

Patriarch, pope meet in Istanbul

From Times wire reports

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Pope John Paul II of the Roman Catholic Church embraced and kissed Patriarch Demetrius I of the Eastern Orthodox Church today as the leaders of Christianity's two largest branches symbolically launched their dialogue to end more than nine centuries of division.

The Roman Catholic pontiff also embraced and kissed Armenian Patriarch Snork Khaludjan shortly after arriving at Istanbul's airport from Ankara on the second day of his ecumenical visit to Turkey.

John Paul's plane landed in Istanbul, Christianity's former Eastern capital, under a bright sun breaking through scattered clouds. Turkish and Christian religious officials were on hand to greet the pontiff.

The unprecedented security for the pope forced him to travel by helicopter to Ankara airport, instead of traveling by motorcade as originally planned. But he did ride in a motorcade into Istanbul, escorted by four helicopters hovering overhead.

On Friday, he and Demetrius will formally inaugurate the dialogue to remove some of the obstacles to reunification of their two branches of Christianity, which split 925 years ago and now claim a total of 900 million members.

It was this meeting that brought the pope to the Moslem nation where Christianity was supreme under the Byzantine emperors and where the Orthodox patriarch still has his headquarters, although there are only 100,000 Christians among the country's population of 45 million.

The session between the pope and patriarch is considered the highlight of John Paul's three-day visit to Turkey, which has been marked by a cool official reception and extremely heavy security in the nation that is 98 percent Moslem.

More than 1,000 people have been placed in preventive detention in the martial law cities of Istanbul and Ankara to stifle possible demonstrations against John Paul, during what is the potentially most dangerous voyage of his 13-month reign.

The pope's itinerary today included visits to two museums, one a former harem and the other a former church; calls on Christian church officials, a Mass and a reception for members of the foreign consular corps.

One of the museums is the Hagia Sophia, the masterpiece of Byzantine architecture and one of the largest churches in Christendom until the Turks captured Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453. They converted it into a mosque, and since 1923 it has been a museum of Byzantine art.

Religious worship in the Hagia Sophia is now banned, and an editorial in Turkey's biggest newspaper, *Hurriyet*, warned the pope on Sunday to avoid the "mistake" his predecessor Paul VI made there during his 1967 visit to Turkey. The previous pope knelt briefly in silent prayer, triggering angry reactions from militant Moslem groups and embarrassing the Turkish government.



Associated Press photo

Patriarch Demetrius I greets Pope John Paul II in Istanbul today

The former harem is the Topkapi Palace, where the priceless jewel collection of the Ottoman rulers is displayed.

Before flying to Istanbul, John Paul told a crammed Catholic service in Ankara today that Catholics and Moslems have much in common.

Before his final visit with Turkish President Fahri Koruturk, the pontiff held a prayer service in the tiny Catholic church inside the Italian Embassy grounds.

To an overflowing congregation he stressed that Moslems, who make up more than 98 percent of Turkey's population of 45 million, and Christians had much in common.

Both religions worship one God, he said, and although Moslems "do not accept Christ as the son of God, they accept Him as one of the prophets. They also respect his mother in the Virgin, and they call to her for help."

"Besides, they also believe that there will be a last judgement and those who live a decent life will be rewarded," the pope said. "They have many similar values with Christians and Catholics."

Contrasting sharply with adoring crowds who wildly cheered the pontiff on earlier visits this year to Mexico, the Dominican Republic, his native Poland, Ireland and the United States, the pope got minimum ceremo-

ny with maximum security when he began his visit in Ankara Wednesday.

Only honor guards, security forces and thoroughly searched journalists were allowed to see the pope lay a wreath at the tomb of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey who decreed separation of religion and state.

Sticking to their secular principles, Turkish officials made no mention in the official timetable of the main purpose of the pope's visit — to meet with Dimitrios today and Friday — saying this was time set aside for a "private program" for the pope.

The schism between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy opened in 1054 when the Eastern churches rejected papal authority over church matters. The first move to heal the dispute came in 1965 when the two sides revoked excommunication edicts and re-established contact. Pope Paul VI visited Istanbul in 1965.

Police in Istanbul Wednesday seized more than 500 university students who officers said were mainly leftists planning anti-pope demonstrations.

The students were taken to the headquarters of the 77th armored division brigade and police sources said they would stay there until the pope flies on to Izmir on Turkey's west coast Friday morning.