

WORLD & NATION

Pope visits homeland, asks Mary for strength

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

KALWARIA ZEBRZYDOWSKA, Poland — Retracing the pilgrim steps of his youth, Pope John Paul II visited a shrine dedicated to Christ's suffering and Mary's compassion on the final day of his trip to Poland.

In a moving prayer at Kalwaria Zebrydowska Aug. 19, he asked Mary to help him find the spiritual and physical strength to fulfill his role as pope.

"Most Holy Mother ... obtain also for me strength in body and spirit, that I may carry out to the end the mission given me by the risen Lord," he said.

He also invoked Mary's special protection for the young.

"Show young people a way and a horizon for the future. Cover children with the mantle of your protection, lest they be scandalized," he said.

It was the final stop on a four-day visit that took the 82-year-old pontiff back to places of deep personal significance in his

native Archdiocese of Krakow. Although bent with age and slowed by infirmity, he seemed to draw energy from his trip home.

He rode the 30 miles from Krakow to Kalwaria in his popemobile, along a winding country road packed with well-wishers and decorated with homemade bunting. Virtually every house displayed a picture of the pope.

Some 60,000 people filled the courtyards and open spaces at the shrine and watched on giant TV screens as the pope celebrated Mass inside the main church. The Kalwaria complex was celebrating its 400th anniversary.

The pope recalled that as a boy he used to come to the sanctuary on pilgrimages with his father. Later, as archbishop of Krakow, he would pray there when he had important decisions to make.

He said the shrine's unique landscape — a series of chapels recalling the path of Christ's passion, joined with chapels commemorating the life of Mary — made a deep impression on him. That made it a



Reuters/CNS

Nuns sing and wave flags as they wait for the arrival of Pope John Paul II at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Lagiewniki Aug. 17. The pope brought a demanding spiritual and social message to his fellow Poles, who responded with their cheers, their smiles and their attention.

special place for Marian devotion, he said.

For centuries, he said, people have come to the site to rediscover the power of faith and hope — assured by the imagery that "the mother does not abandon her children at times of trouble."

He said Mary's union in Christ's suffering and her sharing in the glory of the

resurrection underline her extraordinary role in the church and in the lives of all the faithful.

After lunching with the Franciscans who run the sanctuary, the pope was scheduled to take a helicopter ride over his home town of Wadowice before leaving Krakow for Rome.

Bishops pray, do penance for failure to protect children

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Bishops around the country fasted and prayed in mid-August in repentance for failures to protect minors from priests who molested them, and several took new steps to try to bring healing and reconciliation in their dioceses.

At the same time, however, new lawsuits and investigations were begun.

In Boston, Cardinal Bernard F. Law spent much of Aug. 13 and 14 giving a sworn deposition to lawyers for alleged victims of sexual abuse by Father Paul Shanley. Transcripts and videotape of his June 5 and June 7 depositions on the same case were made public Aug. 13 by court order.

In a related development, Bishop John B. McCormack of Manchester, N.H., was deposed in Manchester by lawyers for alleged Shanley victims. Before his New Hampshire appointment Bishop McCormack was Boston archdiocesan secretary for ministerial personnel and Cardinal Law's delegate for sexual misconduct.

With some 170 lawsuits alleging child abuse by more than two dozen priests, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville, Ky., said,

"I hope that when all this is over, I may have an opportunity to apologize personally and beg forgiveness from each of these victims. ... I don't know how they can be healed. My heart breaks for them."

In Chicago, about 150 people came to the cathedral for an Aug. 14 service convened by Cardinal Francis E. George and his seven auxiliary bishops to, in the words of an archdiocesan statement, "pray and do penance in atonement for the wounds inflicted by clerical sexual abuse."

Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., who is vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, spent Aug. 14 in prayer and fasting at the cathedral. He wrote to Spokane Catholics that his was one of many such actions "to focus on us bishops as ones who need forgiveness and prayers for the inappropriate and irresponsible manner in which the matter of sexual abuse was handled by us."

In Bridgeport, Conn., Bishop William

E. Lori asked people to begin a 40-day period of prayer for their priests Aug. 15, leading up to Convocation 2002, a gathering of all 285 diocesan priests Sept. 22-25.

After a day of fasting and a Mass for sexual-abuse victims in the cathedral, Bishop Joseph J. Gerry of Portland, Maine, spent two hours Aug. 15 meeting privately with six sex-abuse victims.

Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., announced Aug. 8 that the long-planned first diocesan synod has been canceled and will not be rescheduled for another year or two. Instead, he hopes to hold a series of discussions in parishes to address issues surrounding "restoring the trust people need to have in their priest and in their bishop," he said.

He said the synod has been postponed because now is not the best time "to get beyond the issues of sex to talk about visioning and forming the church of the future."

The diocese said Aug. 9 that it had fin-

ished reviewing personnel records of all its active priests. It concluded that any sexual allegations have been properly investigated and there is no reason to believe any active priest has sexually abused a minor.

That same day a Florida judge ruled that, when Father Robert Schaeufele met in April with a St. Petersburg diocesan response team following a sexual-abuse allegation, the meeting was investigative and not subject to the confidentiality of a spiritual counseling relationship. The priest, removed after that first allegation, faces four charges of capital sexual battery on minors, each carrying a possible life sentence.

Bishop Walter F. Sullivan of Richmond, Va., removed Father John P. Blankenship from ministry as a federal prison chaplain Aug. 9. It was the second time in three days that the bishop had removed a priest for admitted past abuse. A diocesan spokesman said at least two other cases were still under review.

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