

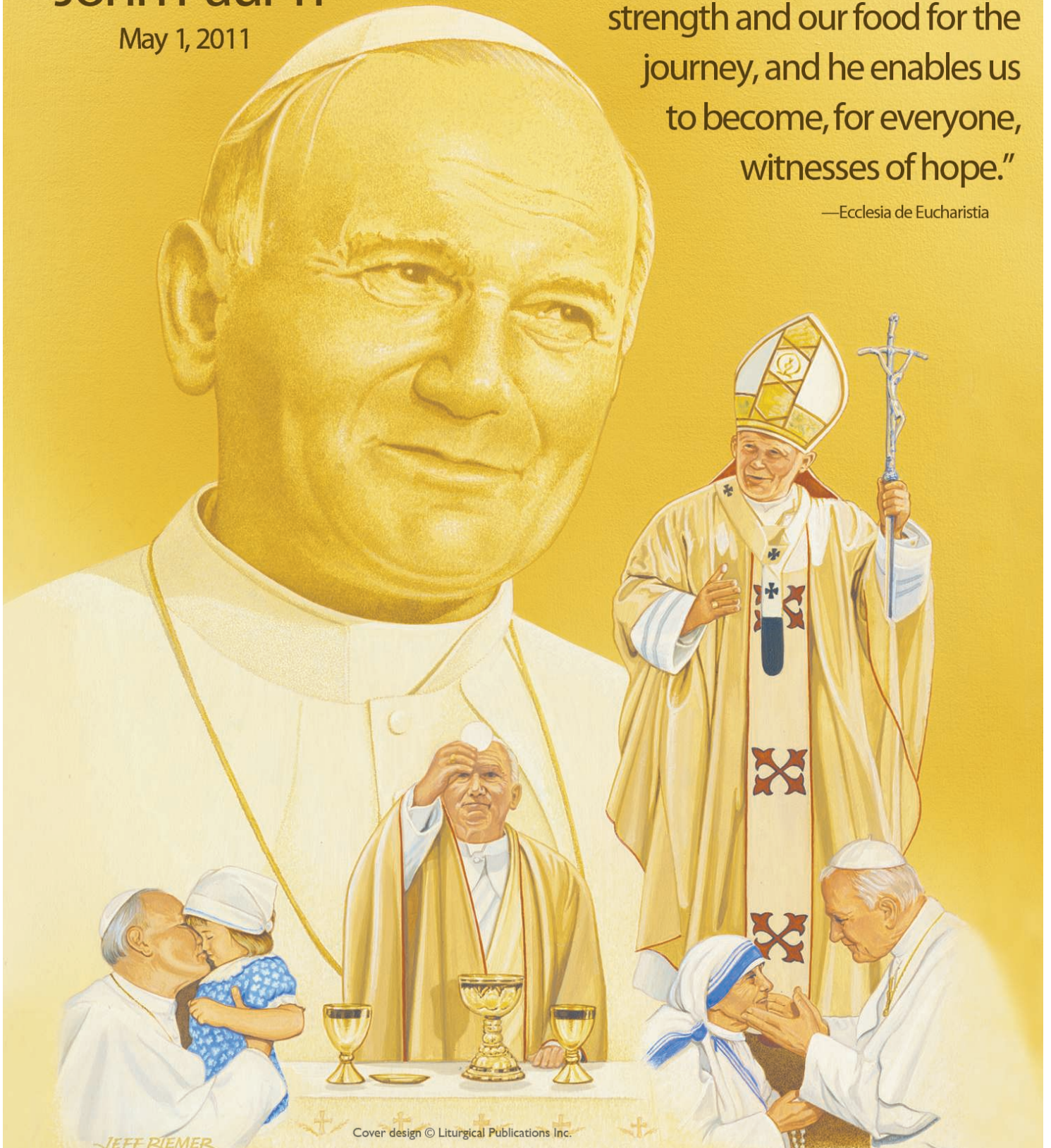
# Blessed

John Paul II

May 1, 2011

"In the humble signs of bread and wine,  
changed into his body and blood,  
Christ walks beside us as our  
strength and our food for the  
journey, and he enables us  
to become, for everyone,  
witnesses of hope."

