

WORLD & NATION

Pope calls for forgiveness to heal enmity in Bosnia

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — In an intense, historic visit to war-shattered Sarajevo, Pope John Paul II beseeched rival ethnic groups to find forgiveness in their hearts and a peace that is deeper than political accords.

"The time has come to resume a sincere dialogue of brotherhood, accepting and offering forgiveness. The time has come to overcome the hatred and vengeance which still hinder the re-establishment of genuine peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said April 13 at a meeting with Muslim representatives.

It was a message the pope emphasized over and over in talks to civil and religious leaders and to his own flock. He began the visit April 12 with the cry, "Never again war! Never again hatred and intolerance!" and repeated it before departing the city's shell-pocked airport 25 hours later.

Unprecedented security by Bosnian and international forces may have prevented a disaster. A few hours before the pope arrived, police discovered and deactivated 23 mines and a radio-commanded detonator under a bridge along the papal motorcade route.

That prompted security officials to board the papal plane after it touched down and advise the pope to enter the city by helicopter. But the pontiff decided to ride down "Sniper's Alley" in his popemobile, as planned, so people could see him.

In the end, the visit went off without incident, and Sarajevo residents and those who had come from across the country greeted

the pope warmly. Many said they would not forget his appeals for Sarajevo during the three-year siege of the Bosnian capital.

A 20-year-old Muslim woman who waited outside the cathedral to glimpse the pope, a short distance from where her grandparents were killed by a grenade during the war, said, "I'm here because the pope is a great guy. He is generous and a great humanist."

The highlight of the visit was an outdoor Mass in Sarajevo's sports stadium, celebrated amid snow squalls and a bitter wind that threatened to blow away the papal altar cloth. The pope finished the Mass as an aide held an umbrella against the driving snow.

Few, if any, of the 50,000 in attendance left early, however. They heard the pope deliver an impassioned appeal that linked national reconciliation with the roots of Christianity.

"The peace that Jesus gives to his disciples is not the peace imposed by conquerors on the conquered, by the stronger on the weaker. It does not receive its legitimacy by force of arms but, on the contrary, is born of love," he said in a sermon.

"Let us forgive and ask for forgiveness," he said. "We cannot fail to take the difficult but necessary pilgrimage of forgiveness, which leads to a profound reconciliation."

The pontiff recalled the many dead of Sarajevo and Bosnia, mourned by mothers, widows and orphaned children. The Mass site was bordered on three sides by cemeteries, where thousands of new, white crosses marked the war's toll.

The pope never explicitly mentioned the Dayton peace accords, which in the view of



Pope John Paul II waves from his popemobile as he arrives for an outdoor Mass at Sarajevo's Kosevo stadium April 13. CNS/Reuters

many Bosnians stopped the fighting but effectively sanctioned the results of ethnic cleansing policies. Instead he urged a careful rebuilding of peace through "the patience of small steps" and the rejection of "unbridled nationalism, the cause of so much sorrow."

Many in the Mass crowd waved Croatian flags, reflecting the fact that most of Bosnia's Catholics are ethnic Croats.

In meetings with representatives of Bosnia's Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish communities, the pope aimed to encourage a spirit of interreligious cooperation that seemed to flicker on and off during recent years. Even for the pontiff, however, the religious leaders did not get together at the same event: Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan Nikolaj of Dabar, Bosnia, citing travel plans, notified the Vatican two days beforehand that he would have to meet the pontiff separately.

When they did meet, the two embraced warmly and the pope asked about losses to the Orthodox community during the fighting. The metropolitan said his community was shrinking, and he spoke sadly of an increase in suicides among the elderly.

In a prepared speech the pope urged Catholics and Orthodox to "join forces" and offer an example of reconciliation to the international community. Both churches, he said, are well aware that real peace starts with faith and "cannot be given by the world."

To Muslim leaders, he stressed that a true peace is an "active peace which enables people to live and work together."

The point is an important one in Sarajevo, where Catholic leaders have increasingly complained of "Muslimization" of the local culture and their own marginalization in jobs, housing and education.

