

**News and Current Events :: Pope sees hope for ecumenical movement**

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Pope John Paul II, on a visit to the Swiss capital of Bern, strongly reaffirmed his commitment to ecumenical dialogue Sunday as he celebrated a Mass boycotted by Swiss Protestants but attended by a record number of Swiss Catholics.

Organizers said that the crowd of 70,000 at the Mass was 20,000 more than expected. They said it was the largest Catholic gathering ever recorded in Switzerland.

John Paul appealed for unity and respect for church teaching among Switzerland's Catholics, many of whom have questioned the Vatican's restriction of the priesthood to celibate males and its ban on sharing communion with other Christian faiths.

The Federation of Evangelical Churches of Switzerland declined an invitation to attend the Mass because its members would be barred from Communion, but its president, Samuel Lutz, spoke at a rally of Catholic youth addressed by the pope on Saturday. Federal President Joseph Deiss was at the Mass.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the pope was informed early Sunday morning of the death of former President Reagan and prayed for him. At a meeting with President Bush at the Vatican Friday, John Paul sent his regards to President Reagan and to Mrs. Reagan, who is so attentive to him in his illness.