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'He was so warm'

JCU president inspired by Pope's talk to educators

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UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
— The Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, president of John Carroll University, came away impressed and encouraged after meeting with Pope Benedict XVI.

Niehoff was among about 500 Catholic educators who attended the pope's address April 17 at the Catholic Uni-

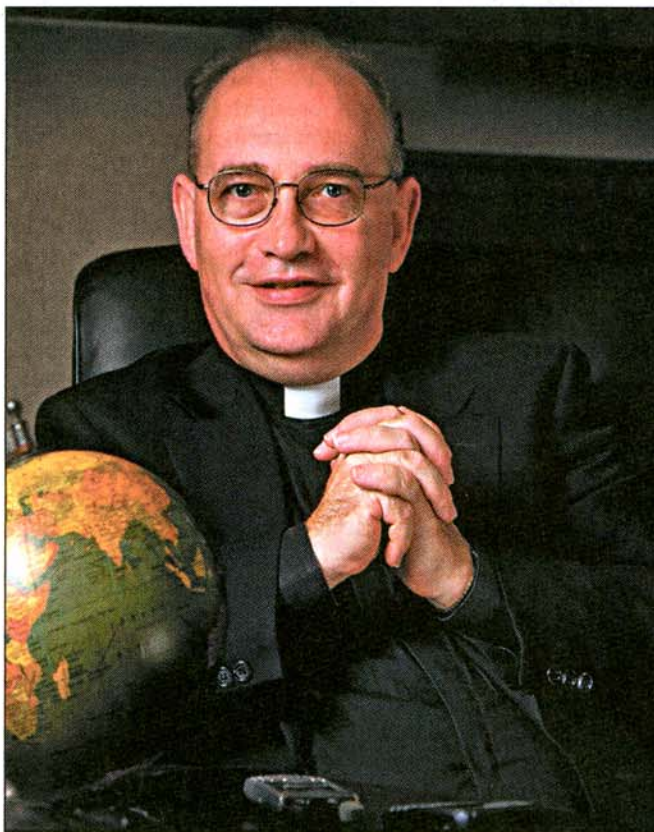
versity of America in Washington, D.C. It was part of the pontiff's six-day U.S. visit.

"We were all surprised at how warm he was and how obviously moved he was by the reception he got from us," Niehoff said.

"We didn't expect a person 81 years old to be able to pull off that type of presence and
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The Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, president of John Carroll University, was among about 500 Catholic educators who met with Pope Benedict XVI April 17 at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Pope

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leave people in many ways excited. We just got more than we imagined."

The pope began his talk with a focus on the contributions of Catholic education to the church and to the nation, Niehoff said. He noted the U.S. has developed an educational system that is "the envy of the world," he said.

"He gave us a reminder that Catholicism, in the end, really is about faith," Niehoff said. "And he was not talking only about the Catholic faith, necessarily, but Christians and members of the Jewish community as well."

While recalling the bicentennials of the dioceses and archdiocese, Benedict acknowledged the role that Archbishop John Carroll — the university's namesake — played historically. Carroll was the first bishop and archbishop in the U.S. during the

18th century.

The pope reminded the group of college and university presidents and diocesan school superintendents that catechesis — teaching people about the Christian faith — is critical for all, Niehoff said.

"People need to deepen their faith, so someone needs to teach them," Niehoff said.

"That faith will show in your lives, too," he told us. "Students need to see it in your life, and by extension on your campus and in your community."

Earlier that day, the pope spoke at a Mass before 46,000 people at Nationals Park in Washington. Niehoff said he watched the Mass on television, as only a select group of guests were able to attend due to security issues.

Niehoff said Benedict and his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, are "two different personalities."

The pope ended his U.S. visit Sunday in New York, where he led a ceremony at Ground Zero and conducted Mass at Yankee Stadium.