

WORLD & NATION

Pontiff issues words of comfort to Yugoslavs

By Lynne Weil
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II issued a message of consolation for all who have suffered in Yugoslavia, placing special emphasis on the plight of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

The pope's April 19 letter, addressed to the Yugoslav bishops' conference president, Archbishop Franc Perko of Belgrade, was released at the Vatican April 20. It said the entire church was "closer to you than ever before," and included a renewed appeal for peace achieved through dialogue rather than violence.

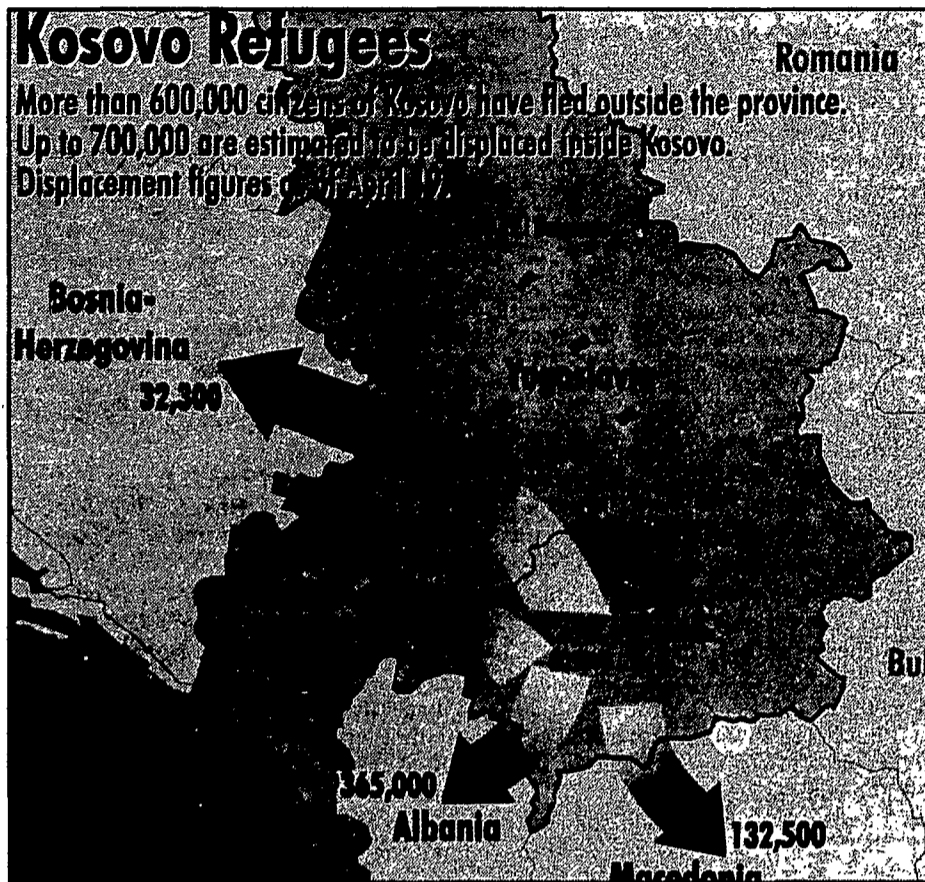
Pope John Paul said he had been hearing "with profound pain" of "the daily worsening of the tragic humanitarian situation in the various regions of Yugoslavia, and above all, in Kosovo."

The pontiff said he felt "particularly near to the pastors and to the faithful of the Catholic community, as well as to all men of good will who try to help those who are suffering more at the present hour, because they are deprived of the affection of their own loved ones."

The pope noted that people in the region were being "forced from their homes and unjustly constrained to live far from their own soil."

The Holy See was continuing its diplomatic efforts to bring peace to the region, Pope John Paul said, "so that these peoples, and in particular those of Kosovo, can be spared more suffering."

The pope reminded Yugoslav authorities



and international leaders "that the way of dialogue is always possible, and that this way can always lead to the finding of honorable solutions among the parties (involved), in respect for the men and women of the same soil, all of them the children of the same Father who is in heaven."

Kosovo, about 90 percent ethnic Albanian, is in the southern portion of Serbia, the larger of Yugoslavia's two republics.

An initially peaceful movement for autonomy in the region led to armed conflict with Serb-led troops in which hundreds were killed in 1998, intensifying ethnic Al-

banian calls for independence and fueling local support for guerrillas.

