

WORLD & NATION

Pope will visit Poland in Aug.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II returns to his Polish homeland for the ninth time in mid-August, making a pilgrimage to two important sanctuaries in his former Archdiocese of Krakow.

During his Aug. 16-19 stay, the pope will also celebrate an outdoor Mass in Krakow's Blonia Park — a "make-up" liturgy for a Mass he had to cancel during his last visit to Poland in 1999 when he came down with the flu.

For many in Poland and around the world, the most important event of the visit will come Aug. 17, when the pontiff goes to the Krakow suburb of Lagiewniki to inaugurate a new basilica dedicated to the Divine Mercy movement and an adjoining pilgrim complex.

The movement was started in the 1930s by a Polish nun, St. Faustina Kowalka, who said she had a vision of Jesus asking devotees to divine mercy. The pope beatified her in 1993 and canonized her in 2000, establishing Divine Mercy Sunday as a universal commemoration.

The devotional movement has grown rapidly around the world in recent years, and more than a million people visited the Lagiewniki sanctuary in 2001. Polish church sources have said the new, \$20 million Divine Mercy complex would include a 28,000-square-foot basilica, a retreat house and pilgrim hostel, and facilities for single mothers and the homeless.

According to an official schedule released at the Vatican Aug. 5, the pope will meet with Polish civil authorities and the country's bishops during his trip, and will pay private visits to the tomb of his relatives and to Krakow's historic cathedral.

On his last day in the country, the pope plans to say Mass at a Calvary sanctuary about 20 miles outside of Krakow in the Carpathian foothills.

Pontiff may rest more during trips

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

MEXICO CITY — Pope John Paul II began his 11-day, 14,000-mile trip to the Americas by triumphantly walking down a set of airplane steps in Toronto — a sign that he might be old and frail, but should not be counted out.

By the time he reached his final stop in Mexico City at the end of July, he was slurring his words and slumping in his chair as if his energy had simply run out.

Along the way, Vatican officials said they were learning a lesson: Any future papal trips should include plenty of down time for the 82-year-old pontiff, who suffers from a degenerative nervous system disorder, arthritis and the cumulative strain of several operations.

In Toronto, the pope spent most of his first four days relaxing at a secluded island retreat on a lake in Ontario. It was the longest papal break ever scheduled on a foreign trip, and it seemed to pay big dividends.

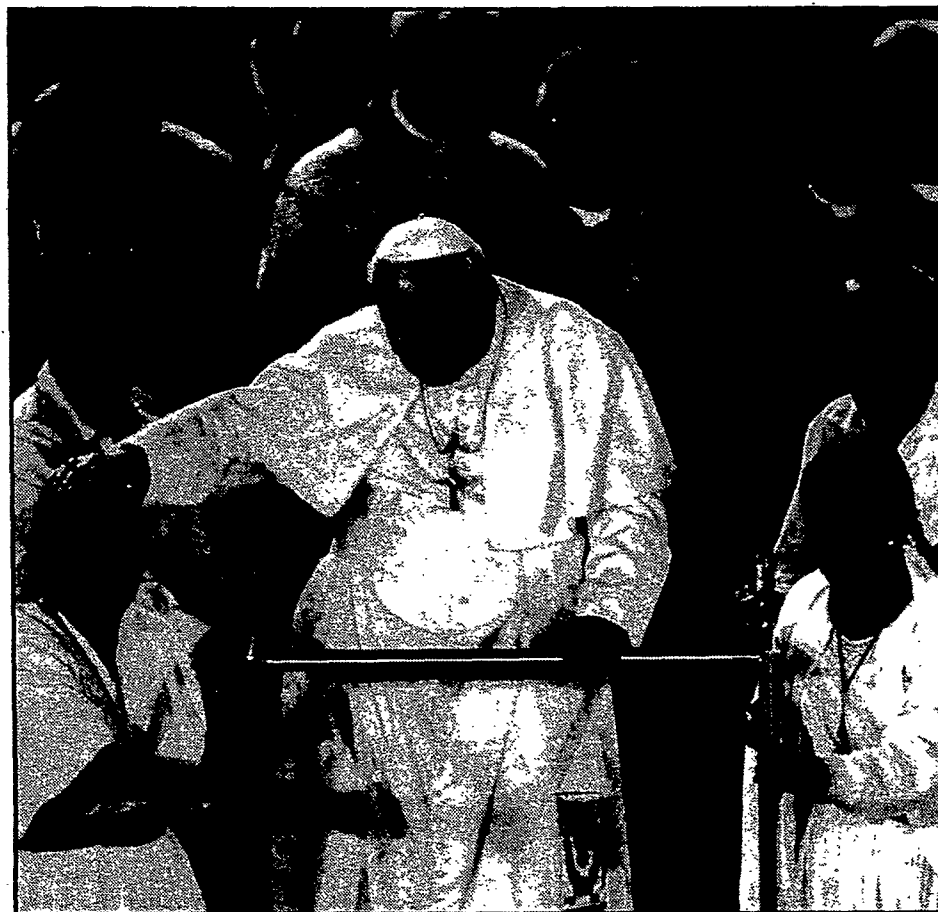
When it came time to preside over the lengthy World Youth Day events, the pope looked and sounded better than he had in many months. He spoke English and French in a voice that resonated and was understood. Even his face seemed more expressive.

He even joked to youths that being 82 was not like being 22 — an impromptu display of humor that aides saw as another good sign.