—Ecclesia de Eucharistia



JEFF RIEMER

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## BENEDICT XVI

### ANGELUS

*St. Peter's Square  
Sunday, 16 October 2005*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

Exactly 27 years ago today, the Lord called Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Archbishop of Krakow, to succeed John Paul I who had died a little more than a month after his election. With John Paul II began one of the longest Pontificates in the Church's history, during which a Pope "from a far-away country" was also recognized as a moral authority by many non-Christians and non-believers. This was demonstrated by the moving expressions of affection on the occasion of his illness, and the touching condolences after his death.

The pilgrimage of so many of the faithful to his tomb in the Vatican Grottoes constantly continues, and this is an eloquent sign of how the beloved John Paul II had a place in people's hearts, particularly because of the witness of his love and dedication amid suffering. In him, we were able to admire the power of faith and prayer and a complete entrustment to Mary Most Holy, who never failed to accompany and protect him, especially in the most difficult and dramatic moments of his life.

We could describe John Paul II as a Pope totally consecrated to Jesus through Mary, as his motto highlighted clearly: "*Totus tuus*". He was elected in the middle of the month of the Rosary, and the pair of Rosary beads he often held in his hands became one of the symbols of his Pontificate, over which the Immaculate Virgin watched with motherly care.

On radio and television, the faithful of the entire world were frequently able to join him in this Marian prayer and, thanks to his example and teachings, rediscover its authentic, contemplative and Christological meaning (cf. Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, nn. 9-17).

Actually, the Rosary is not an obstacle to meditation on the Word of God and liturgical prayer; indeed, it represents a natural and ideal complement to it, especially as a preparation and thanksgiving for the Eucharistic celebration.

With Mary, we contemplate Christ encountered in the Gospel and in the Sacrament in the various moments of his life through the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries. We thus learn at the school of the Mother to conform ourselves to her Divine Son and to proclaim him with our own lives. If the Eucharist for Christians is the centre of the day, the Rosary contributes in a privileged way to deepening communion with Christ and teaches us to live by keeping the heart's gaze fixed on him, to make his merciful love shine upon everyone and everything.

A contemplative and a missionary: this is what beloved Pope John Paul II was. He was this way because of his intimate union with God, nourished each day by the Eucharist and by extended periods of prayer.

In the hour of the *Angelus* that was so dear to him, it is pleasant and a duty to remember him on this anniversary, renewing our gratitude to God for having given the Church and the world such a worthy Successor of the Apostle Peter. May the Virgin Mary help us cherish his precious legacy.

*Excerpts from the*  
**HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II**  
**FOR THE INAUGURATION OF HIS PONTIFICATE**

*St. Peter's Square*  
*Sunday, 22 October 1978*

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16).

Yes, Brothers and sons and daughters, these words first of all.

Their content reveals to our eyes the mystery of the living God, the mystery to which the Son has brought us close. Nobody, in fact, has brought the living God as close to men and revealed him as he alone did. In our knowledge of God, in our journey towards God, we are totally linked to the power of these words: "He who sees me sees the Father." He who is infinite, inscrutable, ineffable, has come close to us in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary in the stable at Bethlehem.

All of you who are still seeking God, all of you who already have the inestimable good fortune to believe, and also you who are tormented by doubt: please listen once again, today in this sacred place, to the words uttered by Simon Peter. In those words is the faith of the Church. In those same words is the new truth, indeed, the ultimate and definitive truth about man: the son of the living God—"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Our time calls us, urges us, obliges us to gaze on the Lord and immerse ourselves in humble and devout meditation on the mystery of the supreme power of Christ himself.

He who was born of the Virgin Mary, the carpenter's Son (as he was thought to be), the Son of the living God (confessed by Peter), came to make us all "a kingdom of priests".

The Second Vatican Council has reminded us of the mystery of this power and of the fact that Christ's mission as Priest, Prophet-Teacher and King continues in the Church. Everyone, the whole People of God, shares in this threefold mission. Perhaps in the past, the tiara, this triple crown, was placed on the Pope's head in order to express by that symbol the Lord's plan for his Church, namely that all the hierarchical order of Christ's Church, all "sacred power" exercised in the Church, is nothing other than service, service with a single purpose: to ensure that the whole People of God shares in this threefold mission of Christ and always remains under the power of the Lord; a power that has its source not in the powers of this world but in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection.