Meanwhile, a Vatican envoy called for additional international means of caring for refugees from crises worldwide and for political measures that could prevent such crises in the first place.

The Holy See's representative to U.N. agencies in Geneva, Archbishop Giuseppe Bertello, said at an April 16 special session on human rights that in the case of Kosovo, "one must speak of 'deportation' more than the movements of populations because people are obligated to abandon their homes and their villages under the threat of weapons."

He drew a parallel between Kosovo's situation and that of Central African countries, where recent conflicts have caused mass refugee displacement.

The archbishop urged the development of "sure and adequate structures" for welcoming refugees from any crisis.

"There is a common element to these movements of populations," the archbishop said, "massive violations of the most fundamental rights of man."

He added that another common factor was "the methods used to maintain power by dictatorial regimes, which stifle with violence any (popular) attempt at self-organization and participation in societies."

"These situations demand an extraordinary, multifaceted effort at solidarity on the part of the international community, which cannot consider its work achieved as soon as the urgent situation is ended and the television images have faded."

Armed men raid Guatemala human rights director's home

GUATEMALA CITY (CNS) — Armed men raided the house of the director of the archdiocesan human rights office, 10 days before the first anniversary of the murder of Auxiliary Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera of Guatemala City.

Ronalth Ochaeta Argueta, director of the human rights office, told reporters that he was not home when the men entered his residence around 9 a.m. April 16, tied up the housekeeper and searched the premises, located in the suburb of Mixco, just west of Guatemala City.

Ochaeta said the intruders threatened

his 4-year-old son and the housekeeper with a pistol. After searching through his personal effects, the gang left in the house a box containing a rock and a piece of concrete, similar to the material used last year to club to death Bishop Gerardi, he added.

Talking to reporters just hours after the incident, Ochaeta blamed "those who want to impede our investigations into the Gerardi killing."

"We're getting close to solving the crime and they don't want the truth to come out," he added.

The raid on Ochaeta's house came as the

church was preparing to commemorate the first anniversary of Bishop Gerardi's murder. Bishop Gerardi coordinated the activities of the human rights office.

Ochaeta and other church officials have been vocal in their criticism of the official investigations into Bishop Gerardi's murder, which occurred April 26, 1998, just two days after the human rights office presented a report on abuses during the civil war.

The church has been adamant that the killing was a reprisal by groups within the army for the report's findings.

Earlier in April, two army officers ap-

peared before the investigating judge in an unprecedented step in the case, to explain their presence at the scene of the crime. A key witness also identified a military vehicle in the zone around the time of the murder.

Auxiliary Bishop Mario Rios Montt, Bishop Gerardi's successor at the archdiocesan human rights office, said April 16 that the raid on Ochaeta's house "worries us that these types of incidents are continuing, against people related to the field of human rights and, especially, the church." He said that other church leaders had received threats during the past year.

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580) Vol. 110 No. 28, April 22, 1999
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Congratulations
from
WESLEY CONSTRUCTION
7340 Victor-Mendon Road
716-924-8200

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW

Thomas A. Rohr

100 Executive Office Bldg.
36 Main St. West • Rochester, NY 14614

- 29 Years Experience
- Past Hearing Examiner, Monroe County Family Court
- Competitive fees, compassionate service
- House calls available

Tel 716 232 6211 • Fax 716 232 3653

St. Ann's Home Connection



ST. ANN'S
ADULT DAY SERVICES
Full of Life

Home Connection offers older adults and persons with disabilities the best of both worlds. It enables them the opportunity to live at home while spending the day at St. Ann's.

Our services include:

- Personal care and bathing
- Hot meals and nutritional counseling
- Physical, occupational and speech therapies
- Skilled nursing and health monitoring
- Social work counseling and case management
- Podiatry and dental hygiene
- Religious & educational activities
- Social activities & field trips
- Transportation
- Individual & group exercise programs

We will also arrange special services like medical transportation, mental health referrals, lab & diagnostic tests, and appointments to St. Ann's beauty salon/barber shop, and visits to the P"Ann"try store.



If you would like more information call
St. Ann's Home Connection,
at 342-1700, ext. 440.

St. Ann's Home Connection

This coupon entitles you to one FREE day including lunch (A \$97 value)

limit one coupon per family

342-1700 ext. 440

introductory offer