

RELIGION IN BRIEF

**Hallmark greets Muslims**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Hallmark has created its first greeting cards for the Muslim holiday Eid-al-Fitr, which marks the end of the monthlong fast of Ramadan.

Fasting on Ramadan is one of the five pillars, or obligations, of Islam and is one of the most important times of the year for Muslims.

One of the cards includes the traditional Arabic salutation, "Eid Mubarak," which means "Happy Holiday," and also contains the message, "May

Allah bless the world with His peace and love."

Another card reads, "Eid brings us all closer together... brothers and sisters, friends and family, united in faith, joy and thanks on this happy and blessed day. Eid Mubarak to you and yours."

The date for Ramadan is determined by a lunar calendar and is expected to begin this year some time between Oct. 25 and Oct. 27. Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, then break the fast with special meals with family and friends. On Eid-al-Fitr, Muslims also exchange gifts.

The American Muslim population has grown

significantly since the federal government loosened immigration restrictions in the 1960s and more U.S. companies are creating specialized products for them. Estimates of the number of American Muslims vary from 2 million to 6 million.

**Milwaukee priests unite**

MILWAUKEE (AP) — About 80 priests of the Milwaukee Roman Catholic Archdiocese have voted to form an alliance meant to serve as a support network and independent voice in

the church.

"There was an overwhelming 'yes' and show hands to the idea of some kind of alliance, some kind of structure, some kind of organization," the Rev. Kenneth Mich, one of 14 organizers at the Sept. 18 session where the alliance was formed.

Among their concerns are advocacy for the priest shortage, promoting discussion making celibacy optional and ensuring that ministries to minorities and religious instruction parishioners are maintained.

**Pope suffers illness, skips gathering**

By Nicole Winfield  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VATICAN CITY — Increasingly frail Pope John Paul II missed his general audience Wednesday — a rare absence because of a mild intestinal problem, raising fresh concerns about his health just weeks before he presides at ceremonies marking his 25th anniversary as pope.

The 83-year-old pontiff managed to address the crowd at the Vatican in an audio message, although he spoke with a weak voice and slurred his words — symptoms of the Parkinson's disease he has had for years.

"I am sorry for not being with you," John Paul said. "I carry you all in my heart and I bless you with affection."

The pontiff was to have traveled from his vacation home at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, to Vatican City to greet thousands of the faithful and tourists. But his doctors advised against the trip after he came down with mild "intestinal indisposition" Tuesday afternoon, the Vatican said in a statement.

"I am sorry for not being with you. I carry you all in my heart and I bless you with affection."

— Pope John Paul II

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican secretary of state, spoke on his behalf at the audience, clapping along with the crowd after John Paul delivered his remarks. Sodano asked people to pray that John Paul recover quickly.

"Viva il papa!" or "Long live the pope!" people in the crowd shouted.

The Vatican said the disorder was "mild," and papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls said John Paul would keep to his upcoming schedule. The includes moving back to the Vatican on Friday from Castel Gandolfo and meeting with the president of Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, on Saturday.

The crowd in the Vatican auditorium only heard the pope's remarks, but some satellite television stations broadcast his appearance. The pope — dressed in his usual white robe — sat in a small chapel at Castel Gandolfo and occasionally glanced up as he spoke.

Late Wednesday, the pope received a few Vatican employees who work at the Castel Gandolfo residence in a private audience, the participants said. They left the residence saying the pope had held up well during the meeting, which lasted about an hour.

**Josefy**

Continued from page 1A

"I think instead of the government coming in next year and trying to do something different, we should grow on what we are doing." Impullitti said. "Change is good, but I think we need to focus on what the guys are doing."

Josefy said he knows change is always occurring. A&M, and University President Robert M. Gates is working to respond to this change.

"Gates is finished with his rookie season," Josefy said. "He has his running shoes laced and ready to go."

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