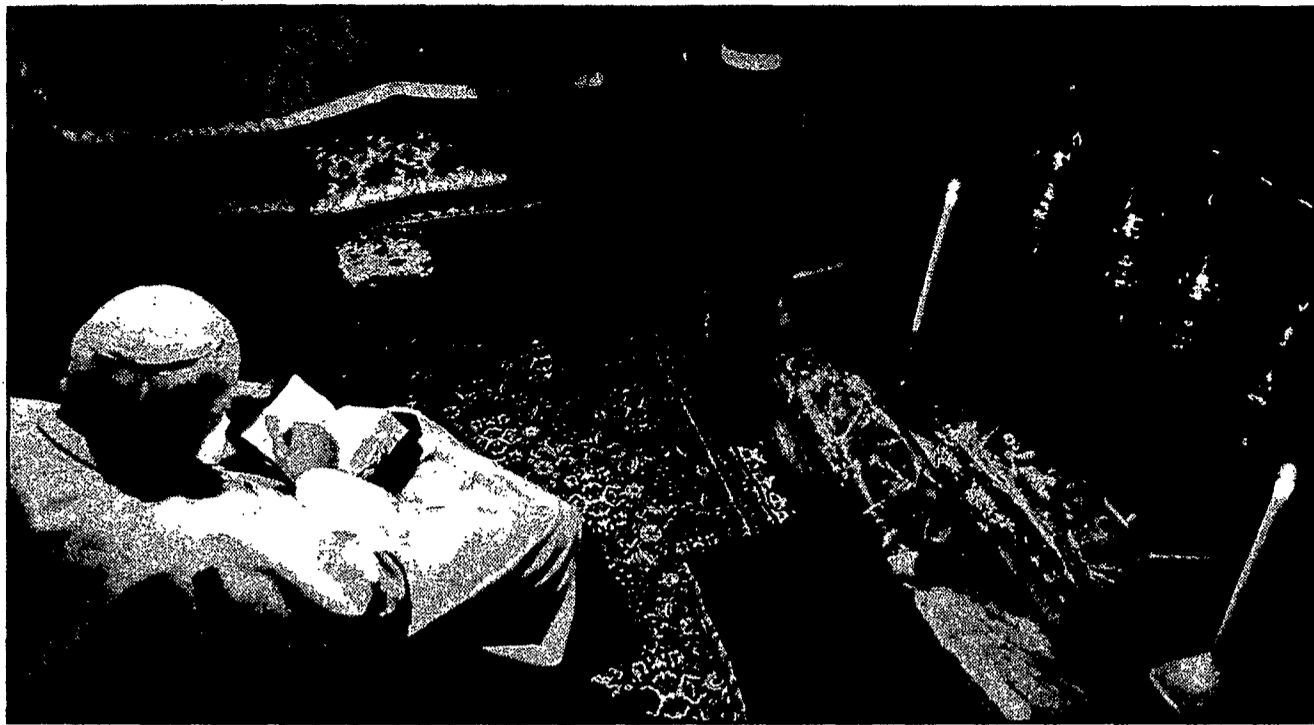


## CONTINUED...



Arturo Mari/CNS

Pope John Paul II reads his breviary at the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem March 22. The pope prayed there for 20 minutes, emphasizing his role as pilgrim in the Holy Land.

## Continued from previous page

But the squabbles paled next to the beautiful form the pilgrimage assumed, as the pope moved from places of the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the Old Law of the Ten Commandments to the New Law of the Beatitudes, and along the path of suffering and salvation walked by Jesus, from the manger in Bethlehem to the tomb in Jerusalem.

Although each of his audiences viewed the pope through a different lens, they all appeared to appreciate that this man was truly on a religious pilgrimage and seemed to receive new energy from each stop. The pope, who knelt for long periods at the holy places, hunched over in silent prayer, became more fascinating as the trip went on.

He made connections even where they were problematic.

In Bethlehem, a Muslim call to prayer interrupted the papal Mass. The pope waited patiently — the picture of religious tolerance — and had his aides point out that the muezzin's call had been abbreviated out of respect for the pontiff.

Speaking to ecumenical leaders in Jerusalem, the pope spoke so movingly that his host, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros, added a spontaneous message thanking the pope "from the bottom of our hearts" at the end of the ceremony.

At Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Holocaust memorial where spiraling smoke from an eternal flame hauntingly evokes the deaths of Jews in the extermination camps, the pope met with Polish survivors. They included one woman who said that in 1945 the future pontiff had personally carried her out of a prison camp and given her food and drink.

The story, which the pope says is "pos-

sible" but which he does not specifically recall, was discussed at length on Israeli TV and seemed to introduce a significant new side of the pontiff to Israeli Jews.

At the Western Wall, the pope amazed Jews by leaving his own written prayer in a crack of the stones, like Jews have done for centuries. It prompted one rabbi to remark, "He touched the wall and the wall touched him."

In the end, the pope managed to bring a week of good will and good news to a region sorely in need of both. On the plane carrying him back to Rome, his spokesman, Navarro-Valls, was asked how the pope managed to navigate the Holy

Land's political minefields without any major explosions.

