

WORLD & NATION

Olympics continue despite explosion

ATLANTA (CNS) — The city that has the phoenix as its unofficial symbol fought July 29 to resurrect a spirit of celebration and joy at the Centennial Olympic Games.

When a bomb struck July 27 at Centennial Olympic Park, leaving two people dead and more than 100 injured, expressions of outrage and sorrow were mingled with determination and admiration for the grit of average citizens.

Volunteers and spectators became Olympic heroes in their own right as they continued to pack venues by the thousands, undeterred by an intended message of terror.

The pipe bomb, stuffed with nails, exploded at approximately 1:30 a.m. near a stage where a free rock concert was in progress. Alice Stubbs Hawthorne, 44, of Albany, Ga., was killed. Mehlih Uzonyol, a Turkish television cameraman, died of a heart attack after running to the scene.

The park is the centerpiece of the city's Olympic hospitality, partially paved with bricks bearing the names of those who bought them to support the Games. It reopened July 30.

Olympic flags were flown at half-staff at all venues throughout the weekend and competitions opened with a moment of silent prayer, but the Games continued.

During a Mass celebrated in the Olympic Village July 28, Atlanta Archbishop John F. Donoghue told athletes and coaches that he hoped nothing would wipe out their experience of the city's gracious spirit.

"None of us will ever forget the tragic bombing that took place a few days ago when two people died and many others were seriously injured," he said. "But I have never known anything to dampen this city's sense of hospitality, and I do hope that every one of you goes home with some memory of the kindness and the enthusiasm which typifies Atlanta and her citizens."

Father Pat Bishop, a native Atlantan chosen to carry the Olympic torch, said the bombing stunned him beyond comprehension.

"There are no words to describe my reaction," he said. "You can say you're disgusted, you're angry and you're sad-



A victim injured by a bomb that exploded in Centennial Park in Atlanta is aided by bystanders July 27. The blast occurred in the public park where Olympic fans and other people had gathered for a late-night concert.

CNS/Reuters

dened, but none of those words really capture my feelings."

Father Edward Branch, campus minister at Atlanta University, said that Atlanta, in its quest to become an international city, has experienced a loss of innocence.

"The threat of bombs, shootings, violence and crime increases when you become an international city," he said. "Security becomes a great concern for a reason. It is part of the package deal. The reality of the situation is that something like this can happen anywhere, and the person or persons responsible for such a tragic act can sometimes be found within the community. As a country and as a city we'll grow from this tragedy."

Father John Adamski, pastor of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Atlanta, said he was "shocked and very sad" when violence ripped into the heart of the city's most popular Olympic site.

"People were just having so much fun" in the park, he said, particularly in its fountain centerpiece, where hundreds of children played in pulsing water jets hours before the bombing.

"I had been there the night before and there was such a good feeling in the park," Father Adamski said. "I'm not sure whether that memory (of the bomb) is going to stay or whether the positive experience of people is going to be so much

stronger. ... Even the day afterward people wanted to go back to the park. If that spirit is out there, that bodes well."

Despite the terrorist act, the normal contingent of Olympic volunteers appeared the next morning at the shrine, less than a mile from Centennial Park, and continued the church's Olympic program of hospitality, church tours and an outdoor water station, Father Adamski said.

The volunteers from archdiocesan parishes and from as far away as New Zealand have been "wonderful," the pastor said. "Our Olympic memories are going to be much better than the Centennial Park incident."

Cenacle Sister Susan Arcaro, an Olympic Village pastoral associate, said her days at the Olympic Village have become more stressful. An FBI chaplain briefed her and other chaplains on how to minister to athletes, coaches and staff. Additional fear and confusion have come from dozens of false bomb threats made since the Centennial Park incident.

"Our role as chaplains changed overnight," she said. "When we began our ministry we were basically a welcoming presence; now we have become a healing presence. Concern took on a new flavor and has turned into compassion and care."

Pope decries Atlanta bomb

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II denounced the pipe bombing of Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park and offered prayers that the Olympic Games would be a witness to the unity of the human family.

A telegram pledging the pope's prayers and condolences for the two people who died and the 111 people injured was sent to Archbishop John F. Donoghue of Atlanta by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican secretary of state.

With thousands of people gathered in the park to listen to a rock concert and enjoy the international party atmosphere of Olympic nightlife, the pipe bomb exploded at 1:25 a.m. July 27.

"With great sorrow the Holy Father has learned of the tragic bomb explosion in Atlanta," Cardinal Sodano wrote in the telegram, asking Archbishop Donoghue to convey the pope's sentiments to the victims and their families.

"Upon those afflicted by this act of senseless violence and those who seek to comfort them in their distress, His Holiness invokes divine consolation and strength," the cardinal said.

Despite the bombing, Cardinal Sodano wrote, the pope hopes the thousands of people gathered in Atlanta for the Olympic Games "will be confirmed in their witness to the unity of the human family and in their commitment to build a world of solidarity, friendship and peace."

Following is the text of the telegram: Archbishop Donoghue 680 West Peachtree St. Atlanta, Ga.

With great sorrow the Holy Father has learned of the tragic bomb explosion in Atlanta. He asks you to convey his deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to assure the injured of his closeness in prayer. Upon those afflicted by this act of senseless violence and those who seek to comfort them in their distress, His Holiness invokes divine consolation and strength. He prays that all gathered for the Olympic Games will be confirmed in their witness to the unity of the human family and in their commitment to build a world of solidarity, friendship and peace.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State

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