



Arturo Mari/CNS

Pope looks out over the Jordan valley from Mount Nebo March 20. The pope recounted how Moses led his people for 40 years through the desert before reaching the mountain, where he died before he could reach the Promised Land.

Pope seeks peace as pilgrim

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

JERUSALEM - Pope John Paul II reached Israel March 21, realizing a dream that frail health, interreligious squabbles and political tensions could not stop.

Arriving at the airport in Tel Aviv, the 79-year-old pope briefly acknowledged the sensitive issues surrounding his visit, but said he came as a pilgrim, "in a spirit of humble gratitude and hope, to the origins of our religious history."

His seven-day pilgrimage to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, he said, was "a tribute to the three religious traditions which co-exist in this land" - Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

After kissing Israeli soil held up to him in a bowl, the pope said, "I pray that my visit will serve to encourage an increase of interreligious dialogue."

Pope John Paul said the teaching of the three religions should give all their members "the motivation and the perseverance to work for the peace and justice which the peoples of the Holy Land do not yet have and for which they yearn so deeply."

The pope's arrival in Israel coincided with the opening in the United States of a new round of peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, and amid increasing signs that Israel and Syria would restart direct talks about the Golan Heights, territory Israel captured in 1967.

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The work of Cardinal O'Connor

In 1995, Cardinal John O'Connor submitted his resignation, as canon law requires of cardinals and bishops who have reached their 75th birthdays.

Five years later, Pope John Paul II still has not accepted Cardinal O'Connor's resignation or named a successor.

The 80-year-old cardinal, noticeably weakened following surgery last August to remove a brain tumor, has cut back substantially on his public appearances. It is widely speculated that a new archbishop of New York will be named in the very near future, even though that hasn't occurred within the time frame the cardinal himself offered earlier this year.

"My guess would be ... that it would be February, March, somewhere in there, that we would finally have the installation of a new (arch)bishop," Cardinal O'Connor was quoted as saying in the Jan. 20 edition of *Catholic New York*, his archdiocesan newspaper. Cardinal O'Connor added that he did not know who the next archbishop will be.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark was among those who attended the cardinal's Jan. 15 birthday festivities in New York City. In his Jan. 20 "Along the Way" column in the *Catholic Courier*, Bishop Clark observed that the cardinal does not relish the idea of retirement.

"He has so loved his years of ministry and so focused his energies on it that the prospect of retirement cannot be one that fills him with elation. He as much as said that to the assembly," Bishop Clark wrote.

In recent weeks, Cardinal O'Connor has only sporadically attended Sunday Masses at St. Patrick's Cathedral where he formerly presided on nearly a weekly basis. He was on hand for the March 5 liturgy, but was too ill to be present March 12 and 19.

As Cardinal O'Connor's retirement apparently grows closer, the accolades have come pouring in. Most notably, President Bill Clinton signed legislation in early March to give Cardinal O'Connor the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor awarded by Congress. The House of Representatives voted 410-1 in February to give the medal to Cardinal O'Connor.

Cardinal O'Connor earned such accolades through his hard work and uncompromising viewpoints during his 16 years as New York's archbishop. He also spent 27 years as a Navy chaplain; was named



Catholic New York

John Cardinal O'Connor

- Born Jan. 15, 1920, in Philadelphia
- Ordained Dec. 15, 1945
- Consecrated as auxiliary bishop to the military vicar, May 27, 1979
- Installed as bishop of Scranton, Pa., June 29, 1983
- Installed as archbishop of New York, May 19, 1984
- Ordained a cardinal priest, May 25, 1985
- Celebrated 80th birthday Jan. 15, 2000

auxiliary bishop to the military vicar in 1979; and was bishop of Scranton, Pa., in 1983 and 1984 before becoming an archbishop.

Such recognition is deeply deserved, said Syracuse Bishop James M. Moynihan, a native priest of the Rochester Diocese.

"Recently there have been a lot tributes paid, and they've certainly been more deserved than any of the tribute-payers could possibly imagine," Bishop Moynihan remarked. The Syracuse bishop worked with the cardinal from 1991 to 1995 as associate general secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association of which Cardinal O'Connor is president.

Tireless, unflinching

As archbishop of New York, Cardinal O'Connor presides over an ecclesiastical province comprising Rochester and six other New York dioceses as well as his own archdiocese. Canon 436 in the Code of Canon Law states that in his relationship to the dioceses in his province an arch-

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