The papal pilgrimage to America

'I now say good-bye in words that I spoke once before: “Today, therefore, my final prayer is this: that God will bless America, so that she may increasingly become — and truly be — and long remain — ‘one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all’.”' — Pope John Paul II, in his departing speech at the end of the papal visit to the United States.
People in the News

There are only a handful of Catholic radio stations in the country, and one of them was recently named by the National Association of Broadcasters as one of the nation's 10 finest radio stations. Winner of the Crystal, intended to recognize "outstanding local achievement in community service," was KNOM, a 10,000-watt station owned by the Diocese of Fairbanks. Its signal reaches deep into remote bush Alaska, covering some 90 villages and fish camps, with regular listeners as far away as 300 miles. Station manager is TOM BUSCH, and the station is the work of FATHER JIM POOLE, S.J. It is operated by unpaid volunteers and funded by individual contributions. The station takes the place of priests, sisters, and lay workers to serve the remote villages where the Catholic Church would have no other presence. KNOM has been on the air since 1971, airing music and news, religious (Rosary, prayers, Mass and an inspirational talk) and educational material. Write to: KNOM, Box 988, Nome, AL 99762. — OSV

A recent exhibiton entitled "A Masterpiece from the Soviet Union: Rembrandt's 'Holy Family With Angels'" will be held at the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio, through Jan. 3, 1988. The exhibition began October 4. The painting, which belongs to the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, has never before been seen in the Americas. A variety of programs on Rembrandt are planned at the Toledo museum in connection with the exhibition. Rembrandt illustrated scenes from the Bible in an intensely personal way, creating a moral and spiritual condition of man in his paintings, drawings and etchings of biblical subjects. For information on tours or visits, call (419) 255-8000. — OSV

Trinity College, a women's school in Washington founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, has chosen JAMES J. MCGRAITH as president. He is the first man and first person not a member of a religious order to head the school. Sister Regina Finnegan, head of the college board of trustees, and Cathleen Black, an alumna, publisher of USA Today and head of the search committee, said in an open letter that the decision to select a lay person and a man as president "was a source of deep introspection and intense discussion." They said McGrath was chosen "given Trinity's great need for stability and sound fiscal management." Sister Finnegan said Trinity is "committed to remaining a Catholic women's college.

The 57-year-old McGrath is president of William Rainey Harper College in suburban Chicago. Trinity College, located near the campus of The Catholic University of America, had 561 students enrolled last year. — NC News

The cowboy-turned-angel MICHAEL LANDON, who portrays an angel in NBC-TV's "Highway to Heaven," has been named recipient of the 1987 Gabriel Personal Achievement Award. Landon is being honored by Unda-USA, the national association of Catholic broadcasters and communicators which sponsors the Gabriel Awards, for bringing to the broadcasting industry "a high standard of artistic excellence and a commitment to public service." The Gabriel Awards are presented annually to radio and television stations and individuals who provide programs that "creatively reflect human values." The 1987 awards were announced from the association's national headquarters in Akron, Ohio. They are to be presented Nov. 1 at the 22nd annual Gabriel Awards dinner in Tampa, Fla., during the Unda-USA annual assembly. Sixty-nine television and radio programs were selected as winners of Gabriel Awards and Gabriel Certificates of Merit this year, chosen from more than 600 entries. Additionally, TV station WCVO of Boston and radio station KNOM of Nome, Alaska, were named for "outstanding achievement through station programming efforts." — NC News

Any readers have written to ask where they might purchase a copy of the Divine Office mentioned in a recent feature by Annabelle Baldwin. "Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours" is available on hard cover for $12 from the Daughters of St. Paul, 50 St. Paul Ave., Boston, MA 02130. Add $2 handling for the first book and 50 cents for each additional copy. Plastic covers are an extra $1 per book. Copies should also be available from your local Catholic bookstore. — OSV

We have all heard pastors say that "this parish belongs to the people." But the pastor of St. Matthew parish in Limerick, Maine, means it. FATHER LAURENT R. LAPLANTE said the Church World, newspaper for the Diocese of Portland in Maine, that the Church could not have been built without the volunteer help of parishioners, who donated $150,000 worth of labor to the project. The new building includes a rectory, CCD classrooms, office space, a parish center and a 600-seat chapel. "The parish belongs to the parishioners because they built it," Father LaPlante said. Parishioners prepared the site, did the landscaping, the plumbing and the wiring. They built window casings, painted and hung wallpaper. The parish complex was dedicated in June. — OSV
Papal pilgrimage to America: a celebration of faith

September 10-19, 1987, the United States witnessed the second historic visit of Pope John Paul II. His first extended visit as Pope was in 1979.

