

John Paul II was beatified in Saint Peter's Square on May 1, 2011 by Pope Benedict XVI, his immediate successor and for many years his valued collaborator as Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. John Paul II was canonized on April 27, 2014 in Rome, together with Pope John XXIII in Rome, by Pope Francis.

A Prayer

O Blessed Trinity, we thank you for having graced the Church with St. John Paul II and for allowing the tenderness of your fatherly care, the glory of the Cross of Christ and the splendor of the Spirit of love 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. He 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, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Quotes of the Saint

As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.

Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.

It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness. He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you.

Saint John Paul II, pray for us!

For Reflection

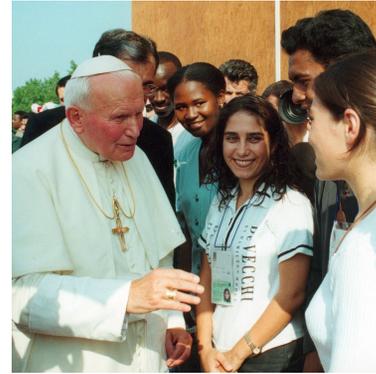
- What stood out to you about this pope?
- In learning about some of his writings, would you be interested in reading at least one or perhaps two? Which?
- He would visit spend time with persons that approached him. How would you approach him now with your prayers?
- What can we learn from the story of John Paul II?

Excerpts from Sources: Catholic.org, Vatican.va, FranciscanMedia.org

Socials with the Saints – PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE

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St. Pope John Paul II

*Patron of Youth, Philosophers, Pilgrims,
Evangelization*

Born: May 18, 1920

Died: April 2, 2005

Canonized: April 27, 2014 in Rome

Major Shrine: Basilica of St. Peter,
Rome

Feast: October 20

Karol Józef Wojtyła was born in Poland, on May 18, 1920. He was the third of three children born. His mother died when Karol was only 9 years old. His elder brother Edmund, a physician, died in 1932, and his father, a non-commissioned officer in the army, died in 1941; Karol was 21 years old.

He was nine years old when he received his First Communion and eighteen when he received the Sacrament of Confirmation. After completing high school, he enrolled in the University of Krakow in 1938. When the occupying Nazi forces closed the University in 1939, Karol worked (1940-1944) in a quarry and then in a chemical factory to earn a living and to avoid deportation to Germany.

During this time, he was attending an underground seminary. Nothing would stop young Karol from studying, especially in his formation to the priesthood. He was also one of the organizers of the local theatre.

In the summer of 1958, Pope Pius XII appointed Father Wojtyła as auxiliary bishop of Krakow. He was young – only 38! Communist officials allowed Wojtyla to be appointed auxiliary bishop of Kraków, considering him a relatively harmless intellectual. They could not have been more wrong! Bishop Wojtyla attended all four sessions of Vatican II and contributed especially to its *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Appointed as archbishop of Kraków in 1964, he was named a cardinal three years later.

Elected pope in October 1978, he took the name of his short-lived,

immediate predecessor, John Paul. Thus, he begins his ministry as universal pastor of the Church!

Pope John Paul II was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years and still very young – he was 58 years old. He made 146 pastoral visits in Italy and, as the Bishop of Rome, he visited 317 of the current 322 Roman parishes. In time, he made pastoral visits to 124 countries, including several with small Christian populations.

John Paul II proclaimed the “New Evangelization” in the 1980’s – he wanted to refresh the universal Church in her efforts to evangelize the Good News; explaining in a way that would invite every individual to respond. The New Evangelization is an opportunity to tell others about Jesus in creative ways, inviting people to encounter Him.

On May 13, 1981, an attempt was made on Pope John Paul II's life in Saint Peter's Square. Saved by the maternal hand of the Mother of God, following a lengthy stay in the hospital, he forgave the attempted assassin. Probably one of the most well-remembered photos of John Paul II's pontificate was his one-on-one conversation in 1983, with Mehmet Ali Agca in his prison cell, the man who had attempted to assassinate him two years earlier.

John Paul II confronted, exposed, and opposed the “culture of death”, wherein the human person is treated as an instrument to be used rather than an unrepeatable gift to be received. He proposed a different way, building a new “culture of life” where every human person, at every age and stage, is recognized as having an inviolable dignity and right to life, freedom, and love.

He charted a path to peace and solidarity, proclaiming to the nations that we are all our brothers' keeper and that we owe an obligation in solidarity to one another and, most especially, to the poor in all of their manifestations. He wrote of authentic freedom as a freedom “for” and not just a freedom “from”, a freedom that must be bounded by truth and lived in accordance with the moral understanding of our obligation to do what is right.

In April of the Jubilee Year – the year 2000 – John Paul II canonized Sister Faustina – known today as St. Faustina – the Divine Mercy Saint. When Pope John Paul canonized St. Faustina, he also, on the same day, surprised the entire world by establishing Divine Mercy Sunday (the feast day associated with the message) as a feast day for the entire Church. The feast day falls on the Second Sunday of the Easter season. On that day, Pope John Paul II declared, “This is the happiest day of my life.”

Repeatedly, Pope John Paul II wrote and spoke about the need for us to turn to the mercy of God as the answer to the specific problems of our times. He placed a strong and significant focus on the Divine Mercy message and devotion throughout his pontificate.

In his 27 years of papal ministry, John Paul II wrote 14 encyclicals and five books, canonized 482 saints and beatified 1,338 people. He promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. He reformed the Eastern and Western Codes of Canon Law. He was an extraordinary pope on every front.

No other pope met as many people as Pope John Paul II. More than 17.6 million pilgrims attended his Wednesday General Audiences (which numbered over 1,160). This does not include any of the other special audiences and religious ceremonies (more than 8 million pilgrims in the Great Jubilee Year of 2000 alone). He met millions of the faithful in the course of his pastoral visits in Italy and throughout the world. He also received numerous government officials in audience, including 38 official visits and 738 audiences and meetings with Heads of State, as well as 246 audiences and meetings with Prime Ministers.

In the last years of his life, he suffered from Parkinson's disease, and was forced to cut back on some of his activities. Pope John Paul II died in the Apostolic Palace at 9:37 p.m. on Saturday, April 2, 2005, the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, which he had instituted. On April 8, his solemn funeral was celebrated in Saint Peter's Square and his tomb is on the main level of Saint Peter's Basilica near Michelangelo's famous *Pieta*.