

THE WORLD WONDERS

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (Revelation 13:3).

(Excerpts quoted from *Inside the Vatican*, June–July 2002.
These are examples of what is posted each month.)

The Month of May, 2002, Pope John Paul II's Official Activities

ISRAELI MINISTER VISITS VATICAN

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was received by Vatican Secretary of State Angelo Cardinal Sodano and Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran. The subject of the meeting, which took place at the conclusion of the siege around the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, was peace in the Holy Land, especially in the city of Bethlehem.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres being received by Vatican Secretary of State Angelo Cardinal

DELEGATION FROM BULGARIA

The Holy Father welcomed Bulgaria's foreign minister, Solomon Passy, and the delegation he led to the Vatican on

the occasion of the Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Also present during this traditional encounter was Metropolitan Kalinik, who greeted the Pope on behalf of Patriarch Maxim. Speaking of his upcoming trip to Bulgaria, the pontiff said that it is his 'fervent desire' during his visit to strengthen the bonds of Christian communion between the Catholic Church and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.



President Georgi parvanov welcomes Pope John Paul II to Bulgaria May 23 in the capital city of Sofia

POPE MEETS CHILEAN PRESIDENT

Pope John Paul II met with Chile's President Ricardo Lagos Escobar. In his public remarks, the Pope emphasized the importance of family life. Efforts are currently underway in Chile to legalize divorce. Speaking with reporters after his private conversation with the pontiff, the Chilean leader told reporters that he would not discuss the divorce question. "That is for parliament to decide," he insisted. However, he disclosed that in their private conversation "the Pope had been particularly insistent on the question of the family."

DELEGATION RETURNS FROM NORTH KOREA

A Vatican delegation has concluded a visit to North Korea meant to promote contacts with the country's Communist government. The delegation was led by Msgrs. Celestino Migliore,

under-secretary for Relations with States and Luis Mariano, nunciature counsellor in the Secretariat of State. The Holy See currently does not have formal diplomatic relations with North Korea.

According to a statement released by the Holy See, the Vatican delegation met with the leaders of the government-approved “Association of Catholics of North Korea,” and celebrated Mass with the Korean faithful.

The visit was the sixth time since 1995 that a Vatican delegation has traveled to North Korea, in response to an appeal for international aid made by its government. Vatican officials estimate that there are only about 2,000-3,000 active Catholics today among the country’s 24 million people; in 1969 that number was estimated at 100,000.

POPE TO DIPLOMATS: PEACE FIRST

In his welcome address to eight new ambassadors to the Holy See on Friday, Pope John Paul II said peace is the first priority of all nations and of diplomats, “so that armed conflicts cease, as they only jeopardize the future of nations and populations.” The new ambassadors represent Belarus, Niger, Sweden, Thailand, Benin, Sudan, Iceland, and Jordan.

RELATIONS WITH EAST TIMOR

The Vatican announced that the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of East Timor have established diplomatic ties with each other. The newborn nation has two apostolic administrations, Dili and Baucau, with 750,000 Catholics in 31 parishes. The Holy Father sent Archbishop Renato Martino, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, to celebrate an outdoor Mass in Tacitolo, near the capital of Dili, for a ceremony celebrating the nation’s declaration of independence.

POPE ENDS AZERBAIJAN TRIP, ARRIVES IN BULGARIA

The Holy Father spent his second and last day in Azerbaijan by celebrating Mass with Azeri Catholics.

The Pope then flew directly to Bulgaria for an official welcoming ceremony by President Georgi Parvanov. Also present were the political and religious leaders, including Orthodox Patriarch Maxim, who in the past had not been favorable to a papal visit.



Azerbaijani President Geidar Aliev with Pope John Paul II

JOHN PAUL II MEETS PRESIDENT BUSH

The Pope received President Bush in his private study for a meeting on the new NATO-Russian alliance against terrorism, the Mideast conflict, and the scandals involving American priests.

President Bush, in town for the NATO-Russian summit with nineteen other world leaders, was the only one to have a private audience with the Pope.



Pope John Paul II with
President Bush

POPE MEETS PRESIDENT OF MAURITIUS

Pope John Paul II met briefly with President Karl Auguste Offman of the Republic of Mauritius. After a ceremonial exchange of gifts and greetings, the Pope and President Offman met privately for about five minutes. It was their first meeting since Offman assumed the presidency last February.

The Month of June, 2002, Pope John Paul II's Official Activities

NEW "POPEMOBILE"

John Paul II received the gift of a new "popemobile" at the end of today's general audience. The vehicle, which will be inaugurated in Toronto during World Youth Day, an M 430 Mercedes-Benz, was given by representatives of the German-U.S. firm DaimlerChrysler. The company has donated several automobiles to Popes since 1930.

GHANAIAN PRESIDENT RECEIVED

John Paul II met with John Agyekum Kufuor, president of Ghana, a country the Pope visited in May 1980.

COLUMBIAN PRESIDENT

John Paul II received Colombian President Andres Pastrana in his private library. Pastrana, who will be leaving office August 7, spoke to the Holy Father about the work for peace undertaken in Colombia by the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Beniamino Stella, and thanked the Pope for the messages of solidarity sent to Columbia.

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT

John Paul II received Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri in his study, and expressed the traditional Indonesian greeting, "selamat datang." Megawati, the leader of the world's largest Muslim country, introduced her husband and entourage to the Holy Father at the end of their brief meeting.

PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA

John Paul II received Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, president of Sri Lanka.

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