It was a time of celebration. It was a time for the world to see the strength and vigor of the Church in the United States. And it was a time for the Holy Father to celebrate that strength with us.

This is our special issue to commemorate that visit. The stories are by OSV West Coast correspondent Gerard E. Sherry. The photos are by OSV photographer John Zierten.
MIAMI/COLUMBIA

A greeting to the papal pilgrim from a huge and diverse Catholic population

Pope John Paul II began his second pilgrim journey to the United States on September 10, arriving in Miami on a hot, muggy afternoon. He was greeted by President and Mrs. Reagan. He did not kiss the ground, for he had done it on his first visit as Pope in 1979. But this was new territory, for his previous visit was to the north and midwest. Now, he would traverse the Sun Belt, all the way to California and then wind up in Michigan.

It wasn't long before the diversity which is America came into focus for him. He was greeted through the streets of Miami by Anglos, Cuban exiles, Haitians, Vietnamese, Chinese and a host of other ethnic groups. After a short stop at St. Mary's Cathedral, situated in a typical American ghetto, he traveled to the archdiocesan Pastoral Center where he dialogued with American priests.

The Pope listened to a presentation by Father Frank McNulty, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Roseland, New Jersey. It was a special moment both for the Pontiff and the priests. Here was announced the special concerns of priests, their daily struggle to serve their people, their dwindling numbers, the burnouts, the retired, and the attempts by priests to reinforce the celibacy vows, their prayer life and peer support.

The Pope's response was upbeat. He said he was well aware of the struggle and he praised the priests for their steadfast commitment to service, which he said was the hallmark of their whole ministry. He told his brother priests that a nurtured prayer life would sustain them, that conformity to the teachings of the magisterium would protect against error, and that they must encourage families in the parishes to provide more vocations.

The next morning he met with national Jewish leaders at the Dade County Cultural Center, where he opened a Vatican Library exhibition of Judaic art (see the Visitor 9/27/87). He spoke with the Jewish representatives, encouraging a continued dialogue with the Church. He praised the dialogue with U.S. Catholics and said it already had produced much fruit. He condemned the Holocaust and said it must never happen again. He affirmed the right of Israel as a nation, but also said that the Palestinian people were also entitled to a homeland. It was a successful meeting mitigating many of the tensions that were said to exist between the two faiths.

This was followed by a eucharistic celebration at the Dade County Fairgrounds. Many thousands had waited hours for him to arrive, but the Mass was interrupted by a heavy
Ecumenical leaders arrive for the meeting with the Holy Father

downpour. The Secret Service and other advisors, mindful of the lightening and thunder that was taking place, saw it as a physical danger to the Pope and the congregation. A reluctant Pope terminated his Mass at the special altar erected for the event, but continued the Mass to completion in a private chapel nearby.

The morning complete, the Pontiff headed for South Carolina for a meeting with ecumenical leaders from all over the country. At the University of South Carolina in Columbia, the hometown of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, he was greeted by thousands of students gathered in front of the president's house where the Protestant officials awaited him. He told the young people he was well-versed in campus life, having been a university professor in his native Poland. This was Bible-Belt country. Few of the students were Catholics, but they gave an enthusiastic welcome and Pope John Paul was obviously moved by it. Later, he attended an ecumenical service in the university stadium, where a crowd of 60,000 were equally enthusiastic in their greeting to him. Later that evening, the Pope departed for another state — Louisiana. It had been three in one day and the city of New Orleans was set to welcome him.

The Pope listens
NEW ORLEANS

It had been a long day. First Florida, then South Carolina and now Louisiana. Hot and muggy weather was still the fare as Pope John Paul II arrived in New Orleans. Though it was late at night, he went straight to the archbishop’s residence chapel to pray — he is a very prayerful Shepherd of the Flock.

