

# CONTINUED...

## Pope

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In the course of his remarks, the pope gave special attention to the efforts of the United Nations, with which the Vatican has clashed on some matters in the past.

Agencies such as the United Nations are essential to promoting peace, the pope said.

Experience worldwide has shown that wars, while seeming to "solve" the problems which cause them, leave other problems in their wake that impede peace, the pope said.

"Awareness of this should encourage peoples, nations and states once and for all to rise above the 'culture of war,'" Pope John Paul said, explaining that the use of arms to solve problems and to prove supremacy are part of this culture.

Developing a "culture of peace" is all the more urgent in a time when increasingly sophisticated technology for destruction is available, the pope said.

The pope began his message by noting that "only three years separate us from the dawn of a new millennium."

"This time of expectation is a time for reflection, inviting us to make an assessment, as it were, of mankind's journey in the sight of God, the Lord of history."

The United Nations was the only organization apart from the church mentioned by name in the entire 16-page message.

The pope said that "it seems fitting to hope that the means at (the U.N.'s) disposal will be appropriately reviewed in order to enable that organization to face effectively the new challenges of our time."

Pope John Paul also praised the establishment of war crimes tribunals and other investigative bodies "as a first step toward reconciliation."

And he supported the granting of amnesty in some cases in which people have publicly admitted to committing crimes during turbulent times, as long as it serves "the fundamental good of con-



CNS photo from Reuters

**Pope John Paul II reads his homily during Mass at St. Peter's Basilica marking the feast of the Mother of God and World Peace Day Jan. 1. The pope prayed for forgiveness to fill everyone's hearts to bring peace to the world.**

solidating peace" and promotes improved relations between opposing groups.

When reparations are made or justice meted out, the pope said, these must be done in the interest of reintegrating the wrongdoers into society or the community of nations.

"No punishment can suppress the inalienable dignity of those who have committed evil," he explained. "The door to repentance and rehabilitation must always

remain open."

Alluding to the recent end of conflicts and lasting injustices such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina and South Africa, Pope John Paul stressed that reconciliation is essential to creating a durable peace. This does not rule out penalties for crimes, he said, but it means people should forgive the perpetrators in their hearts.

"When such forgiveness is lacking, wounds continue to fester, fuelling in the

**"When so many of our brothers and sisters are suffering, we cannot remain indifferent!"**

younger generation endless resentment, producing a desire for revenge and causing fresh destruction," the pope said. "Offering and accepting forgiveness is the essential condition for making the journey toward authentic and lasting peace."

Forgiveness "can seem contrary to human logic," he continued. "But forgiveness is inspired by the logic of love, that love which God has for every man and woman, for every people and nation, and for the whole human family."

The pope noted that recent advances in agriculture, technology and other industries have made possible the expansion of human knowledge and brought hope and a higher standard of living to millions of people.

He warned, however, that materialism and "a growing contempt for human life" threaten morality and solidarity.

Discrimination, poverty and war have forced many people to the margins of society, the pope said.

"Faced with situations like these, involving real human tragedies, some people prefer simply to close their eyes, taking refuge in indifference," he noted. "Theirs is the attitude of Cain: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'"

"But the church has the duty to remind everyone of God's severe admonishment: 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground!'"

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