

WORLD & NATION

Shooting

Continued from page 1

news of the terrible tragedy which has caused many deaths and injuries at a school near Denver, and he asks you to convey to the families and school community the assurance of his prayerful closeness at this very difficult time," said Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state, in a telegram to Archbishop Chaput.

The telegram also expressed Pope John Paul's "earnest hope that American society as a whole will react to this latest act of violence among the young by committing itself to promoting and transmitting the moral vision and the values which alone can ensure respect for the inviolable dignity of human life."

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Domestic Policy Committee, expressed similar sentiments in an April 22 statement titled "Our Hearts Cry: Not Again!"

"This violence that haunts our nation reflects the breakdown of family and community life, the absence of spiritual roots, the loss of respect for life, the pervasiveness of violent images from the media, and the easy accessibility of guns and other weapons," he said. But, he noted, Americans can turn away from this culture "toward life: a culture of life to shape how we treat one another, how we live together, and the messages that we send to our young people."

In his homily at a Mass to remember the Littleton victims at St. James Cathedral in Seattle, Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett said that although the shootings raise "a thousand questions," answers can be found in Christ, "whose love and example set the standard for who we are and what we want our lives to be."



Greg Benenati/Photo Intern

Sister Ellen Galvin, SSJ, prays beside Ira Current on Sunday, April 25, at St. Thomas More Church in Brighton during a memorial service for those killed April 20 in Littleton, Colo. Approximately 500 people attended the Brighton service, one of many held around the nation.

"As members of the Catholic community, I ask you to stand with me in affirming the dignity of human life and the futility of hostility," he added. "Looking to the teachings of Jesus and drawing upon our rich Catholic heritage, I believe that our faith and our individual lives can make a difference in the struggle to build a better community."

More than 70,000 people filled a parking lot in Littleton April 25 for a memorial service honoring all the victims. Mourners included Vice President Al Gore, retired Gen. Colin Powell, Colorado Gov. Bill Owens, Archbishop Chaput and other political and religious leaders.

"Surely the past week is about as much

suffering as any community can bear," the archbishop said. "Love is stronger than death. I believe that. Perhaps beyond all this suffering, something good can be achieved."

Earlier in the week, thousands gathered at Civic Center Park in Denver for an interfaith prayer service mourning the Columbine victims.

"The killing at Columbine High School touched, in a shocking way, the hearts and minds of the people of this country and around the world," said Mohammed Jodeh, a representative of the Islamic community.

Those who survived the massacre at Columbine High School said their lives will never be the same. "The innocence is

just gone right now," said Michelle DiManna, a 28-year-old math teacher and St. Frances Cabrini parishioner.

"Columbine's been my life," added DiManna, who graduated from Columbine and met her husband at the school. "Now, all the innocence and stuff at Columbine, you know, high school and thinking about homecomings and all that stuff, it's gone."

Columbine's 1,800 students were to return to classes at Chatfield High School, located a few miles south on April 29, the day of the last scheduled funeral.

But the tragedy was not without its miracles. Val Schnurr, an 18-year-old Columbine senior and St. Frances parishioner, was hit by a shotgun blast at point-blank range and, as her assailant stood over her, began to pray.

"Do you believe in God?" he asked.

Without hesitation, Schnurr replied, "Yes, I do."

As the young man reloaded his weapon, Schnurr prepared to die. But the gunman became distracted and left without shooting her again. The shotgun blast and pieces of shrapnel from the explosion of a pipe bomb near her missed all of Schnurr's vital organs. She was expected to be released April 26 or 27 from Swedish Medical Center in Denver.

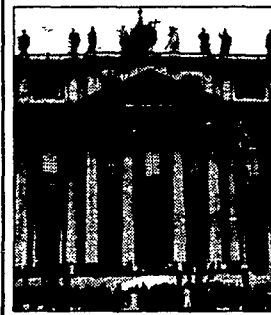
Pontiff weighs beatifying Pope John XXIII in 2000

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II could beatify Pope John XXIII as early as next year, said the promoter of the late pontiff's cause for beatification and canonization.

A beatification in 2000 became a possibility April 22 when medical consultants to the Congregation for Sainthood Causes said there was no scientific explanation for the healing of a nun who prayed for the late pope's intercession.

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