope and charity."

"I am well aware of the difficulties amid which you are called to bear witness to your faith in Christ," he said.

Pope John Paul urged Chinese Catholics to keep their gaze fixed on Christ, to persevere in their faith and to not give into fear.

"Your witness will be all the more eloquent if it is expressed in words and

deeds of love," he said, encouraging them not only to love other Catholics, but to love all their fellow citizens.

Love, he said, should consist of "understanding, respect, forbearance, forgiveness and reconciliation within the Christian community; a love which involves service, self-sacrifice, fidelity, hard work, honesty and justice in society as a whole."

But, he said, genuine love can never be separated from the truth.

And part of the truth of what Christ willed for his church, Pope John Paul

said, was that it would be united under the service and leadership of the successor of the apostle Peter, the pope.

Speaking indirectly to the Chinese government, the pope said unity with the See of Peter and therefore with the universal church "is not the result of human policies or hidden and mysterious intentions."

It springs from a conversion of heart and acceptance of Christ's plan for the church, he said.

A Vatican official later said two of five priests from the Chinese Catholic Pa-

triotic Association joined hundreds of other priests concelebrating a Jan. 15 Mass with the pope.

Navarro-Valls had said that officials from the Archdiocese of Manila were responsible for determining the priests' fidelity to the Vatican, "requesting if necessary a profession of faith."

Such a profession to ensure the priests are, in fact, Catholics obedient to the church and pope "is nothing unusual," he said, but a routine affirmation of acceptance of Catholic beliefs and of the teaching and authority of the pope.

Shelling continues

Russian forces launched a massive attack on the Chechen capital of Grozny Jan. 12, as artillery fire slammed into the city's center in the heaviest shelling to date.



AP/Wide World Photos

A young boy with an AK-47 slung over his shoulder chews a match while two older Chechen fighters discuss an old communist party identity card they found in Grozny.

Agency seeks donations for flood victims

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS) — Catholic Charities USA is seeking donations to help those affected by the floods in California, which have caused an estimated \$300 million in damages, forced 3,000 people out of their homes and left 11 people dead as of Jan. 13.

"The floodwaters are still high, and more rain is expected ... so it will be some time before officials can determine precise needs," said Jane Gallagher, director of disaster response for Catholic Charities USA.

A series of storms caused the severe flooding in both Northern and Southern California that forced thousands of people to evacuate and severely damaged crops.

The waters receded enough in many flooded areas by Jan. 12 to allow evacuated residents to return to their homes and begin cleaning up and assessing their losses.

President Clinton has called 34 California counties federal disaster areas, and Transportation Secretary Federico Pena announced an initial \$5 million in federal funding to pay for repair to roads and bridges.

EDITORS' NOTE: Donations for flood victims can be sent to Catholic Charities USA-California Floods, 13331 Pennsylvania Ave., Hagerstown, Md. 21742. Checks and money orders should be made payable to "Catholic Charities USA-Disaster Response."

Contributing to this story was Julie Sly in Sacramento.

Pope urges reconciliation in Papua New Guinea

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea — Pope John Paul II, on the second leg of a four-nation, 10-day trip, arrived in Papua New Guinea urging reconciliation among the nation's people.

He offered prayers for the inhabitants of Bougainville, a copper-mining area

on an island off the east coast of Papua New Guinea, torn by four years of war.

"To you, people of Bougainville, I send a special word of encouragement," the pope said upon his arrival Jan. 16 in the capital, Port Moresby.

"If you have been treated unjustly, I invite you to remove bitterness from your hearts. If you bear arms unjustly, I urge you to put them down and seek

reconciliation," he said.

Bishop Luke Matlatarea of Bereina told journalists the fighting in Bougainville has been "scaled down."

However, he said, members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army continue to insist the Papuan government must give the province more of the revenue from the mines operated by multinational corporations.



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