CALENDAR

All Diocesan

Social Activities

■ **SUN, APR. 20** — Award banquet: Catholic Committee on Scouting; Burgundy Basin Inn, 1361 Marsh Rd., Pittsford; 4 p.m. social hour, 5 p.m. banquet; Bishop Matthew H. Clark, presenter; \$20 per person; for information, call 716/473-4782.

Chemung Schuyler

Religious Activities

■ **SUN, APR. 20** — Memorial service: at Monument to the Unborn, Ss. Peter & Paul Cemetery, Franklin St., Elmira; 3 p.m.; conducted by Elmira Knights of Columbus; rain date is Apr. 27.

Social Activities

■ **SAT, APR. 26** — Dance: '50s, '60s, '70s; Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Center, 1100 W. First St., Elmira; 6 p.m.-midnight; \$10/person; 21 years or

older; for tickets call 607/732-6261 or 607/732-5816.

Monroe County

Meetings

■ **WED, APR. 23** — Informational night: to explain annualments; St. Helen's Church, 310 Hinchey Rd., Gates; 7-8:30 p.m.

Religious Activities

■ **APR. 21-24** — Parish retreat: St. Leo Church, 167 Lake Ave., Hilton; 7 p.m.; Fr. Tony Mugavero, who will also give introductory talk at all Masses Apr. 19 and 20; all are welcome.

■ **TUE, APR. 22** — Course: "Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior"; St. Thomas the Apostle School, 4536 St. Paul Blvd., Rochester; 7-9 p.m.; \$3 per session; 6 weeks; on approaching millennium; for more information, call David, 716/342-1901; for similar Thu. morning offering in Pittsford, call Ann, 716/381-8577.

■ **WED, APR. 23** — Ad-

vance ticket deadline: for the Spirituality Faire; St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St., Pittsford and Church of the Transfiguration, 50 W. Bloomfield Rd., Pittsford; 6:30 p.m.; Sun. Apr. 27 at St. Louis; Mon. Apr. 28 at Transfiguration; \$7.50 at the door, \$5 in advance; for tickets or more information call 716/586-5675.

■ **THU, APR. 24** — Presentation: St. Bernard's on the Road; "Prayer for Busy People"; Holy Ghost Church, 220 Coldwater Rd., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; Alice Miller-Nation, presenter; \$3.

Social Activities

■ **APR. 18-20** — Play: "It's Cool in the Furnace"; Holy Name of Jesus Parish Center, 15 St. Martins Way, Rochester; 8 p.m. Fri./Sat., 2:30 p.m. Sun.; \$4; call 716/663-1531.

Workshops

■ **APR. 21-May 27** — Seminar: "Discovering New Life"; Guardian Angels Church; 2061 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester; Mondays 7:30-9:30 p.m.

■ **TUE, APR. 22** — Program: "The Joys & Struggles

of Parenting Kids with ADD and Learning Disabilities"; Good Shepherd School Library, 3318 E. Henrietta Rd., Henrietta; 7 p.m.; with Sr. Diana Dolce; free.

Seneca Cayuga

Fundraisers

■ **SAT, APR. 19** — Indoor yard sale: St. Patrick Parish, 81 W. Bayard St., Seneca Falls; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; bake sale; car wash; continental breakfast; lunch 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Steuben County

Fundraisers

■ **SAT, APR. 19** — Reverse draw: to benefit St. Joseph's School, 209 Fremont St., Wayland; 7 p.m.; to order a ticket or for more information call the rectory, 716/728-2228.

Tompkin Tioga

Religious Activities

■ **APR. 18-19** — Worship service: "The River is Here"; with Jim Cowan, composer and musician; Immaculate Conception Church, 113 N. Geneva St., Ithaca; 7 p.m.; for more information call 607/273-6121.

Yates Ontario Wayne

Social Activities

■ **SUN, APR. 20** — Liturgical Dance Troupe; Rochester's Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word; Geneva Church Women United; St. Stephen's Church, Pulteney St., Geneva; 3 p.m.; \$5 per person, \$2, students, \$10, family; tickets available from CWU, 47 High St., Geneva, or at the door.

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