The absolute and yet sweet and gentle power of the Lord responds to the whole depths of the human person, to his loftiest aspirations of intellect, will and heart. It does not speak the language of force but expresses itself in charity and truth.

The new Successor of Peter in the See of Rome, today makes a fervent, humble and trusting prayer: Christ, make me become and remain the servant of your unique power, the servant of your sweet power, the servant of your power that knows no eventide. Make me be a servant. Indeed, the servant of your servants.

Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept his power. Help the Pope and all those who wish to serve Christ and with Christ's power to serve the human person and the whole of mankind. Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows "what is in man". He alone knows it.

So often today man does not know what is within him, in the depths of his mind and heart. So often he is uncertain about the meaning of his life on this earth. He is assailed by doubt, a doubt which turns into despair. We ask you therefore, we beg you with humility and trust, let Christ speak to man. He alone has words of life, yes, of eternal life.

Precisely today the whole Church is celebrating "World Mission Day"; that is, she is praying, meditating and acting in order that Christ's words of life may reach all people and be received by them as a message of hope, salvation, and total liberation.

I appeal to all men—to every man (and with what veneration the apostle of Christ must utter this word: "man"!)

— *pray for me!*

— *help me to be able to serve you! Amen.*

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*APOSTOLIC JOURNEY  
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA  
**MEETING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF NEW ORLEANS**  
*Excerpts from the*  
**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II***

*"Louisiana Superdome" Stadium  
Saturday, 12 September 1987*

**Part II**

I would like to speak to you briefly about *prayer*, about communion with God, a communion that is deeply personal between us and God.

In prayer we express to God our feelings, our thoughts, our sentiments. We wish to love and be loved, to be understood and to understand. Only God loves us perfectly, with an everlasting love. In prayer, we open our hearts and our minds to this God of love. And it is prayer that makes us one with the Lord. Through prayer we come to share more deeply in God's life and in his love.

One of the most striking things about *Jesus* was *his habit of prayer*. In the midst of an active public ministry, we find him going away by himself to be alone in silence and communion with his Father in heaven. On the Sabbath, he made it a practice to go to the synagogue and pray with others in common. When he was together with his disciples, or when he was by himself, he prayed to the Father whom he dearly loved.

Saint Mark's Gospel describes an evening in Capernaum when Jesus cured many who were sick and expelled many demons. After giving us this description of Christ's generous care for others, Saint Mark adds: "Rising early the next morning, he went off to a lonely place in the desert; there *he was absorbed in prayer*" (*Marc.* 1, 35).

And Saint Luke informs us that, before Jesus selected the Twelve to be his Apostles, "*he went out to the mountain to pray, spending the night in communion with God*" (*Luc.* 6, 12). In fact, it seems that it was his example of prayer that *prompted his disciples to want to pray*: "One day he was praying in a certain place", Luke tells us,

and "when he had finished, one of his disciples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray"" (*Ibid.* 11, 1). That was the occasion when Jesus taught them the prayer that we call the "Lord's prayer", or the "Our Father".

If you really wish to follow Christ, if you want your love for him to grow and last, then you must be *faithful to prayer*. It is *the key to the vitality of your life in Christ*. Without prayer, your faith and love will die. If you are constant in daily prayer and in the Sunday celebration of Mass, your love for Jesus will increase. And your heart will know deep joy and peace, such as the world could never give.

But many young people tell me that they do not know *how to pray* or they wonder if they are praying in a way that is correct. Here again, you must look to the example of Christ. How did Jesus himself pray?

First of all, we know that his prayer is marked by a spirit of joy and praise. "*Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit* and said: 'I offer you praise, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth' (*Ibid.* 10, 21). In addition, he entrusted to the Church at the Last Supper the celebration of the Eucharist, which remains for all ages the most perfect means of offering to the Father glory and thanksgiving and praise.

Yet, there were also times of suffering when, in great pain and struggle, Jesus poured out his heart to God, seeking to find in his Father both comfort and support. For example, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the inner struggle became even more difficult, then "*in his anguish he prayed with all the greater intensity* and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground" (*Luc.* 22, 44). "He prayed with all the greater intensity" – what an example for us when we find life difficult, when we face a painful decision or when we struggle with temptation. At times like these, Jesus prayed with all the greater intensity. We must do the same!