First item the next morning was a meeting with the nation’s 11 black bishops and representatives of the increasing number of black Catholics, including Hispanics, Haitians and Puerto Ricans from all over the country. The Pope was greeted with “Amen” and “Alleluias.” He loved it and they loved him.

It was like an old-fashioned revival meeting — but it was Catholic. The Pontiff reaffirmed the black bishops in their role as shepherds and pastors, praised black cultural and spiritual contributions to the U.S. Church and urged all Catholics to accept them as equals.

Though Bishop Joseph Lawson Howze of Biloxi, Mississippi, they told the Holy Father who they were; that historically black Americans have not been affiliated with the Catholic Church as have other ethnic and national groups. As a result, being black and Catholic, in the minds of some, is not a spontaneous concept. The bishop said that being black and Catholic does not denote separatism. Rather it identifies an integration of faith and culture in the common heritage of the Church which is shared by all.

For his part, the Pope said black bishops share with him the joys and burdens of the episcopacy. Black priests were his brothers also and black permanent deacons, along with other deacons, complete the three-fold ministry of the Sacrament of Orders. Indeed, he made the point that he was close to the whole black community in love and esteem and that it was a vital sign of hope for society.

The Pontiff then met with Catholic elementary, secondary and religious educators. He stressed the importance of Catholic schools in the life of the parish and the Church. They were, he said, an essential element in religious formation of the young and by that provide for the future of Church leadership. He praised Religious and lay teachers and urged them to foster vocations to the religious life.

The morning was not yet over. The Pope went to a youth rally at the Superdome. Here he was in his element. Here he met the future, not only of the Church but also the country — and he told them so. He obviously loves young people and, at this rally, they made it clear they love him. The exuberance shown on both sides was a measure of the charisma of John Paul II and his ability to communicate with all sections of the people of God. He left smiling and very satisfied with the encounter.

In the evening, the Pope celebrated the Eucharist at the University of New Orleans Lakefront Arena and then met with leaders of Catholic higher education at Xavier University. At the Mass, he spoke of the importance of a deepened prayer life, not only for priests and Religious, but for all Catholics. He said the Eucharist was the center of all activity and spoke of confession and the seeking of reconciliation with God and among individuals.

For the Pope, it was another long day. For the people of New Orleans it was a once-in-a-lifetime reminder that the Shepherd of the Flock signified the Unity of the universal Church.
JOHN PAUL II in AMERICA

This is the official volume commemorating the Pope's historic visit to the United States in the fall of 1987. This beautifully bound coffee-table edition will include the text of all the major addresses and homilies of the Pope with introduction and commentary by the National Catholic News Service. It will be strikingly illustrated with over 100 full color photographs that will provide memorable pictures of the Pope's visits to eight major cities from California to Florida to Michigan.

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On the Lord’s Day, the Pope spoke of reconciliation and recognized the Hispanic heritage of the Church.

Pope John Paul II’s arrival at Kelly Air Force Base started his one day pastoral visit to San Antonio and its predominately Hispanic Catholic population. He was greeted first by servicemen who lined the streets of the base, and then it was on to the huge Mass site at Westover Hills. There he first recited the Angelus, a prayer he often says at noon from the Balcony of his Vatican apartment.

Three hundred thousand people attended the Westover Mass at which he reminded all that it was Sunday, a day of rest and “the Lord’s day.” The Pope dwelt on the Sacrament of Penance and said the ministry of reconciliation is an essential part of the Church’s life. He stressed the following:

• Christ willed the forgiveness of sins by means of sacramental absolution given by the priestly ministers of penance.

• Every confessional is a blessed place of reconciliation, and renewed fidelity to the practice of confession will mean a renewal in Christian living. He appealed to all who have abandoned the practice to return and he asked the young to especially make use of it.

• Reconciliation with God requires reconciliation among ourselves. Here human needs, both spiritual and material, continue to call out to the whole Church.

The next stop was at the annual convention of Catholic Charities U.S.A., where he told the delegates he was grateful for the “vast network of Christian love and human solidarity in which you are engaged.” He stressed that service to the needy reveals God as the rescuer of the oppressed and that the Church is called to encompass with love all those who are afflicted. He praised the American people for their generosity, noting that the Church’s stand on the centrality of the person prevents human beings from being reduced to categories of political and social planning.

