

# Pope offers challenge to youth

PARIS (AP) — Pope John Paul II offered tough challenges and affectionate encouragement Sunday to more than 1 million faithful attending Mass, one of the biggest crowds he has seen in years.

At the closing World Youth Day ceremonies, the pontiff, standing under a white umbrella to shield him from the scorching sun, counseled his young followers to be strong in seeking meaning in life.

"The world is wonderful and rich; it sets before us countless treasures," the pope said in his final homily before returning home. "But in the end it does not satisfy our spirit."

"Dear young people, your journey does not end here. ... Go forth now along the roads of the world, along the pathways of humanity," the pope said, urging them to build a "civilization of love" and unity.

Police estimates of the crowd at the Longchamp racetrack in western

Paris were twice what organizers expected, but it was just what French President Jacques Chirac predicted when he greeted the pope Thursday.

Young people waved flags from more than 100 countries and held signs aloft. One homemade poster, colored with crayons, read, "Hello, Pope, we love you!"

The pope, eager to keep the enthusiasm of young Catholics high, announced the next mega- rendezvous — Rome in 2000.

About 20 million extra pilgrims already are expected in the Italian capital that year for millennium festivities and Vatican Holy Year events.

As the church moves into its third millennium, the pope wants not only to gain new souls but to win back Catholics distracted by materialism or unwilling to abide by Vatican rules on sexual matters, such as the bans on sex before marriage, birth control and abortion.

The pontiff told the young people that renewed morality doesn't come easily and they might have to pay "heroic" prices for "moral choices opposed to worldly behavior."

In the context of celebrating youth, the pope announced Sunday that he was making Saint Theresa of Lisieux, a pious young French Carmelite who died 100 years ago at age 24, a doctor of the church.

During his farewell greetings in 12 languages, the pope sent a special message to war-ravaged central Africa, urging the faithful there to seek reconciliation and peace.

Standing on shoulders, filming friends and the pope, the audience seemed eager to linger, even after a 2½-hour Mass under the broiling sun.

"It increases my faith both to see the pope and to see all these people together," said Antoine Detournemere, a 24-year-old French student.

# Joint Ukraine-U.S. exercise under way

DONUZLAV NAVAL BASE, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine celebrated the sixth anniversary of its declaration of independence from Moscow on Sunday with a military exercise that reflects its complex relationship with Russia and its tightening ties with the West.

Ukraine's navy chief, Rear Adm. Mikhaylo Yezhel, announced the opening of Sea Breeze '97, which brought two U.S. ships, sailors and Marines to Crimea, an unprecedented U.S. presence on the mostly ethnic Russian peninsula.

Also participating in the peace-keeping exercise, which is similar to others Ukraine has hosted since joining NATO's partnership for peace program in 1994, are Turkey,

Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia.

Ukraine has cultivated close relations with both Russia and the West. In recent months, President Leonid Kuchma signed a charter tightening ties with NATO and a pact establishing friendly relations with Russia.

No military activities took place Sunday. Instead, sailors drank beer or competed in arm wrestling matches, tugs-of-war and other tests of strength.

The peaceful nature of Sunday's activities was a bid to appease Russia, which refused last year to participate in Sea Breeze because initial plans had U.S. Marines making an amphibious landing on Crimea.

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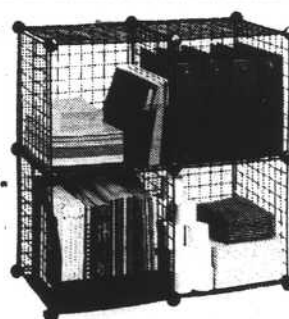
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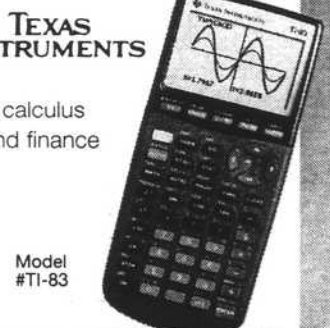
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