When it is difficult therefore to pray, the *most important thing is not to stop praying*, not to give up the effort. At these times, *turn to the Bible* and to *the Church's liturgy*. Meditate on the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Ponder the wisdom and counsel of the apostles and the challenging messages of the prophets. Try to make your own the beautiful prayers of the Psalms. You will find in the inspired word of God the spiritual food you need. Above all, your soul will be refreshed when you take part wholeheartedly with the community in the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church's greatest prayer.

Do you recall the story of Jesus and his Mother Mary at the wedding feast of Cana? At a certain point in the feast, when they have run out of wine, Mary tells those waiting on table, "*Do whatever he tells you*" (*Jo.* 2, 5). When the waiters follow Mary's advice, Jesus rewards their faith and changes water into wine, a wine that far surpasses the quality of what had been served before. And Mary's advice still holds true today. For the true success of our lives consists in *knowing and doing the will of Jesus*, in doing whatever Jesus tells us. When you pray, you must realize that prayer is not just asking God for something or seeking special help, even though prayers of petition are true ways of praying. But prayer should also be characterized by *thanksgiving and praise*, by *adoration and attentive listening*, by *asking God's pardon* and forgiveness. If you follow Jesus' advice, and pray to God constantly, then you will learn to pray well. God himself will teach you.

Prayer can truly change your life, for it turns your attention away from yourself and directs your mind and your heart towards the Lord. If we look only at ourselves, with our own limitations and sins, we quickly give way to sadness and discouragement. But if we keep *our eyes fixed on the Lord*, then our hearts are filled with hope, our minds are washed in the light of truth, and we come to know the fullness of the Gospel with all its promise and life.

Prayer also helps us to *be open to the Holy Spirit*, the Spirit of truth and love, the Spirit who was given to the Church so that she could fulfill her mission in the world. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to resist evil and do good, to do our part in building up the Kingdom of God.

It is significant that the symbol of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was *tongues of fire*. In fact, fire is often the symbol that the Bible uses to speak of the action of God in our lives. For the Holy Spirit truly inflames our hearts, engendering in them enthusiasm for the works of God. And when we pray, the Holy Spirit stirs up within us love of God and love of our neighbor.

*The Holy Spirit brings us joy and peace.* The modern technological world can offer us many pleasures, many comforts of life. It can even offer us temporary escapes from life. But what the world can never offer is lasting joy and peace. These are the gifts which only the Holy Spirit can give. And these are the gifts that I ask for you, so that you may be strong in hope and persevering in love. But *the condition for all of this is prayer*, which means contact with Christ, communion with God. Dear young people: my message to you is not new. I have given it before and, with God's grace, I will give it again. And so, as long as the memory of this visit lasts, may it be recorded that I, John Paul II, came to America *to call you to Christ, to invite you to pray!*

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## FAREWELL CEREMONY

### *Excerpts from the* **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II**

*Airport of Detroit*  
*Saturday, 19 September 1987*

*Mr. Vice President,*  
*Dear Friends, dear People of America,*

Once again God has given me the joy of making a pastoral visit to your country-the United States of America. I am filled with *gratitude to him and to you*. I thank the Vice President for his presence here today, and I thank all of you from my heart for the kindness and warm hospitality that I have received everywhere.

I thank all those who have worked to make this visit above all a time of *fruitful evangelization and prayerful celebration of our unity in faith and love*.

I am grateful to *all those who supported me by their prayers*, especially the elderly and the sick, who are so dear to the heart of Jesus Christ.

As I leave, I express my gratitude to God also for what he is accomplishing in your midst. With the words of Saint Paul, I too can say with confident assurance "that *he who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion*, right up to the day of Christ Jesus" (*Phil. 1, 6-7*). And so I am confident too that America will be ever more conscious of her responsibility for justice and peace in the world. As a nation that has received so much, she is called to continued generosity and service towards others.

As I go, I take with me vivid memories of a dynamic nation, a warm and welcoming people, a Church abundantly blessed with a rich blend of cultural traditions. I depart with admiration for the ecumenical spirit that breathes strongly throughout this land, for the genuine enthusiasm of your young people, and for the hopeful aspirations of your most recent immigrants. I take with me an unforgettable memory of a *country that God has richly blessed from the beginning until now*.

