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# John Paul is first pope in 900 years to attend an Eastern Orthodox service

By DENNIS REDMONT

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) — Pope John Paul II took one more step toward unification of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches today by becoming the first pontiff in nine centuries to attend a full Orthodox service.

Although the pope did not join in celebrating Mass, he hummed through the liturgy in a low voice and made the sign of the cross from right to left in the Orthodox manner, and not from left to right as Roman Catholics usually do.

The pope wore a white robe and a red mantle topped with a gold-embroidered red sash, and was greeted by Patriarch Demetrius I at the St. George Orthodox Church for their second meeting in two days.

The patriarch wore a black robe and carried an iron staff topped with two iron serpents as he led the pope into the church for the feast of St. Andrew — the patron of the Orthodox church.

The pope apparently was unaware of the bombing of nine bank branches in Istanbul shortly after midnight by a Moslem extremist group protesting his visit to this predominantly Moslem nation.

Police said the blasts caused damage but no injuries. The banks were at least six miles from the residence of the Vatican envoy, where the pope was staying.

The pope told Istanbul's small Catholic community last night at his first public Mass of his three-day Turkish visit that he would take part in the celebration of the feast of St. Andrew, "but we will not be able to concelebrate. That is the most painful sign of the misfortune introduced in the only church of Christ through division."

The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches split in the Great Schism of 1054, after a long-seething conflict over the authority of the pope. Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople, the name for Istanbul until 1930, each excommunicated the other. Since then, no pope has ever attended an Orthodox Mass or Eucharistic liturgy.

Rapprochement between the two churches began when Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras embraced at a historic meeting in Jerusalem in 1964. Three years later, the two churches lifted their mutual excommunications and exchanged visits.

Now, following in the footsteps of Pope Paul VI, John Paul II prepared the ground for a 60-member joint theological commission to



Pope John Paul II and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Demetrius I give a blessing from the Patriarchy in Istanbul, Turkey, today. UPI

overcome some of the difficulties still separating the two churches.

Besides papal primacy and different attitudes on the priestly celibacy and divorce — the Orthodox grant divorce on grounds of adultery and allow married men to be ordained — the 13 Eastern churches are sometimes fiercely independent.

Demetrius I has quietly tried to bring together such diverse churches as the Russian Orthodox and the American Greek Orthodox to name representatives to the commission, scheduled to start its meetings next year.

Turkey has completely blacked out the ecumenical aspect of John Paul's visit, which involves the tiny community of 60,000 Orthodox and 26,000 Catholics in this Moslem nation of 45 million.

The Turkish press, after a cool welcome, warmed to the pope after he kissed the ground upon arrival and delivered a plea for Christians and Moslems to work together to promote "moral values, peace and liberty."