

# WORLD & NATION

## Pontiff prays for victims of Holocaust, all violence

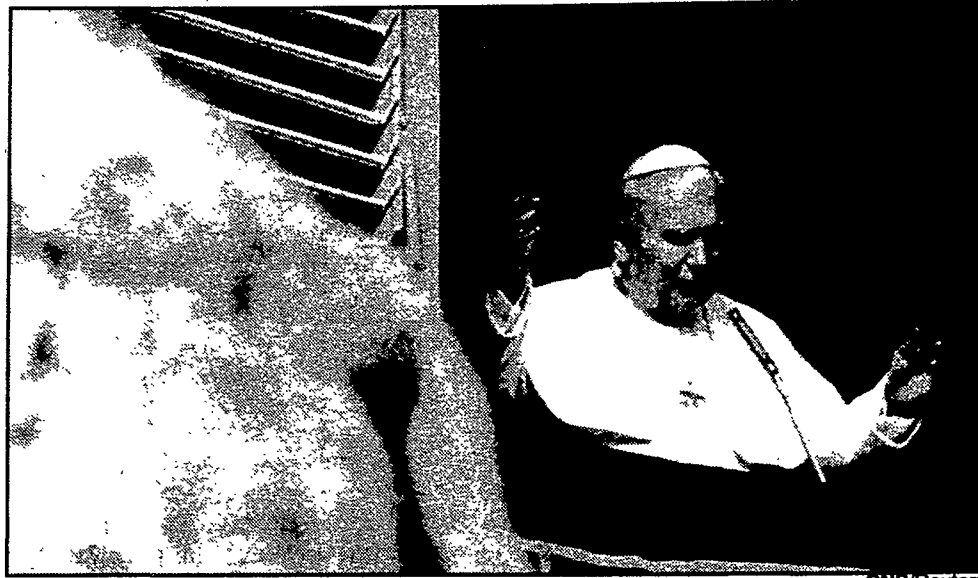
By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Remembering all the saints and all the deceased at the beginning of November, Pope John Paul II offered special prayers for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust, violence and disasters.

"I go in spiritual pilgrimage particularly to the places where the victims of violence and war, injustice and hunger are buried," the pope said during his midday Angelus address Nov. 2, the feast of All Souls.

"May Jesus, who said, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' grant to all the deceased the repose of the just and the fullness of eternal life," he prayed.

Speaking in Polish, the 77-year-old pope personalized his prayers, saying that on the feast day his thoughts turn to the cemeteries in his homeland, "to Auschwitz and the other concentration camps (and) to the Rakowicki cemetery in Krakow, where my parents rest. I entrust all of these deceased to God with



Pope John Paul II addresses pilgrims from a window overlooking St. Peter's Square on All Souls' Day Nov. 2. The pope recalled those who were killed in the Auschwitz death camp in his native Poland during the Holocaust.

my warmest prayers."

On Nov. 1, the feast of All Saints, Pope John Paul made his customary visit to

the underground grotto of St. Peter's Basilica to pray at the graves of the popes and other faithful buried there.

"Celebrating all the saints and commemorating all the faithful departed, the pilgrim church on earth lives and expresses in its liturgy the spiritual bond which unites it to the heavenly church," the pope told a crowd in St. Peter's Square Nov. 1.

The unity of Christ's body — the faithful who have been baptized into new life — is not broken by death, the pope said.

"How consoling it is to think that our dearly departed are in the company of Mary, the Apostles, the martyrs, the confessors of the faith, the virgins and all the saints in paradise," he said.

Continuing his explanation of "the communion of saints" during his Nov. 2 Angelus address, the pope said, "Death is not the last word about human destiny, because we are destined for a life without limits, accomplished in God."

Because life does not end with death, the Catholic Church encourages its members to visit cemeteries, care for graves and pray for the dead, giving witness to "trusting hope, even in the pain of separation from their dear ones."

## Pope John Paul II condemns all forms of anti-Semitism

By Lynne Weil  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II told participants in a Vatican symposium that hatred of Jews and Judaism is against God's will and the church's intent.

The pontiff addressed the 60 members of the group, composed mostly of Catholic theologians, on the second day of their Oct. 30-Nov. 1 colloquium titled, "The Roots of Anti-Judaism in the Christian Milieu."

The gathering was intended to review the elements of Christian teaching from the last 2,000 years that might have contributed to dislike for Judaism.

Pope John Paul pointed to several parts of the Old and New Testaments in which Jews are referred to as chosen as a people by God, and in which the descendants of

the first Jewish people enjoy God's irrevocable love.

Jews' existence "is therefore not purely a fact of nature or of culture," the pontiff said.

"It is a supernatural fact," he said. "This people perseveres despite everything because it is the people of the Covenant and, in spite of the infidelities of humankind, Yahweh is faithful to his Covenant."

The pope noted that the New Testament would be "empty of its sense" without reference to the Old Testament, and that any understanding of Jesus which omits the influence on him of his Jewish upbringing would be a "misunderstanding of the sense of the history of salvation."

Such an omission would make an authentic conception of the story of Jesus' resurrection impossible, Pope John Paul

said.

The pontiff also said the misguided understanding of Christian teachings concerning Judaism was one of the enabling factors of the Holocaust, in that many Christians lacked the will to stop it.

Pope John Paul said that "in the Christian world" there had been "erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament" where it speaks of Jews and "their alleged culpability." These interpretations, "contributed to lulling consciences," so that "the spiritual resistance of many was not what humanity had the right to expect on the part of disciples of Christ" when the Nazis persecuted Jews before and during World War II.

The pope also noted that there were Christians who did try to aid the Nazis' victims, often at the risk of their own lives.

Pope John Paul said, "The church firm-

ly condemns all forms of genocide, as well as the racist theories which they have inspired and which are supposed to justify (genocide).

"Racism is a negation of the profoundest identity of the human being, who is a person created in the image of God," the pope added.

He said it was necessary to review these matters in order to give meaning to the "purification of memory."

Pope John Paul has used the same phrase to describe the examination of conscience to which he has summoned the church in anticipation of its commemorations of the year 2000.

The pontiff told the symposium participants that their work would help "clearly show that anti-Semitism is without any justification and is absolutely to be condemned."

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