

PEACE

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participatory ways of exercising political authority, even international political authority, and for transparency and accountability at every level of public life," he said.

The pope said that perhaps nowhere is there a more obvious need for such political intervention than in the Middle East and the Holy Land, where "day after day, year after year, the cumulative effect of bitter mutual rejection and an unending chain of violence and retaliation have shattered every effort so far to engage in serious dialogue."

"The volatility of the situation is compounded by the clash of interests among the members of the international community," he said. The impasse will be broken only when leaders undergo a "veritable revolution" in the way they use their power and secure their people's welfare, he said.

The Middle East needs men and women who will implement policies based on respect for human dignity and human rights, the pope declared.

"Such policies are incomparably more advantageous to everyone than the continuation of conflict," he said.

The papal letter did not touch upon other concrete examples of international conflict, nor did it examine the recent increase in global



Pope John Paul II looks toward a statue of the infant Christ during the pontiff's New Year's Day Mass in St. Peter's Basilica Jan. 1.

terrorism and U.S.-led efforts to contain it through military means.

But at a Vatican press conference to present the peace day message, Archbishop Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said that in the world since Sept. 11, 2001, peace is threatened by the "cancer" of international terrorism.

The archbishop added that terrorism can never be fought at the expense of human rights and humanitarian rights. He specifically

rejected the concept of a preventive war, saying it was just another term for a war of aggression.

Responding to questions about U.S. threats to wage war on Iraq, Archbishop Martino said it was important to disarm countries that hold weapons of mass destruction, but that the United Nations is the proper vehicle for that. The archbishop, who represented the Vatican at the United Nations until his recent appointment to the justice and peace council, said that while

Pope endorses 'four pillars' for lasting peace

Cindy Wooden/CNS

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II began the new year with a new plea for peace in the Middle East and for world leaders to find peaceful solutions to tense situations elsewhere.

"Despite serious and repeated attacks on the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of peoples, peace is possible and necessary," the pope said to applause Jan. 1 during a Mass marking World Peace Day and the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

The pope presided over the Liturgy of the Word and gave the homily, but knelt on a platform away from the altar as Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state, led the eucharistic prayer.

"In the face of events which are upsetting the planet, it clearly appears that only God can touch the depths of the human heart; only his peace can give hope back to humanity," the pope said in his homily.

With the Mass celebrated just a

week after Christmas, the pope said it was impossible not to look "with apprehension and pain to that holy place where Jesus was born."

"The dramatic and continuing tension in which this region of the Middle East finds itself makes even more urgent the search for a positive solution to the fratricidal and senseless conflict which has bloodied it for so long," Pope John Paul said.

As he did in his written message for World Peace Day, the pope underlined the ongoing relevance of Pope John XXIII's 1963 encyclical on peace, "*Pacem in Terris*."

The encyclical's teaching on the obligation to pray and work for peace is still valid "for believers and for people of good will in our time weighed down by tensions, but also full of many positive hopes," he said.

Despite the fact that Pope John reigned in one of the most frightening periods of the Cold War, he never gave into despair, he said.

"On the contrary, standing on a solid trust in God and in the poten-

tial of the human heart, he forcefully prescribed 'truth, justice, love and freedom' as the 'four pillars' on which to build a lasting peace," he said.

Pope John Paul also appealed to members of every religion to focus on the value their faiths give to peacemaking.

"What is required is the cooperation of all those who believe in God, aware that authentic religiousness, far from putting individuals and peoples in conflict with each other, pushes them to build a world of peace together," he said.

The pope concluded his homily asking once again that Catholic families pray the rosary for peace, asking Mary to help them discover the face of her son, the Prince of Peace.

"May she support us and accompany us in this new year; may she obtain for us and for the whole world the desired gift of peace," he prayed.

After the Mass, Pope John Paul recited the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square.

the current U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq are laborious, he hoped they would be successfully completed.

In his 15-page message, issued in seven languages, the pope focused on the four basic principles identified by "*Pacem in Terris*" as essential for world peace: truth, justice, love and freedom.

The pope said the bond between peace and truth means that no human activity takes place outside the sphere of moral judgment, and international politics cannot be considered a "free zone" in which moral law holds no sway.

Respect for truth also means that state and government leaders must honor their commitments, including those made in international forums, he said.

"Promises made to the poor should be considered particularly binding," he said. In this sense, the failure to maintain aid commitments to developing countries is a "serious moral question and further highlights the injustice of the imbalances existing in the world," he said.

"The suffering caused by poverty is compounded by the loss of trust. The end result is hopelessness," he said.

The pope also said that along with increasing awareness of human rights, the international community needs to insist more on the "universal human duties" that correspond to such rights.

"The huge crowd included about 10,000 people who had participated in a march for peace through the streets of Rome. Organized by the lay Sant'Egidio Community, dedicated to evangelization and charity, the marchers carried rainbow banners with the word "peace" and signs with the names of 39 countries or regions directly involved in armed conflicts.

"Believers do not lose hope even when the obstacles and attacks on peace multiply," the pope told the crowd.

Each individual must make concrete gestures for peace, beginning with his or her family members, friends and co-workers "through a generous choice for mutual understanding, reconciliation, forgiveness and effective attention to those in need," he said.

The pope asked world leaders "to do everything possible to find peaceful solutions to the many tensions existing in the world, particularly in the Middle East, avoiding further suffering for those already suffering populations."