From there he went to San Fernando Cathedral, the oldest in the U.S., and met with Texas seminarians and men and women in religious-formation programs. He told them preparation for the priesthood or the religious life requires a constant dialogue with Christ in prayer. He said the Eucharist is the principle reason for the priesthood; that in order for preaching to be fruitful it must be in accord with the magisterium; that celibacy is a special response to God’s gifts and a commitment to a deeper and universal love; and that the priest best serves the laity when he faithfully fulfills his own unique mission.

But it was at Our Lady of Guadalupe Plaza that Hispanic Catholics came into their own. Pope John Paul spoke in their native language before a huge backdrop adorned with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He told them the Hispanic heritage of San Antonio and the Southwest is very important to the Church and that the Spanish-speaking must be missionaries to one another. The Pope said that Hispanics must hold on to their respect for family life and support their parish, which is a family of families. In the life of prayer, the family and the parish complement each other and he urged his audience to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

It was a long day for the Pope, but he concluded his San Antonio visit on a personal, happy note — he was greeted at the archbishop’s residence by Polish-Americans of Texas, many of them in native costumes, and he spoke with them in his native tongue. Another point also should be made, the Holy Father was greeted throughout the visit by the traditional sounds of mariachi music — on arrival and on his departure. Roving bands of such musicians were among the crowds that lined the streets as he drove by in his Popemobile. They serenaded him in joy and respectful prayer.

The San Antonio visit took on the appearance of a street fair.
PHOENIX A celebration with bands, tribal chants and thousands of welcomers in a land of sun and desert

Pope John Paul II visited the sun-baked desert area of Arizona, arriving in Phoenix to tribal chants, mariachi bands and thousands of welcomers on the fifth day of his pastoral visit.

Within 30 minutes he was at the pediatric ward of St. Joseph's Hospital where he cuddled several of the child patients, giving his blessing to all in the ward and the doctors and nurses who attended them. Later he met with six thousand of the hospital staff and their families and praised their dedication in the service of the sick.

Soon after he proceeded by Popemobile to St. Mary's Basilica, from the balcony of which he addressed a large crowd in the adjoining Civic Plaza. He spoke of human development which, if authentic, promotes the good of the whole human person. He added these observations:

True human progress must be accompanied by a spirit of fraternal solidarity with all people; that for the work of development, Christians find inspiration in the words and deeds of Jesus Christ.

It was then on to the annual meeting of the National Catholic Health Association meeting at the Convention Center. Officials of the association gave the Pope information on health care concerns in the U.S. and the Pope responded by telling the delegates that Catholic health services are among the most extensive and fundamental ministries of the Church in the United States.

He told them that illness and suffering are basic problems of human existence and that health care must reflect the Church's role as the teacher of moral truth. Furthermore, health care professionals must contribute to the formation of society's moral vision. He emphasized that the Church defends the value of human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, adding that what is technically possible is not for that very reason morally permissible. He said that while the Church encourages all genuine advances in knowledge, she also insists on the sacredness of human life at every stage and condition.

The highlight of the day's visit was the Pope's dialogue with Native Americans, 16,000 of whom gathered at the Arizona Memorial Coliseum. Tribal rituals were performed and the Pontiff was presented with a sacred feather, which he held for most of the session.

Bishop Donald Pelotte, coadjutor of the Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico, and first Native American prelate in the U.S. hierarchy opened the dialogue by informing the Pope of the problems and concerns of his people. It was an informal "pow-wow" and the Holy Father was obviously moved. He said that they were noble descendents of countless generations of inhabitants of this land who had cherished and passed on their customs. He mentioned the work of Frey Junipero Serra and said that the Church was convinced of the need to protect the native peoples, although not all members of the Church lived up to their responsibilities. Still, he said, we are called to learn from the mistakes of the past and to work for reconciliation and healing.