*America the beautiful!* So you sing in one of your national songs. Yes, America, you are beautiful indeed, and blessed in so many ways:

- in your majestic mountains and fertile plains;
- in the goodness and sacrifice hidden in your teeming cities and expanding suburbs;
- in your genius for invention and for splendid progress;
- in the power that you use for service and in the wealth that you share with others;
- in what you give to your own, and in what you do for others beyond your borders;
- in how you serve, and in how you keep alive the flame of hope in many hearts;
- in your quest for excellence and in your desire to right all wrongs.

Yes, America, all this belongs to you. But *your greatest beauty and your richest blessing is found in the human person*: in each man, woman and child, in every immigrant, in every native-born son and daughter.

For this reason, America, your deepest identity and truest character as a nation is revealed in the position you take towards the human person. *The ultimate test of your greatness in the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless ones.*

The best traditions of your land presume respect for those who cannot defend themselves. If you want equal justice for all, and true freedom and lasting peace, then, America, defend life! All the great causes that are yours today will have meaning only *to the extent that you guarantee the right to life and protect the human person*:

- feeding the poor and welcoming refugees;
- reinforcing the social fabric of this nation;
- promoting the true advancement of women;
- securing the rights of minorities;
- pursuing disarmament, while guaranteeing legitimate defense; all this will succeed only if respect for life and its protection by the law is granted to every human being *from conception until natural death.*

Every human person - no matter how vulnerable or helpless, no matter how young or how old, no matter how healthy, handicapped or sick, no matter how useful or productive for society - is a being of inestimable worth created in the image and likeness of God. This is the dignity of America, the reason she exists, the condition for her survival-yes, the ultimate test of her greatness: to respect every human person, especially the weakest and most defenseless ones, those as yet unborn.

With these sentiments of love and hope for America, I now say goodbye in words that I spoke once before: *"Today, therefore, my final prayer is this: that God will bless America, so that she may increasingly become - and truly be - and long remain one Nation, under God, indivisible. With liberty and justice for all."* May God bless you all. God bless America!



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## ***DEED FOR THE PIOUS TRANSFER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II***

In the light of Christ risen from the dead, on 2 April A.D. 2005, at 9:37 p.m., while Saturday was drawing to a close and we were already beginning the Lord's Day, the Octave of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church's beloved Pastor, John Paul II, departed this world for the Father. The whole Church, especially the young, accompanied his passing with prayers.

John Paul II was the 264th Pope. His memory lives on in the Church and in all human hearts. Karol Wojtyła, elected Pope on 16 October 1978, was born in Wadowice, 50 k. from Krakow, on 18 May 1920. He was baptized two days later in the parish church by the parish priest, Fr. Francesco Zak.

He received his First Holy Communion at the age of 9 years old and the sacrament of Confirmation when he was 18. His studies were interrupted by the invasion of the Nazis who shut down the university; he went to work in a quarry and later in the Solvay chemical factory.

From 1942 forward, feeling that he was called to be a priest, he took the formation courses provided by the clandestine seminary in Krakow. On 1 November 1946, he was ordained a priest by Cardinal Adam Sapieha. He was then sent to Rome where he earned a license and a doctorate in theology with a thesis on *Doctrina de fide apud Sanctum Ioannem a Cruce*.

He returned to Poland where he worked in pastoral ministry and taught the sacred disciplines. On 4 July 1958, Pope Pius XII appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow, of which Paul VI appointed him Bishop in 1964. It was in this capacity that he participated in the Second Vatican Council. Paul VI created him a Cardinal on 26 June 1967.

The Cardinals elected him Pope at the Conclave on 16 October 1978, and he took the name of John Paul II. On 22 October, the Lord's Day, he solemnly inaugurated his Petrine ministry.

John Paul II's Pontificate was one of the longest in the history of the Church. In this period we have seen many changes, in many aspects. The list includes the fall of several regimes to which he himself contributed; and in order to proclaim the Gospel he travelled to various nations.

John Paul II exercised the Petrine ministry with a tireless missionary spirit, devoting to it all his energy. He was sustained throughout by the *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* and by his love for all. He had more Meetings than any of his Predecessors with the People of God, the leaders of Nations, in Celebrations and at General and Private Audiences, as well as during his Pastoral Visits.

His love for young people made him inclined to establish the World Youth Days, to which he summoned millions of young people in various parts of the world.

