

Pope Francis Calls For Earth Protection

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — Latin America's first pope returned to Spanish-speaking South America for the first time Sunday, stressing the need to protect the poor and the environment from exploitation and to foster dialogue among all sectors of society.

Children in traditional dress greeted Francis at Mariscal Sucre airport outside Ecuador's capital, the wind blowing off his skullcap and whipping his white cassock as he descended from the plane following a 13-hour flight from Rome. He greeted and kissed several indigenous youths waiting for him on the side of the red carpet.

In a speech in front of President Rafael Correa, Francis signaled some of the key themes for the visit, which will also take him to Bolivia and Paraguay: the need to care for society's most marginal, guarantee socially responsible economic development and defend the Earth against profit-at-all-cost development that he says harms the poor the most.

"From the peak of Chimborazo to the Pacific coast, from the Amazon rainforest to the Galapagos Islands, may you never lose the ability to thank God for what he has done and is doing for you," he said from the tarmac. "May you never lose the ability to protect what is small and simple, to care for your children and your elderly who are the memory of your people, to have confidence in the young and to be constantly struck by the nobility of your people and the singular beauty of your country."

It's a message that is particularly relevant for Ecuador, a Pacific nation of 15 million people that is home to one of the world's most species-diverse ecosystems and the Galapagos Islands, which inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. While oil has brought Ecuador unparalleled revenues in recent years, the accompanying deforestation and pollution have stained its vast swaths of Amazonian rain forests where many indigenous peoples live.

Institutions Considering Name Changes

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The massacre at a predominantly black South Carolina church has institutions from Alaska to Connecticut evaluating whether they should continue enshrining the names of historical figures linked to slavery and the Confederacy.

The June 17 slaying of nine black worshippers led to calls to curb displays of the Confederate flag after photos emerged showing the suspect posing with one and burning the U.S. flag. But it also has added urgency to discussions on whether it is time to do away with names given to schools, colleges and streets that have come to be seen in a new light in places far outside the South.

A petition is calling for Yale University in Connecticut to change the name of its residential Calhoun College, which honors 1804 alumnus John C. Calhoun, a prominent advocate of the slave plantation system who became a vice president and U.S. senator from South Carolina. The petition says the name, in place since the 1930s, represents "an indifference to centuries of pain and suffering among the black population."

Yale spokeswoman Karen Peart said the university welcomes the discussion. "The tragedy in Charleston, on top of countless preceding tragedies in our country's history, has elevated public opinion and discourse on difficult subjects that have too long been avoided," she said.

Other campaigns around the country include efforts to change the names of Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis and New York City's General Lee Avenue in Brooklyn, named after Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. In Helena, Montana, officials will meet Wednesday to discuss whether anything should be done with a downtown memorial to fallen Confederate soldiers. The foundation was built in 1916 by the Daughters of the Confederacy.

Iran Nuclear Deal In The Balance

VIENNA (AP) — Nine days into marathon nuclear talks, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Sunday said the diplomatic efforts "could go either way," cutting off all potential pathways for an Iranian atomic bomb or ending without an agreement that American officials have sometimes described as the only alternative to war.

The EU's top foreign policy official, Federica Mogherini, said agreement was "very close." But Kerry said there was still a ways to go.

"We are not yet where we need to be on several of the most critical issues," Kerry told reporters outside the 19th-century Viennese palace that has hosted the negotiations.

World powers and Iran are hoping to clinch a deal by Tuesday, setting a decade of restrictions on Iran's nuclear program and granting Iran significant relief from international sanctions. Kerry met for 3 -90 hours on Sunday with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, as top diplomats from the five other negotiating countries planned to return to Austria's capital later in the evening.

Greece Enters Uncharted Territory After Referendum 'No' Vote

BY ELENA BECATOROS
Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece— Greece lurched into uncharted territory and an uncertain future in Europe's common currency Sunday after voters overwhelmingly rejected demands by international creditors for more austerity measures in exchange for a bailout of its bankrupt economy.

Results showed about 61 percent voted "no," compared with 39 percent for "yes," with 100 percent of the vote counted. The referendum — Greece's first in more than four decades — came amid severe restrictions on financial transactions in the country, imposed last week to stem a bank run that accelerated after the vote was called.

Thousands of jubilant government supporters celebrated in Syntagma Square in front of Parliament, waving

Greek flags and chanting "No, no, no!" Early trading on Asian markets indicated investors were alarmed, as stock indexes fell.

It was a decisive victory for Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who had gambled the future of his 5-month-old coalition government — and his country — in an all-or-nothing game of brinkmanship with Greece's creditors from other European countries that use the euro currency, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank.

"Today we celebrate the victory of democracy," Tsipras said in a televised address to the nation, describing Sunday as "a bright day in the history of Europe."

"We proved even in the most difficult circumstances that democracy won't be blackmailed," he said.

Tsipras called the referendum last weekend, saying a "no" vote would

strengthen his hand to negotiate a better deal for his country. His government has said it believes it would be possible to conclude a deal with creditors within 48 hours.

But European officials and most of Greece's opposition parties painted the referendum as one of whether the country kept using the euro currency — even though that was not the convoluted question asked on the ballot. Opinion polls Friday showed that 74 percent or more want their country to remain in the euro.

"Given the unfavorable conditions last week, you have made a very brave choice," Tsipras told Greeks in his address. "But I am aware that the mandate you gave me is not a mandate for rupture." He said he would seek to negotiate a viable solution with the country's creditors.

