

Pope, in Turkey, Implored Aid in Great Task of Unity

ISTANBUL (NC) — A moment of prayer for the scores of people killed three days earlier in an earthquake southeast of here opened Pope Paul VI's visit to the leaders, the people and the shrines of Turkey.

Stepping from his specially-refitted Pan American jetliner, the Pope halted in front of Turkish President Cevdet Sunay and Premier Suleyman Demirel to say: "Arriving in this country immediately after a cataclysm that has plunged the nation in mourning, we turn our thoughts first to those who have suffered and ask all to join with us in a moment of observance."

Then the Pope moved into the hectic round of visits, talks and tours that marked his two-day stay in a land whose ancient Moslem heritage is preceded by an even more ancient Christian tradition.

The Pope's first stop was at the Latin-rite cathedral of the Holy Spirit, where more than 1,000 Catholics filled the church and spilled into its courtyard.

Speaking to the crowd in French, the Pope thanked them for their welcome and spoke of the joy the crowd brought to his heart. He recalled the statue of Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) that stands outside the cathedral, placed there by Turks grateful for the Pope's relief work during World War I and added:

"Then closer to us is the good Pope John XXIII, who spoke to you often in this very place as apostolic delegate and who in his 'Journey of a Soul' tells of all the esteem and affection he felt for those to whom Providence had made him pastor."

After citing the work of religious orders in Turkey, Pope Paul went on to speak of his reasons for making the visit. "Help us then," he pleaded, "help us in the great task we have undertaken and which has been one of the determining reasons for this journey: the recomposition of Christian unity. You feel here its necessity more than others, and you also see better than others its progress."

Concluding with a reference to the Christian history of Istanbul, known until 1930 by the name Constantinople given to it 1,600 years earlier, the Pope imparted his apostolic blessing in English.

Then Pope Paul, following a brief rest at this temporary

residence in the city, drove to a wooden chalet reserved for important visitors to President Sunay's Yildiz Palace.

Here the Pope spoke with the president, thanking him for his courteous welcome and calling to mind the establishment of relations between Turkey and the Holy See by Pope John XXIII. "We, in our turn," the Pope added, "making our own the mind of this great-hearted Pope, have made it our concern to develop and strengthen these relations. . . ."

"There is a very special reason for this. It is because the great cultural heritage of your country, of which the evidence is everywhere so abundant, includes centers of

considerable interest both for the Catholic Church and for all Christians," the Pope pointed out.

The Pope also recalled that, when Turkish Foreign Minister Ihsan Sabri Caglayangil had visited him in the Vatican a few months before, he had invited him to visit Turkey. "We never imagined that the proposal would so soon become a reality. Providence, however, provided us with the occasion and we were only too happy to take advantage of it."

The Pope said that it was in the spirit of Pope John that he had returned to the Turkish government the banner captured by Christian navies at the 16th century battle of

Lepanto, "thereby publicly proclaiming that the disagreements of the past were indeed dead."

President Sunay praised the Pope's efforts for peace and also rendered homage to the memory of Pope John XXIII and his work in Turkey. He thanked the Pope for the restitution of the Turkish banner.

Premier Demirel and Foreign Minister Caglayangil took part in the meeting, which, to judge from the time it consumed (more than an hour), must have gone beyond formalities into practicalities.

Following the presidential visit, the Pope began a tour of Istanbul, viewing it first from the deck of President Sunay's yacht, Halas, as it sailed along the Bosphorus. Then, landing at Dolmabahce Palace, the Pope continued his tour of the city by car.

The Pope then visited the church of Hagia Sophia — which in its 1,400-year history has been a church dedicated to Christ as Holy Wisdom personified, a mosque and now a national monument — the Pope turned the first sightseeing tour of his five pilgrimages into a religious gesture. He asked his guides if he might pray a moment in the great building where papal legate Humbert excommunicated Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople in 1054.

Msgr. Paul Marcinkus of the Chicago archdiocese, an official of the Papal Secretariat of State, who prepared for the Pope's visit in Turkey, and accompanied him throughout the tour, knelt at

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POPE PAUL VI WAVES to friendly crowd as he and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople joined hands, symbolizing their hope for unity. The Pontiff was leaving the residence of the Patriarch in Istanbul after talks in which they discussed the future of the Holy Places and the road to Christian unity. (See Page 9, for additional photos of the Pope's visit to Turkey.) (NC Photo)