He successfully encouraged dialogue with the Jews and with the representatives of other religions, whom he several times invited to prayer meetings for peace, especially the meetings in Assisi.

He considerably increased the College of Cardinals, creating 231 Cardinals (plus one Cardinal *in pectore*). He organized 15 Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops - seven General Ordinary Assemblies and eight Special Assemblies. He established many new Dioceses and Circumscriptions, especially in Eastern Europe.

He reformed the Eastern and Western Codes of Canon Law, created new Institutions and reorganized the Roman Curia.

As "*sacerdos magnus*", John Paul II exercised liturgical ministry in the Diocese of Rome and throughout the world in total fidelity to the Second Vatican Council. He set an outstanding example in promoting liturgical life and spirituality, as well as contemplative prayer and especially adoration of the Eucharist and the prayer of the Holy Rosary (cf. Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*).

Under his guidance the Church prepared herself for the third millennium and celebrated the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 in accordance with the instructions given in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. The Church then faced the new epoch, receiving his instructions in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, in which he pointed out to the faithful their future path.

With the Year of the Redemption, the Marian Year and the Year of the Eucharist, he promoted the spiritual renewal of the Church. He gave an extraordinary impetus to Canonizations and Beatifications, focusing on countless examples of holiness today that would be an incentive to the people of our time. He proclaimed Thérèse of the Child Jesus a Doctor of the Church.

The doctrinal magisterium of John Paul II is very rich. As custodian of the deposit of faith, he strove with wisdom and courage to promote Catholic theological, moral and spiritual teaching and, throughout his Pontificate, to counter the trends that opposed the genuine tradition of the Church.

His most important Documents include 14 Encyclicals, 15 Apostolic Exhortations, 11 Apostolic Constitutions, 45 Apostolic Letters, as well as the Catecheses he gave at the General Audiences and his Speeches in every part of the world. With his teaching John Paul II strengthened and enlightened the People of God on theological (especially in his first three great Encyclicals - *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia*, *Dominum et Vivificantem*), social and anthropological (*Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Centesimus Annus*), moral (*Veritatis Splendor*, *Evangelium Vitae*), ecumenical (*Ut Unum Sint*), missiological (*Redemptoris Missio*) and Mariological (*Redemptoris Mater*) doctrine.

He promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in the light of Tradition, authoritatively interpreted by the Second Vatican Council. He also published several volumes as a private Doctor.

His magisterium culminated in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and in the Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, during the Year of the Eucharist.

John Paul II has bequeathed to all a wonderful witness of piety, of a holy life and of universal fatherhood.

Signed by the witnesses of the celebrations and of the burial ...

*CORPUS IOANNIS PAULI II P.M.  
VIXIT ANNOS LXXXIV, MENSES X DIES XV  
ECCLESIAE UNIVERSAE PRAEFUIT  
ANNOS XXVI MENSES V DIES XVII  
Semper in Christo vivas, Pater Sancte!*

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CELEBRATION OF MASS, ADORATION AND BLESSING  
OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING  
OF THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST 2004-2005

*Excerpts from the*  
**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II**

*Altar of the Confessio of the Vatican Basilica*  
*Sunday, 17 October 2004*

"I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28: 20).

In contemplation before the Eucharist, at this moment we experience with special vividness the truth of Christ's promise: *He is with us!*

"*The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium*". The theme of the Congress invites us to consider the Eucharistic Mystery not only in itself, but also in relation to the problems of our time. *Mystery of light!* The human heart, burdened with sin, often bewildered, weary and tried by suffering of all kinds, has need of light. The world needs light in the difficult quest for a peace that seems remote, at the beginning of a millennium overwhelmed and humiliated by violence, terrorism and war.

*The Eucharist is light!* In the Word of God constantly proclaimed, in the bread and wine that have become the Body and Blood of Christ, *it is precisely he, the risen Lord*, who opens minds and hearts and makes us recognize him, as he made the two disciples at Emmaus recognize him, in the "breaking of the bread" (cf. Lk 24: 35). In this convivial gesture we relive the sacrifice of the Cross, we experience God's infinite love, we feel called to spread Christ's light among the men and women of our time.

*Mystery of life!* What greater aspiration is there in life? Yet *threatening shadows* are hanging over this universal human hope: the shadow of a culture that denies respect for life in all its stages; the shadow of an indifference that relegates countless people to a destiny of hunger and underdevelopment; the shadow of scientific research that is sometimes used to serve the selfishness of the strongest.

