

WORLD & NATION

Papal Visit



Reuters/CNS

Pope John Paul II blesses the crowd at the end of the Oct. 6 Mass at the Aqueduct Raceway in Queens, N.Y.



Michael Okoniewski/CNS

A woman celebrates among the more than 100,000 people who attended Mass with the pope in Central Park Oct. 7.



Reuters/CNS

Melissa Brent of Columbus, Md., and Justin Farinella of Pasadena, Md., hug Pope John Paul II after having given him flowers upon his arrival in Baltimore Oct. 8.

Pontiff challenges Americans to conquer fears

BALTIMORE, Md. (CNS) — Visiting the United States Oct. 4-8, Pope John Paul II urged Americans to conquer their fears and turn to Christ when times get tough.

"There is no evil to be faced that Christ does not face with us," he told the crowd during a Mass at Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore. "There is no enemy that Christ has not already conquered. There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us and does not now bear with us."

In talks to seminarians in Yonkers, to members of the U.N. General Assembly and to young people in New York's Central Park, the pope spoke of the need to turn to God to help overcome fears. He also spoke of the diversity of the United States and the need to continue its tradition of welcoming immigrants.

The readings for the Central Park Mass on Oct. 7, marking the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, said that Mary was afraid when the angel told her she would become the mother of Jesus.

"Yes, Mary was afraid, just as we are often afraid!" the pope said. But when Mary realized it was God who was calling her, "all fear was banished."

"Like Mary, you must not be afraid to allow the Holy Spirit to help you become intimate friends of Christ," he said.

"Christ wants to go many places in the world and to enter many hearts through you," he told the young people, urging

them to conquer their fears to be able to spread Christ's message.

Anticipating what the pope would say at the United Nations Oct. 5, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the assembly, "he calls upon us, like the angel in the garden, to 'be not afraid.' He tells us that we can and we must conquer fear if we are to solve the problems of our planet and its people."

In his U.N. address, Pope John Paul II said nations have a right to exist and a right to organize themselves, care for their members and maintain their language and cultures.

Every nation has "the right to shape its life according to its own traditions, excluding, of course, every abuse of basic human rights and, in particular, the oppression of minorities," the pope said.

But just as with individuals, the rights of a nation also carry responsibilities, he said. And those extend beyond self-interests.

"Foremost among these duties is certainly that of living in a spirit of peace, respect and solidarity with other nations," Pope John Paul said.

The polyglot Polish pope spoke in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese, the official languages of the United Nations, to encourage the world's people to look to the future with hope.

"Men and women must learn to conquer fear," he said. "We must learn not to

be afraid; we must rediscover a spirit of hope and a spirit of trust."

Wherever he went, the pope was greeted by enthusiastic crowds: more than 80,000 people at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., and Aqueduct Racetrack in Queens, N.Y.; nearly 60,000 at Baltimore's Oriole Park; and 125,000 people at Central Park. News reports said 350,000 people turned out for the papal parade through downtown Baltimore.

At Giants Stadium nearly 83,000 people waited hours in the rain to hear the pope urge them to remember "the kind of nation America has aspired to be." He presented his view of the nation as one concerned about the poor and the immigrant.

The pope reminded his listeners of the nearby Statue of Liberty, emblazoned with the words of Emma Lazarus' poem: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"

"Is present-day America becoming less sensitive, less caring toward the poor, the weak, the stranger, the needy?" Pope John Paul asked. "It must not."

He said the United States was called to be "a welcoming culture." And with special emphasis, he asked: "If America were to turn in on itself, would this not be the beginning of the end of what constitutes the very essence of the American experience?"

He was repeating his message from his

Oct. 4 arrival at Newark, N.J.'s, international airport, where he was greeted by President Bill Clinton, a host of government and church leaders, and the screams of 2,000 schoolchildren waving Vatican flags.

The United States has a responsibility not only to its own citizens and those seeking a better life within its boundaries, the pope said. "In particular, for nations and peoples emerging from a long period of trial, your country stands upon the world scene as a model of a democratic society at an advanced stage of development."

"Your power of example carries with it heavy responsibilities," Pope John Paul said.

Four days later, at Oriole Park, he noted that "America has always wanted to be a land of the free."

"Every generation of Americans needs to know that freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought," he said.

In Baltimore, Pope John Paul also spoke to officials of Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. Catholic bishops' overseas relief and development agency headquartered in Baltimore.

Since the 1960s CRS has placed increasing emphasis on development programs that promote self-reliance among some of the world's poorest people. Among these programs have been such as health and water projects, loans