

## Pope John Paul II touches millions of Canadians

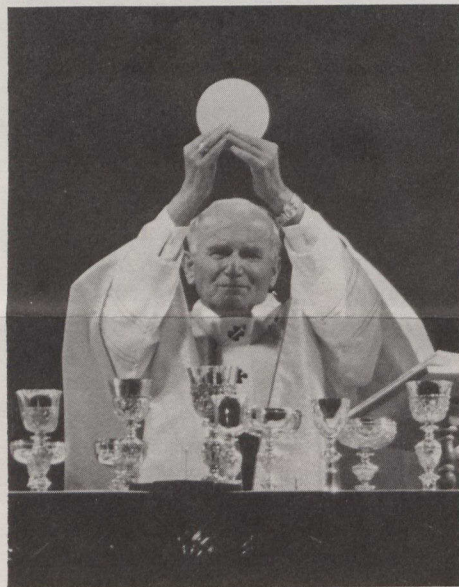
During a 12-day visit to Canada last month, Pope John Paul II reached out with his message of hope for mankind and millions of Canadians responded warmly to his plea.

In a 12 800-kilometre sweep across the country, the Pope visited 13 cities attracting crowds unlike those gathered for any other visitor. He seemed to unite people with his benevolence and accessibility and, despite differences of religious beliefs, he entered the hearts of many. As he offered Canadians his view of a better world, his magnetism helped to turn every event into a memorable experience.

### Arrival in Quebec

The Pope's Canadian journey began in Quebec City on September 9. After descending the ramp of his aircraft, he knelt to kiss the tarmac, his first act in all the countries he visits.

Governor General Jeanne Sauvé, who welcomed him, said he was a pilgrim of compassion and peace whose message was bold, selfless and universal. "We receive you as a prophet, for, more than any other contemporary leader, you have been successful in identifying the causes of our universal anxiety," she said.



*The Pope lifts the host at the papal mass in Quebec City on the first day of his 12-day visit to Canada.*

John Paul, in his first message to Canadians, said he would discuss "the issues of our times" and "the fundamental problems". He said he would pose questions during his trip, adding: "I would also like to hear yours."

Thousands greeted John Paul as he drove along the streets of Quebec City, and later approximately 300 000 people



*Pope John Paul waves to the crowd during the open-air mass at the airfield in Namao, Alberta.*

gathered at Laval University Stadium for the first of the Pope's many open-air masses in Canada.

He met with native Indian leaders in Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec, before visiting the national shrine at Cap-de-Madeleine near Trois-Rivières; the shrine marks the site where in 1888 the eyes of a statue of the Virgin Mary reportedly opened for several minutes.

During two days in Montreal, September 10 to 12, the Pope visited many sites where he was always greeted by large crowds. Some 300 000 people attended an open-air mass in the rain at Jarry Park Stadium, where the Pope beatified Sister Marie-Leonie Paradis, a nineteenth century nun. The highlight of the visit to the city occurred when about 60 000 enthusiastic young people welcomed the Pope with a spectacular show of singing and dancing at Olympic Stadium.

### The Maritimes

In Newfoundland, the Pope travelled to the coastal village of Flatrock to bless the fishing fleet in the tiny community. In St. John's, he met thousands of children, elderly people and the sick and handicapped, and celebrated a mass for some 80 000.

On September 13, in Moncton, New Brunswick, John Paul told about 100 000 people at an open-air mass to be proud

of their Acadian heritage. Speaking from an altar that included a four-metre waterfall flanked by curving staircases, the pontiff spoke about the need of "respect for human rights".

John Paul's affinity with the young and disabled was evident in Halifax, Nova Scotia,



*An embrace by the Pope as he enters the open-air mass site in Edmonton, Alberta.*

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