But the second half of his trip included three major liturgies in Guatemala and Mexico, along with arrival and departure ceremonies and long motorcade rides. He seemed worn out by the time he landed in Mexico July 30 and needed help getting to his feet when a band started playing the national anthem.

"What you see is a soul dragging a body, a soul stronger than a body," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters midway through the trip.

Like many, Navarro-Valls was pleasantly surprised by the pope's marked improvement in Toronto. He said he asked the pope's doctor if he was taking new drugs, and the answer was no. The key seemed to



Reuters/CNS

Pope John Paul II reaches out to a young woman escorting him from the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe following the beatification service for two indigenous martyrs Aug. 1 in Mexico City.

be big blocks of time for repose.

The papal spokesman said the success of the rest and relaxation formula might become a model for future trips, especially if the pontiff travels to Manila, Philippines, in January for a World Family Congress.

In August, the pope returns to his Polish homeland, where he will celebrate Mass in his former archdiocese, Krakow. It's a makeup liturgy from his last visit in 1999, when he became ill and canceled Mass for more than a million people.

Navarro-Valls acknowledged that at the Vatican the pope cannot simply do away with the regular round of meetings, audiences and liturgies, although he has cut

back his schedule significantly in recent years.

What sometimes surprises observers is that neither the pope nor his aides have any qualms about putting his physical decline on public display. When he slouched forward in his chair at the Mass to canonize Juan Diego in Mexico City, with his miter practically in his lap, neither his doctor nor his chief liturgical official batted an eye.

Vatican Radio commented during the trip that the pope these days has trouble even raising the host and the chalice when he celebrates Mass — a fact that seems only to have increased the admiration of those around him.

Prayer played important role in rescue of trapped miners

By Melissa Williams Schofield
Catholic News Service

GREENSBURG, Pa. — Death was knocking at Robert Pugh Jr.'s door. So he and the eight other miners trapped more than the length of a football field below the ground prayed "hard, real hard."

One recited the first few words of the Our Father and another picked it up. Pugh, meanwhile, thought of his three kids and prayed to God to get out alive.

Pugh, 50, and his co-workers were trapped for nearly 78 hours July 24-27 at Quecreek Mine in Somerset County after they accidentally dug into an abandoned mine, flooding their own with millions of gallons of water.

"Water was up to our noses," Pugh told *The Catholic Accent*, newspaper of the Greensburg Diocese. "All we could do was sit there and pray. ... It seemed like it was taking so much time to find us. Time was something we didn't have."

They fought off starvation, suffocation and dehydration during the ordeal.

"We found three-gallon jugs of distilled water used for batteries for our equipment," he said. "One of the guys had a sandwich in his lunch bucket and a can of pop that we shared. Before they dropped the air to us, we had trouble breathing. We looked at one another and asked each other about the breathing. We tried to talk and breathe through our mouths. When they dropped the air down, it felt so much better."

They were rescued in the early morning of July 28 after a shaft was drilled in to the ground to recover them.

"I never prayed so much in my life. God is the one who got us through this," Pugh said. "We all knew we had to rely on God. Faith in God is all that mattered. After we were rescued, there were guys who went to church that never do."

Three Catholic men from the Diocese of Greensburg who helped lead the rescue efforts at Quecreek Mine also were convinced a 10th person was guiding the trapped coal miners to higher ground. The mine is in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, but the Greensburg Diocese is right next door.

"God was with them the whole time. He had to be, because everything went right. Everything that had to happen happened," said Joseph Sbaffoni, bituminous division chief for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Deep Mine Safety with the state's Uniontown-based Department of Environmental Protection.

Like Sbaffoni, colleague Kevin Stricklin, assistant district manager of technical services for District 2 for the federal Mine, Safety and Health Administration based in New Stanton, said prayer was a major factor in getting the miners out alive.

He and colleague John Urosek, chief of the ventilation division of the Pittsburgh Safety and Health Technology Center for the U.S. mining agency and a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Parish in Con-



CNS

The fourth of nine rescued miners emerges from the rescue shaft in Pennsylvania July 28.

nellsville, believe it was divine intervention that got the men out.

"Water was continuing to rise. We didn't know early on if we could control it," said Urosek.

"You have to be ahead of the game," he said. "That's the only way to get to the end. We had the best in the world working to get the men. On the surface, we knew it was a race against time. Yet, we are never prepared for something like

this. We learn as we go along. We knew we needed help and we got it."

Stricklin, a member of St. Anne Parish in Rostraver, knew to keep his cool.

"If you panic, you lose," he said. "We all did what we had to do. We hoped they (the miners) did, too, because we didn't know what was going on at their end."

"It's just overwhelming when you think of how well things went," said Urosek, looking over a map of the mine.

"I know God was with us. No question," said Sbaffoni, who belongs to SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Fairchance.

Father Jack O'Malley, a priest of the Pittsburgh Diocese who currently is serving as labor chaplain for the state of Pennsylvania, was on the surface at the mine comforting the families of the nine miners.

"It was a privilege, an honor and an inspiration," he told the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, Pittsburgh's diocesan newspaper. "I felt compelled to be there because of working people. I checked with a priest up in Somerset, and he welcomed me to come up because he had been there the night before and he couldn't get back."

"When the fellows came in to give us a report, they came running in and said, 'All nine are alive,'" he recalled. "To be with those families, and to be a part of that sign of peace and love ... I'll never forget that."

Contributing to this story was Chuck Moody in Pittsburgh.