

WORLD & NATION

Italian couple now beatified

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — For the first time in the church's history, Pope John Paul II beatified a married couple and said their lives as spouses and as parents were models for all Christians.

At a joyous liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 21, the pope declared as "blessed" Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, a lawyer and homemaker who lived in Rome in the first part of the 20th century. They raised four children.

Three of the children still survive and attended the beatification ceremony; two are priests, and they concelebrated the Mass with the pope.

"The richness of faith and married love shown by Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi is a living demonstration of what the Second Vatican Council said about all the faithful being called to holiness," the pope said in a sermon.

They built their spiritual strength on simple practices like the daily Eucharist, devotion to Mary, praying the rosary and meetings with spiritual advisers, he said.

The pope praised the couple in particular for their openness to having children. In fact, Maria had her fourth child, Enrichetta, against the advice of doctors who had recommended an abortion because the mother's life was perceived as endangered by the pregnancy. The birth was difficult but the mother and child survived today.

The pope also praised their marriage. They met and had their first child in 1903, and their marriage was a model of love and sacrifice.

Many families in the world are tempted by the devil to think in particular ways and experience the devil's temptation. I am thinking of the illness and those who die young, the early death of a child, and the death of a parent.

In such situations too, one can find the witness of faithfulness to God.

Muslims question 'religious' schools

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Muslims in the United States point to schools in Pakistan that teach a radical fundamentalist approach to Islam as one source of anti-American and anti-Western attitudes fueling support for accused terrorist leader Osama bin Laden and the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan.

Traditional Islamic schools, known by their Arabic name of "madrasahs," have been cited by organizations such as Human Rights Watch as serving as major recruitment centers for the Taliban.

"This recruitment is performed openly," a recent Human Rights Watch report said. "Some Pakistani government officials have repeatedly admitted knowledge of the paramilitary activities of the religious schools."

Despite the Pakistani government's official "discomfort" with the practice, the report said, "significant numbers of recruits (from the schools), traveling in trucks and buses, regularly cross into Afghanistan from Pakistan in order to fight with the Taliban ... without any interference from Pakistani border officials."

Muslim leaders around the world have considered sending Islamic scholars to debate Taliban leaders about their fundamentalist type of Islam, said Azizah Al-Hibri, a University of Richmond, Va., law professor and founder of Karamah, a Muslim women's human rights organization.

"The problem is the Taliban is looked at (by many Muslim scholars) as not religious, but political," Al-Hibri said. "It's too hot to try to handle it religiously."

Islamic scholars in the United States and abroad have decried efforts by bin Laden and his supporters to justify terrorist attacks on the United States as righteous efforts to defend Islam. The scholars say Islam does not condone killing hostages or attacks on innocent civilians.

At an October press conference in Washington called to discuss stereotypes of Islam, Al-Hibri said Muslims in other parts of the world are recognizing that they need to begin addressing how young people in countries such as Pakistan are being educated in fundamentalist madrasahs.

In a November 2000 report, *Foreign Affairs Magazine* quoted Pakistan's interior minister, Moinuddin Haider, as saying "the brand of Islam they are teaching is not good for Pakistan. Some, in the garb of religious training, are busy fanning sectarian violence, poisoning peoples' minds."

The magazine noted that, increasingly, the madrasahs are financed by wealthy out-



Martin Lueders/CNS

Boys at a government high school in Zariab Colony, Peshawar, Pakistan, do military exercises. U.S. Muslim leaders say Afghanistan's ruling Taliban use the region's schools as training for new generations of fundamentalist followers.

siders, including individuals and organizations in Saudi Arabia and Iran, which limits the government's ability to supervise.

The result, according to the magazine and the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis of New Delhi, India, is that parents send their children to madrasahs thinking they will receive an education that emphasizes the Koran but includes other subjects.

Instead, some of the schools ignore math, science and other secular subjects, offering only religious instruction with a focus on the concept of "jihad" as an obligation to armed pursuit of justice. Most Muslims equate "jihad" primarily with an inner struggle to avoid evil in order to please God.

"I had handed over my son to the school so that he would learn the Koran, not the

handling of guns," the father of a 13-year-old in Karachi, Pakistan, was quoted as saying in a report of the Institute for Defense Studies. Without his parents' knowledge, the boy visited Afghanistan with other students from his madrasah.

The report said the boy came back insisting that he wished "to be martyred in jihad in Afghanistan."

In Washington, Al-Hibri said the answer to the use of madrasahs as recruiting programs for the Taliban is not to close down all religious schools — especially when there are few state-run alternatives.

"The answer is not that we don't want madrasahs," she said. "But that we need more of them — good ones. The problem with the so-called fundamentalists today is that they're not teaching the real fundamentals."



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