

Pope Calls Bombing Halt 'Ray of Light'

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ROME, Dec. 31—Pope Paul VI, though suffering from influenza, made a public appearance today to welcome as "a ray of light" the end of the United States bombing raids on North Vietnam and the planned resumption of peace talks.

The 75-year-old Pontiff looked wan and his increasingly hoarse voice broke a few times in emotion as he showed himself in an open window of his private apartment of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace at noon. He spoke exclusively about Viet-

nam before giving his customary Sunday blessing.

In St. Peter's Square below, a downpour kept pilgrims and tourists, including many American, in their cars and buses. A concert of horns greeted the Pope.

In his brief address, Pope Paul spoke severely about the United States bombing strikes.

Voices Bitterness on Victims

He voiced "profound bitterness over the all too many victims that this long conflict has reaped in either camp, and particularly those who were

sacrificed in the recent frightful exacerbation of the hostilities."

The Pope went on: "What has happened during the last few days, and the shocked reaction of human—Christian—conscience to the horror of the tremendous tragedy should convince all responsible persons even more strongly of the necessity, which is moral even more than political, to continue indefatigably in clear and honest negotiations. The accord that is being sought, Pope Paul said, must be unequivocal and give each party what it could justly claim without violating the rights and interests of the other side, and without giving up its own rights and interests.

"With our good wishes and with our encouragement we accompany the work of the negotiators and of all those instrumental in the talks," the Pope declared. "We are thinking with particular affection of the most dear populations of Vietnam—we have suffered with them the old and the recent ordeals, we are shedding our tears with them for their dead, for the many innocent victims of war, hatred and revenge, for the destruction of their homes, the ruin of their cities and villages."

Discloses His Investment

The Pontiff disclosed that

recent "contacts with the interested parties" in the Vietnam conflict he had appealed for an end to the bombings and new negotiations.

European and Asian diplomats accredited to the Vatican have said since before Christmas that Pope Paul had sent a personal letter to President Nixon urging him to order a bombing halt. This report was formally denied by a Vatican spokesman after it was published in the Italian press on Wednesday.

Vatican officials declined to elaborate on the Pope's remarks about intervention in the Vietnam conflict after the breakdown in the Paris talks. "The Holy Father's diplomats have been very busy lately," one churchman said.

Pope Paul said yesterday's announcement in Washington that the bombing had stopped and talks for a cease-fire in Vietnam would be resumed Jan. 8 had been greeted by him as by the entire world, with "relief and hope." The new-coming had lifted a weight from his heart, he added.

Papal aides said later that Pope Paul, despite the indisposition of the last few days, might go through with earlier plans to say mass at a center for handicapped children on Mount Mario, a hill on Rome's northern outskirts, tomorrow morning. The rite was scheduled to mark the church's sixth World Peace Day tomorrow.