"The key thing, I think, was that the pope told the truth to everyone, but without humiliating anyone. He spoke in charity ... and people respected that," Navarro-Valls said.

That was no small accomplishment in today's Holy Land.



Reuters/CNS

A Palestinian refugee boy holds the Palestinian flag and key as Pope John Paul II addresses a gathering at the Dehlyshe camp outside Bethlehem March 22.

## Catholic mea culpa draws mostly praise from leaders in diocese

By Rob Callivan  
Staff Writer

Pope John Paul II and other church leaders received a generally favorable reaction from religious leaders in the Diocese of Rochester for apologizing for the church's sins in an extraordinary liturgy at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy, March 12.

During the liturgy, the pope and other Vatican officials expressed regret for sins against women, Jews, non-Catholic Christians and other religious believers. Rabbi Laurence Kotok, senior rabbi at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Brighton, said the apology was a welcome moment in interfaith relations.

"I'm very pleased and thankful for his words," said the rabbi, who has participated in interfaith discussions at the Vatican with Jewish and Catholic leaders. "Now, the real challenge is to move beyond the words and to translate them into acts of serious commitment and con-

trition."

Some Jewish leaders have criticized the pope for not specifically apologizing for the church's controversial role during the Holocaust, a period during which many Jewish leaders believe the church could have done more to oppose Nazism but didn't. Rabbi Kotok offered a mixed opinion on this subject, noting that the pope's apology should be seen as one of many steps to come in the road toward reconciliation between Jews and Catholics. However, he added that he understood why some Jewish leaders wanted to hear more than they heard.

"You just can't move forward without a level of trust," he said. "There's facts on the ground. They cannot be ignored. They're just too painful."

In a parallel manner, Sister Edna Slyck, RSM, pastoral minister at Immaculate Conception Church in Ithaca, said the pope could have said more about those he addressed, including women. Sister Slyck was recently appointed to the Diocesan

Women's Commission.

"I sense the pope's desire to reconcile with women and all the issues stated," she said. "However, I wonder if he lacks support from the people closest to him... (so) he does not go farther. To me, they are more concerned about what their followers think than the issues at hand."

Deacon Brian McNulty of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward in Rochester pointed out that one of the issues at hand was the pope's call for more mutual love among Christians of different denominations and humans of all creeds and colors. Former director of the Diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Deacon McNulty based his comments on the Vatican document released before the pope's apology that gave the apology its context: "Memory and Reconciliation."

"In the past we have not always treated people from different cultures or beliefs with mutual love," the deacon said. "The result is painful and damaged mem-

ory. The only way to repair this damage is to acknowledge the past and to strive to create new memory with others that is more strongly based in mutual love."

Deacon McNulty added that the apology is valuable in that it sets an agenda for the church.

"(T)his call to repentance is also a call to reform the life of the church so that it will never again fall into such evil."

Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, director of the Islamic Center of Rochester, called the church's apology for the Crusades and the Inquisition "a positive step to be welcomed." However, the imam said, "Muslims do not hold present-day Christianity or Christians responsible for what took place 800 years ago."

Dr. Shafiq added that he hoped the pope's words would inspire a change in negative media images of Muslims as terrorists and fundamentalists.

"As a Muslim, I look forward to a new understanding between Christians and Muslims," he stated.

## Chaplain

Continued from page 1

Upon hearing that Father O'Brien had been passed over, Democrats accused House GOP leaders of an anti-Catholic bias. They called for a release of all public records related to the chaplain selection process. But even the reams of paperwork could not swell the mounting political frenzy.

In the ensuing rancor, many Democrats refused to meet with Rev. Wright and seemed ready to vote against him when the issue came to a floor vote.

The vote, which was to have taken place in February, was postponed and

then ultimately done away with when Hastert used the speaker's prerogative to simply appoint a new chaplain.

The speaker of the House has always had the role of assigning the House chaplain, since 1789 when the position first began.

But last year, when Rev. Ford, a Lutheran, announced his retirement, Hastert chose to open up the selection process to a bipartisan committee. The committee, in turn, spent more than six months weeding through 38 nominations for the job.

Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-N.D., co-chairman of the selection committee, said March 23 on the House floor that he had a "deep sense of sorrow and regret that

a process that began so honorably by the speaker has ended in this fashion."

He also offered a resolution that future chaplains be voted on by the House.

In looking to quickly resolve the chaplain crisis, Hastert had recently turned to Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, asking for a list of priests who might qualify for the job.

In a statement, the cardinal said he was pleased that Father Coughlin had been chosen as chaplain, saying the priest has served the archdiocese well and is "one of our most deeply respected priests."

Father Coughlin, a Chicago native who was ordained in 1960, has served as the vicar for priests in Chicago for the past five years, assisting priests with their

spiritual, professional and personal needs. Prior to that position, he served as director of the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, Ill. His varied career highlights include service with missionaries in India and faculty work at North American College in Rome.

The priest's 85-year-old mother is reported to be an usher at Wrigley Field, the ballpark of the Chicago Cubs.

Immediately after he had been sworn in, Father Coughlin told a group of reporters that his role as chaplain was not political, "but to minister to the people."

He also had a quick comeback when asked if he knew he was walking into a lion's den by telling reporters, "My name is Daniel."