

WORLD & NATION

Pope celebrates 20th anniversary

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — After a week of tributes, Pope John Paul II celebrated the 20th anniversary of his election with a Mass of thanksgiving and an emotional meeting with his Polish compatriots.

Joined by 70,000 people at a liturgy in St. Peter's Square Oct. 18, the pope delivered a soul-searching sermon, asking whether he had truly done all he could to teach and guide the faithful over the last 20 years.

He asked the world's Catholics to pray so that "this pope can carry out his mission to the very end." After the Mass, he brushed aside a tear as he kissed some 40 Roman schoolchildren who lined up to whisper their congratulations into his ear.

On Oct. 16, the date of his election in 1978, the pontiff officially took the day off but appeared at an audience with Poles on pilgrimage to the Vatican.

Visibly moved, he told them that he had felt their prayers through "every hour and every day along the path of my papal ministry." He said events in their homeland had always held a profound place in his heart.

Among those cheering the pope was Warsaw Cardinal Jozef Glemp, who said in an interview with the Rome newspaper *La Repubblica* that Pope John Paul had considered resigning in 1981 to return to Poland and help fight communism.

Asked to verify rumors that pope had told the Kremlin he would leave the papacy and return home if Soviet troops invaded Poland, Cardinal Glemp answered: "Yes. This was a hypothesis that had much foundation in some moments. ... He was ready to do anything, even leave the leadership of the church in order to defend the freedom of his country." He said the pope's determination was



Pope John Paul II watches children waving colorful flags at a Mass marking his first 20 years as pontiff Oct. 18. About 70,000 people celebrated the pope's anniversary in St. Peter's Square.

Reuters/CNS

one reason why there was no invasion.

The pope marked his pontificate's anniversary by issuing his 13th encyclical, "Faith and Reason," a 35,000-word treatise on the difficult modern relationship between absolute truths and philosophical reason. The product of 12 years of work, it reflected the pope's concern about increasing skepticism and indifference toward traditional religious values.

"Woe to humanity which loses the sense of truth, the courage to seek it and the faith to find it," he said at a blessing Oct. 18.

At the commemorative Mass the same day, the pope spoke about the primary duty of a pope to teach. In an unusually personal series of statements, he asked

whether he had done enough.

"After 20 years of service on Peter's chair, I cannot help but ask myself some questions today," he said.

"Have you been a diligent and vigilant teacher of the faith in the church? Have you tried to bring the great work of the Second Vatican Council closer to the people of today? Have you tried to satisfy the expectations of the church's faithful, and also the hunger for truth that is felt in the world outside the church?" he said.

In response, he recalled the injunction of St. Paul to "announce the word."

"This is my task, to do everything possible so that the Son of Man, when he comes, may find the faith on this earth," he said.

Group urges altered papacy

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — An international network of more than 140 groups of Catholics seeking changes in the church has called for a more consultative, collaborative leadership style in the next papacy.

In a statement sent to all the world's cardinals, the International Movement We Are Church, its national branches and similar groups said the church needs a pope who "calls forth a genuine public dialogue on the theologies, moral teaching and policies in the church."

Their statement was titled "A Pope for the Time to Come: Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor."

They asked for a pope who "encourages academic freedom for theologians and other scholars in order to foster a healthy diversity of opinions in the church."

They called for "a collaborator with a sense of history who is willing to restore the tradition of full participation of the people in church and who invites all Catholics to share governance and decision-making, including the election of church leaders."

Loretta Sister Maureen Fiedler, coordinator of Catholics Speak Out and U.S. spokeswoman for the network, claimed the 140-plus groups that signed the statement have a combined membership of more than 160,000 in 27 countries. She is tentatively scheduled to speak at Rochester's Corpus Christi Church, 864 Main St. E., Sunday, Oct. 25.

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