

WORLD & NATION



Debbie Hill/CNS

Bethlehem resident Sister Jamina looks at the ruins of storefronts Oct. 29. Millions of dollars in damage resulted from fighting between Palestinians and Israelis.

Pope calls for negotiations

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Two days after Israeli troops withdrew from Bethlehem, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met with Pope John Paul II to brief him on the most recent wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

"His Holiness, in expressing his condolences for the numerous victims of the unending spiral of violence, renewed his appeal that everyone abandon their weapons and return to negotiations," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said after the Oct. 30 meeting.

The spokesman said Arafat came to the Vatican to inform the pope "about the worrying situation in the Palestinian territories with particular reference to the recent tragic events in which even Christian holy places were involved."

Following the Oct. 17 murder of Israel's tourism minister, Israeli troops moved into Bethlehem and several other towns that had been under the control of the Palestinian National Authority.

In the confrontations that followed, several people were killed, including some in Bethlehem's Manger Square near the church marking the birthplace of Jesus.

The Israeli army withdrew from Bethlehem and Beit Jalla Oct. 28, but continued to occupy several other towns. Government officials said the occupation would continue until Arafat demonstrated his willingness and ability to arrest Palestinians who attack Israelis.

Arafat, who greeted Pope John Paul by kissing his hand, told him the Palestinian people want peace, and he condemned every form of terrorism, Navarro-Valls said.

The Palestinian leader's private meeting with the pope lasted about 15 minutes, then his entourage joined him in the pope's private library. Arafat gave the pope a nativity scene carved out of mother of pearl with the word "Bethlehem" in the background.

During his recitation of the Angelus Oct. 28, Pope John Paul prayed again for an end to violence in the Holy Land and for the return to meaningful negotiations.

"We cannot forget how many people continue to suffer violence and death in the Holy Land, especially in the holy places so dear to the Christian faith," the pope told visitors in St. Peter's Square.

"May Mary, the queen of peace, help everyone to put down their weapons and to finally take up, with conviction, the path toward a just and lasting peace," the pope

prayed.

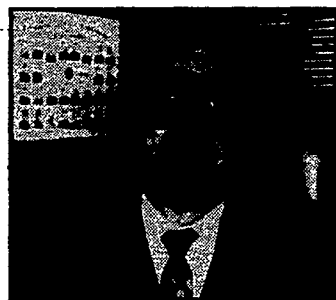
The Vatican's concern about the situation in Bethlehem and throughout the Holy Land also was expressed Oct. 29 by Archbishop Renato Martino, the Vatican's observer at the United Nations.

Speaking to a U.N. committee about the situation of Palestinian refugees, Archbishop Martino denounced damage in recent fighting to the church-run Bethlehem University, the Catholic seminary, the Pontifical School for the Deaf and Holy Family Hospital.

"When normal conditions of life are not granted, the security of all is threatened," he told the committee, referring specifically to the Israeli occupation of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jalla.

Archbishop Martino called for "greater international solidarity and the political will to meet the challenge of the seemingly unending violence in the region."

Thoughts to Consider



EDWIN SULEWSKI
Funeral Director

When a pet dies what can I do for my child?

A child may be quite upset when a pet dies. One way you can help is to plan a ceremony with the child for saying goodbye. A pet funeral gives the child a feeling of being in control and allows him to express some feelings about the loss. Finding a box to place the pet in, digging a grave and holding a ceremony also satisfies a child's natural curiosity about the physical aspects of death. When a pet dies a child may continue to be sad, for several days then, as a rule, they turn their attention to other matters. Listen to your child when he expresses his feelings and be available to answer any questions your child might have.

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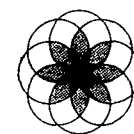
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