
TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL II: Papa, Proclaimer and Pastor

By Father William Cosgrove

The pope was not even buried and the people of God were calling him “Pope John Paul the Great” and crying out “Santo Subito” – Make Him a saint immediately. There is no doubt that around the world this one man has profoundly touched millions of lives, and in many ways changed the course of human history in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Each person you talk to will have his/her reason for why we may one day call him “the Great”; a title reserved to only two other popes: Gregory the Great and Leo the Great. For those of us who have lived under his spiritual guidance for the past 26 years I believe that John Paul will be called “the Great” because he embodied these three characteristics: he was a “papa” to us all, he proclaimed the message of the gospel unceasingly and finally, he was truly a “Good Shepherd” that laid down his life for his sheep in imitation of the Master.

For centuries we have called the bishop of Rome — Holy Father. Throughout the cultures of the world believers and unbelievers cry out in one voice “viva ‘il papa’”. A father is more than one who

brings life into the world with his wife. A father also leads, guides and encourages his children. Our Holy Father was a model of encouragement to the family of God throughout the world during his entire pontificate. He was especially encouraging to the youth of the world whom he loved so deeply. From his days as a chaplain to college students in Poland to the last moments of his life on earth, he longed to be with the youth of the world. He had the heart of a true father and the youth of the world saw him as a loving father.

His greatness can also be seen in his role as a “proclaimer of the gospel” In his taking the name of John Paul he wanted the world to know that he saw his mission as pontiff in a twofold way: he was to continue the reforms and renewal initiated by John XXIII and he was to be an apostle to the nations and a proclaimer of the gospel like St. Paul. In his last will and message he begins by invoking “the holiest Trinity”. John Paul began the first years of his pontificate by writing three encyclicals –one for each member of the Trinity. He was dedicated to centering his ministry on Christ, the Redeemer of

mankind. His second encyclical focused on the Father who was “rich in mercy” and his third encyclical described the Holy Spirit as the “Lord and Giver of Life”. He proclaimed the gospel to over 127 nations. He was tireless and indefatigable. Like Paul he believed that the gospel needed to be preached once again in a fresh new way to the “ends of the earth.”

Finally John Paul served the Church and the world by imitating the one “Good Shepherd”—Jesus Christ. Shepherds love being with their flock. John Paul longed to be with his flock –the Church. He was always called the “people’s pope” He touched people physically as well as spiritually. His kisses bestowed on little babies were reminders of the Heavenly Father’s desire to kiss each one of us. He truly saw himself as a “universal pastor” for a church that was truly universal for the first time. John Paul was more than the “bishop of Rome”. He was a shepherd unparalleled in the 20th century.

As we ponder the many talents and gifts of this man there can be no doubt that he was more than anyone could have asked for and someone beyond our wildest imaginings: a “papa”, a proclaimer of the gospel, and a pastor to the world. May he live forever in the house of the Lord. Amen.

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Please send all articles, comments and photos to the editor, Fr. Bill Cosgrove via e-mail at frbill@optonline.com or fax to 845-227-3951.

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted!

Although this column will not be published until May I am writing it on the morning of the funeral of John Paul II. By the time you read this we will hopefully have selected our new Holy Father and begun a new era for the Church.

Like many of you I watch the majesty of John Paul II's funeral with so many other people in the world. It was amazing to see not only the thousands of people from all over who flocked to Rome but also the many testimonies of those whose lives were touched by John Paul. He had the unique gift of being able to touch hearts and lives of so many.

While many lament about the future of the Church and her inability to touch the lives of youth, we were able to see the power of John Paul II with young people. Whether it was the images of all the youth gathered in Rome for the funeral or the video clips of past World Youth Days, we were able to see the connection that this elderly man was able to make with youth of every language and culture.

In my own parish's memorial mass for the Holy Father we remembered that the most memorable thing was the strong proclamation of the Good News that the Holy Father made throughout his pontificate. In whatever circumstance or situation he found himself, he was able to share the gospel; at times with words full of compassion, and at times with words full of challenge but always with a spirit of love.