Dear brothers and sisters, the needs of our many brothers and sisters call us into question. We cannot close our hearts to their pleas for help. Nor can we forget that "one does not live by bread alone" (cf. Mt 4). We are in need of the "living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn 6: 51). Jesus is this bread. Nourishing ourselves on him means welcoming God's life itself (cf. Jn 10: 10) and opening ourselves to the logic of love and sharing.

I desired this Year to be *dedicated especially to the Eucharist*. In fact, every day, particularly Sunday, the day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church lives this mystery. But, in this *Year of the Eucharist*, the Christian community is invited to become more aware of it through a more deeply felt celebration, prolonged and fervent adoration and a greater commitment to brotherhood and the service of the least. The Eucharist is the source and manifestation of *communion*. It is the principle and plan of *mission* (cf. *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, chapters III and IV).

Therefore, in the footsteps of Mary, "woman of the Eucharist" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, chapter VI), the Christian community lives this mystery! Strengthened by the "bread of eternal life", it becomes a presence of light and life, a leaven of evangelization and solidarity.

*Mane nobiscum, Domine!* Like the two disciples in the Gospel, we implore you, Lord Jesus, *stay with us!*

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***EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION  
FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF POPE JOHN PAUL II***

***REGINA CAELI***

*Feast of Divine Mercy  
Second Sunday of Easter, 3 April 2005*

*Pope John Paul II died peacefully on the evening of 2 April, 9:37 p.m. Rome time. The last gift of the Holy Father for Divine Mercy Sunday, 3 April (also the Second Sunday of Easter), was the Regina Caeli, read by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, Substitute of the Secretariat of State, at the end of the Holy Mass celebrated that day in St Peter's Square for the deceased Pope. "I have been charged", Archbishop Sandri said, "to read you the text that was prepared in accordance with his explicit instructions by the Holy Father John Paul II. I am deeply honored to do so, but also filled with nostalgia".*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

Today the glorious Alleluia of Easter resounds. Today's Gospel from John emphasizes that on the evening of that day he appeared to the Apostles and "*showed them his hands and his side*" (Jn 20: 20), that is, the signs of the painful passion with which his Body was indelibly stamped, even after the Resurrection. Those glorious wounds, which he allowed doubting Thomas to touch eight days later, reveal the mercy of God who "*so loved the world that he gave his only Son*" (Jn 3: 16).

This mystery of love is at the heart of the liturgy today, the Second Sunday of Easter, dedicated to the devotion of Divine Mercy.

As a gift to humanity, which sometimes seems bewildered and overwhelmed by the power of evil, selfishness and fear, the Risen Lord offers his love that pardons, reconciles and reopens hearts to love. It is a love that converts hearts and gives peace. How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy!

Lord, who reveal the Father's love by your death and Resurrection; we believe in you and confidently repeat to you today: *Jesus, I trust in you, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world.*

The liturgical solemnity of the Annunciation that we will be celebrating tomorrow urges us to contemplate with Mary's eyes the immense mystery of this merciful love that flows from the Heart of Christ. With her help, we will be able to understand the true meaning of Easter joy that is based on this certainty: the One whom the Virgin bore in her womb, who suffered and died for us, is truly risen. Alleluia!

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[www.dioceseofcleveland.org](http://www.dioceseofcleveland.org)

***Prayer for asking graces through the intercession of the Servant of God***

***The Pope John Paul II***

*O Blessed Trinity*

*We thank You for having graced the Church with Pope John Paul II*

*and for allowing the tenderness of your Fatherly care,*

*the glory of the cross of Christ,*

*and the splendor of the Holy Spirit, to shine through him.*

*Trusting fully in Your infinite mercy*

*and in the maternal intercession of Mary,*

*he has given us a living image of Jesus the Good Shepherd,*

*and has shown us that holiness is the necessary measure of ordinary Christian life and*

*is the way of achieving eternal communion with you.*

*Grant us, by his intercession, and according to Your will,*

*the graces we implore,*

*hoping that he will soon be numbered among your saints.*

*Amen*

With ecclesiastical approval

**CARDINAL CAMILLO RUINI**

**the Holy Father's Vicar General for the Diocese of Rome**

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