The Pontiff said the Gospel of Jesus Christ is at home in every people and it enriches, uplifts and purifies every culture. He concluded the "powwow" by stating that the time had come for the native peoples of America to have a new life in Jesus Christ. To those present, it was a great moment in their lives. Here was a great White Father, not in Washington but in Rome. The drums of the tribes beat with joy at his coming, and when he had gone to continue his pilgrim journey, they tapped out the message, "come again oh holy one, our teepees are your teepees."
On the seventh day of his pastoral visit to this country, Pope John Paul II left behind the oppressive heat of the southeast and Arizona. He arrived in Los Angeles to mild temperatures and streets of enthusiastic welcome.

His grueling schedule was no less before, but he seemed renewed in strength and bounced about the city of the Angels as youthful as his audience in the Universal Amphitheatre. Here he dialoged with young people at a teleconference linked to other participants in Denver, Portland and St. Louis. He received a wild, happy reception from the youngsters whose spokesperson told him of their concerns and problems in living their faith. The Pope seemed very much at home, radiating enthusiasm with American youth.

The Pope listens during the meeting with lay representatives.

He told them they bring hope to the world, that God was the source of hope, that these with faith look to the future with confidence; that God is the source of strength.

He told them: "We love you John Paul," sang and played a guitar with his toes for him. There wasn’t a dry eye in the amphitheatre of six thousand, nor in the audience of equal number in the link cities. The Pontiff exited to cries: "We love you John Paul," to which he emotionally reciprocated.

One event that received enormous coverage during the Los Angeles visit was the papal speech to leaders of the communications industry in the United States. The meeting followed directly on the heels of his extraordinary conference with American youth.

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In the amphitheatre of Los Angeles, 10,000 people were assembled - world renowned actors, directors, producers, writers and editors. But they had to wait for the Pontiff to finish with the young people. They sat patiently, watching the Holy Father's exhortation on television screens.

They welcomed Pope John Paul cordially, and listened to him as he took them to their enormous power for good, not greed. Also in Los Angeles, the Pope celebrated Mass at the Coliseum for 110,000, and a further 65,000 at Dodger Stadium. At the latter, 300,000 were assembled - world renowned actors, directors, producers, writers and editors. But they had to wait for the Pontiff to finish with the young people. They sat patiently, watching the Holy Father's exhortation on television screens.

The Pope addressed leaders of the communication industries.

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The Pope with Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco meets well-wishers.

In a lengthy response, the Pope summed up his views on the lay mission in the Church by concluding with these words: "It is up to you the Catholic laity to incarnate without ceasing the Gospel in society in America. You are in the forefront of the struggle to protect authentic Christian values from the onslaught of secularization. Your greatest contribution to the evangelization of our own society is made through your lives. Christ's message must be lived in you and in the way you live and in the way you refuse to live."

He made: "To be a Christian in fact and in spirit, not just in name requires a systematic catechesis and means that one must be identified with Christ in all circumstances of life."

It had been one of the longest days of the visit for the Pope, but the weather was good, the crowds large and enthusiastic. The Golden Gate Bridge, majestic as ever, was partially obscured by fog as Shepherd I lifted off for Detroit. The Bridgeway had been blessed - and by John Paul II. It could now endure whatever the ravages of time set for it.  

The same evening, the Pontiff arrived in San Francisco, where he immediately visited the Golden Gate Bridge and blessed it. A celebration recently commemorated the 50th anniversary of its completion. Later the Pope went to Mission Dolores Basilica and blessed the sick, including several AIDS victims. Among these were a three-year-old child hemophiliac who had caught the disease from a blood transfusion. The Pope embraced and kissed the child and blessed a priest suffering from AIDS.

But the evening wasn’t over. The Pontiff went to St. Mary's Cathedral where he met with representatives of women and men Religious. He told them:

- Religious life testifies to the presence of God in the reality of human life and human affairs.
- Religious must be deeply committed to the renewal expounded in the documents of Vatican Council II.

The Pope embraces and kisses a child.

- Religious consecration belongs inseparably to the life and holiness of the Church.

The next morning he was again at St. Mary’s to listen and respond to representatives of the U.S. laity. In a moving presentation, Mrs. Donna Saint of Portland told of concerns the laity have, and said: "Please let me walk with you so that I can understand the challenge of being Peter’s successor... Your Holiness, please let me know that you are also willing to work with me."

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