

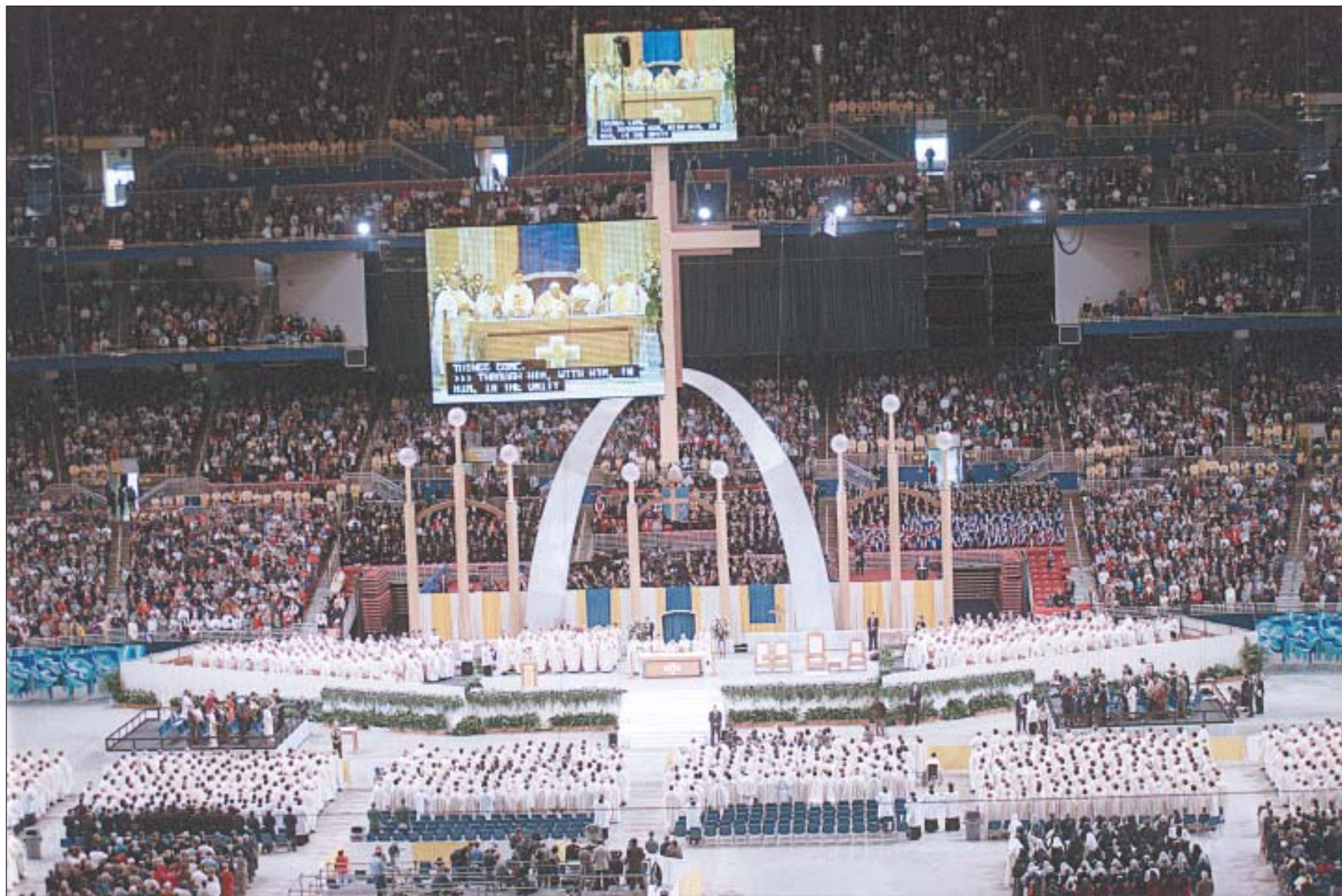
## POPE JOHN PAUL II



DERIK HOLTSMANN/News-Democrat

Pope John Paul II prays over young people gathered at a special service on Jan. 26, 1999, at the Kiel Center, now known as the Savvis Center.

# THE POPE IN ST. LOUIS



TIM VIZER/News-Democrat

A large group of cardinals, bishops and priests helped Pope John Paul II celebrate Mass on Jan. 27, 1999, at the Trans World Dome in St. Louis.



News-Democrat file photo

Above, Catholics from Belleville Diocese join a crowd of thousands who lined the streets of St. Louis to catch a glimpse of Pope John Paul II on Jan. 27, 1999, on the parade route to his Mass at the Trans World Dome, now called the Edward Jones Dome. At right, the pope greets the crowd while riding in the popemobile.



News-Democrat file photo

## Historic church's chalice used at St. Louis Mass

News-Democrat

For two cold January days in 1999, Pope John Paul II celebrated the spread of faith that began 300 years earlier on the banks of the Mississippi River.

Before 104,000 Catholics, he celebrated Mass in the former Trans World Dome by drinking from the same gold chalice used 300 years earlier by three priests who used a makeshift stone altar. The trio established the oldest parish in the United States, and their chalice still resides in the historic log-built Holy Family Church in Cahokia.

The pope's visit Jan. 26-27, 1999, brought familiar themes — the power of faith, compassion for the ill and disabled, and the sanctity of life.

He also delivered his strongest message ever against the death penalty.

The pope's 30-hour visit here was his fifth trip to the U.S. mainland and came on the heels of a triumphant, five-day visit to Mexico City. President and Hillary Rodham Clinton greeted him at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

The pope was 78, his arm shook and his body was stooped as he spoke upon arrival. His voice was firm as he spoke of St. Louis' civil-rights history and the current struggles over the rights of "the unborn, the terminally ill, the handicapped and others considered 'unuseful.'"

The pontiff later met privately with the president, spent time with his longtime friend, former St. Louis Archbishop Justin Rigali, thrilled thousands during two parades down the streets of St. Louis and shook hands with home-run slugger Mark McGwire.

That night he was a firm, kindly grandfather to 20,000

cheering teens during an evening prayer service at the Kiel Center. The teens appeared to energize him: He smiled often, joked and twirled his cane as he left, to the cheers of the teens.

On Jan. 27, 1999, he celebrated Mass with 104,000 people, using the gold chalice from Cahokia.

During his homily, he said: "Three hundred years have passed since Dec. 8, 1698, when the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time in what is now the city of St. Louis.... St. Louis has been the Gateway to the West, but it has also been the gateway of great Christian witness and evangelical service."

He urged the audience to spare even those who have "done great evil." He called for an end to the death penalty.

"Modern society has the means of protecting itself without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform," he said.

The Missouri Supreme Court, without explanation, postponed an execution that was to have taken place while the pope was in St. Louis. Papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls called the delay "a mockery."

After leading Mass at the Dome, the pope led a prayer service at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica. A rainbow appeared in the winter sky above the cathedral during the service.

The visit ended with a tired-looking pope walking hand-in-hand with former Vice President Al Gore on the tarmac at Lambert. At 8:30 p.m. that night he boarded a Trans World Airlines jet and headed for Rome.