A Day Of Liberty



CAROLYN COLE/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

The tall ship L'Hermione leads a parade of ships up the Hudson River, past the Statue of Liberty, to welcome home the L'Hermione and the Spirit of Lafayette back to New York Harbor on Saturday, in New York.

Farmers Eager For Drones, But Most Can't Legally Fly

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

CORDOVA, Md. — Mike Geske wants a drone.

Watching a flying demonstration on Maryland's Eastern Shore, the Missouri farmer envisions using an unmanned aerial vehicle to monitor the irrigation pipes on his farm — a job he now pays three men to do.

"The savings on labor and fuel would just be phenomenal," Geske says, watching as a small white drone hovers over a nearby corn field and

transmits detailed pictures of the growing stalks to an iPad.

Nearby, farmer Chip Bowling tries his hand at flying one of the drones. Bowling, president of the National Corn Growers Association, says he would like to buy one for his Maryland farm to help him scout out which individual fields need extra spraying.

Another farmer, Bobby Hutchison, says he is hoping the man he hires weekly to walk his fields and observe his crops gets a drone, to make

the process more efficient and accurate.

"I see it very similar to how I saw the computer when it first started," says Hutchison, 64. "It was a no-brainer."

Farmers are eager for the technology.

The small, relatively inexpensive vehicles could replace humans in a variety of ways around large farms: transmitting detailed information about crops to combines and sprayers, directing them very precisely to problem spots and cutting down on the amount of water and chemicals that a farmer needs to use

in those areas.

The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, a trade group, says agriculture could account for 80 percent of all commercial drone use.

Agricultural use of drones is about to take off after being grounded for years by the lack of federal guidelines. The Federal Aviation Administration has approved more than 50 exemptions for farm-related operations since January.

Companies with those exemptions say business has grown, helped by quick advances in the technology.

Vietnam

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he was to return home, Plumb was shot down, captured, tortured and imprisoned in an 8 foot x 8 foot cell. He spent the next 2,103 days as a POW in communist war prisons.

During his captivity, Plumb served for two years as the chaplain in his camp.

His military honors include two Purple Hearts, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the POW Medal.

Plumb, who currently resides in California, has spoken to more than 4,500 audiences as a motivational speaker, according to his website. He has also appeared on national television programs such as "Good Morning America," "Nightline," "Larry King Live" and "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

"Attitude is the secret

to survival," he says on his website.

MAKING THE TRIP

Mollison describes himself as an aviation artist and military writer. He has been drawing images of airplanes since he was 3, which has led to increased interest in combat pilots and their stories. He has compiled interviews with pilots and believes Plumb represents another story that needs to be told.

In providing his coverage, Mollison doesn't plan to emphasize so much the historical details of the war. Rather, he seeks to offer a special insight into the face of the war — particularly those who fought in the conflict and still carry the scars more than four decades later.

Mollison didn't want to reveal many details of the itinerary before his departure because of concerns it could affect the trip. However, he plans to share the two men's experiences while in Vietnam on a daily

basis through observations, photos, video and other means.

The Vietnam War didn't affect just the soldiers who fought a half-world away from home, Mollison said. The war divided the American people and touched nearly every aspect of life on the home front — even long after the United States was no longer present in Vietnam, he said.

"The Vietnam War impacted American culture hugely," he said.

Unlike previous wars, the returning Vietnam veterans frequently didn't receive a warm welcome home, Mollison said. As a result, they were often more reluctant to talk about their experiences.

"The Vietnam veterans were once bitter and cynical, and they didn't want to tell their stories," he said. "But now, I want to share their stories because they are important and significant."

The passage of time has made it even more crucial to capture the Vietnam veter-

ans' stories before they are lost forever, much as with the passing of World War II and Korean War veterans, Mollison said.

In that regard, he sees more of a willingness now among Vietnam War veterans to speak about their experiences, thoughts and perspectives.

"The Vietnam veteran is getting up there (in age) to where the World War II veteran was 20 years ago," he said. "It's a great time to start talking to these (Vietnam veterans), while their memories are still relatively fresh and they have the willingness to talk."

The timing is also noteworthy as 2015 marks a pair of important historical milestones regarding the war, Mollison said. It's been 20 years since the United States' renewal of its relationship with the Vietnamese government and 40 years since the end of the war.

TELLING THE STORY

Mollison believes his con-

tent will give readers more than an eyewitness account of Plumb's trip.

The account will hopefully spur additional local coverage on Vietnam veterans, their wartime stories and the struggles they faced — and continue to face — in the years since they returned home, Mollison said.

"The Vietnam veteran has had a chip on his shoulder," he said. "It's time for the Vietnam veterans' stories to get their due."

Different wars have exerted different effects on American culture, Mollison said. "That's what drives me (to continue this work)," he said.

In many ways, the American people either think little of or want to forget the Vietnam War, Mollison said. The differences among the wars are also reflected in the lands where the battles were fought, he said.

"When you go to Belgium and France, they revere the American veterans," he said. "But when you go to Vietnam

and see the parks with the American tanks, it's not pleasant."

Many of the raw feelings surrounding the Vietnam War remain decades later, Mollison said.

"The Vietnam War wasn't American's shining moment," he said. "It's no wonder that veterans feel a sense of rage and betrayal." In that regard, Mollison hopes the journey with Plumb will help heal many of those wounds.

"I'm going over there (to Vietnam) to find some good and some hope and some closure," Mollison said.

For more information about Mollison, visit online at www.johnmollison.com and www.OldGuysAndTheirAirplanes.com.

For more information about Plumb, visit online at speaker.charlieplumb.com.

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