All of us can honor the memory of John Paul II by imitating his life and his love. He was able to touch the lives of so many because of these gifts. May we continue to share his spirit with the world by following his example and proclaiming Jesus the Lord of our lives as well.

Many younger priests credit their vocation to the life of John Paul II. They were inspired by his life or his words and this started them on the road of their vocation. As your support of the Fraternity of Priests continues, you allow priests

around the world to continue to respond to their vocation. By their regular meetings with other members of the Fraternity they are able to find the support and wisdom they

need to continue in their priestly ministry.

Thank you for the great love and support that you show to priests. Know that the Lord's blessing will continue to shine upon you for your generosity.

In Christ,



Fr. Timothy Graff



Fraternity Financial Report

One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$6,300.00**

Actual Donations: **\$3,205.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage) **(\$3,095.00)**

Current as of March 31, 2005.

**A Message from
Pope Benedict XVI
delivered on April 20, 2005.**

Venerable Brother Cardinals,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Men and Women of Good Will!

1. May grace and peace be multiplied to all of you (cf. 1 Peter 1:2)! In these hours, two contrasting sentiments coexist in my spirit. On one hand, a sense of inadequacy and of human anxiety before the universal Church, because of the responsibility that was entrusted to me yesterday as Successor of the Apostle Peter in this See of Rome. On the other hand, I feel very intensely in myself a profound gratitude to God who — as we sing in the liturgy — does not abandon his flock, but leads it through the times, under the guidance of those whom he himself has chosen as vicars of his Son and has constituted pastors (cf. Preface of the Apostles I).

Beloved, this profound gratitude for a gift of the divine mercy prevails in my heart despite everything. And I consider it in fact as a special grace obtained for me by my venerable Predecessor, John Paul II. I seem to feel his strong hand gripping mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and to hear his words, addressed at this moment particularly to me: “Be not afraid!”

The Holy Father John Paul II’s death, and the days that followed, were a time of extraordinary grace for the Church and for the entire world. The great sorrow of his death and the sense of emptiness that it left in everyone were tempered by the action of the risen Christ, which was manifested during long days in the unanimous wave of faith, love and spiritual solidarity, culminated in his solemn obsequies.

We can say it: John Paul II’s funeral rites were a truly extraordinary experience in which in some way the power of God was perceived that, through his Church, desires to make of all peoples a great family, through the

unifying force of Truth and Love (cf. “Lumen Gentium,” No. 1). At the hour of death, conformed to his Teacher and Lord, John Paul II crowned his long and fruitful pontificate, confirming the Christian people in the faith, gathering them around himself and making the entire human family feel more united. How can we not feel supported by this testimony? How can we not perceive the encouragement that comes from this event of grace?

2. Surpassing all my expectations, Divine Providence, through the vote of the venerable Cardinal Fathers, has called me to succeed this great Pope. I reflect again in these hours on all that occurred in the region of Caesarea Philippi, some 2,000 years ago. I seem to hear Peter’s words: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and the Lord’s solemn affirmation: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church ... I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:15-19).

You are the Christ! You are Peter! I seem to relive the same evangelical scene; I, Successor of Peter, repeat with trepidation the anxious words of the fisherman of Galilee and I hear again with profound emotion the reassuring promise of the divine Teacher. If the burden of responsibility that is placed on my poor shoulders is enormous, exceeding is as well the divine power which I can count on: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18). In choosing me as Bishop of Rome, the Lord has desired me to be his Vicar, he has desired me to be the “rock” on which all can lean with security. I ask him to make up for the poverty of my strength, so that I will be a courageous and faithful Shepherd of his flock, always docile to the inspirations of his Spirit.

I prepare to undertake this peculiar ministry, the “Petrine” ministry at the service of the universal Church, with humble abandonment in the hands of the Providence of God. In the first place it is to Christ that I renew my total and faithful adherence: “In Te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum!”

To you, Lord Cardinals, with a grateful spirit for the trust shown to me, I ask that you support me with prayer and with constant, active and wise collaboration. I ask also all brothers in the episcopate to be by my side with prayer and counsel, so that I can truly be “Servus servorum Dei.” As Peter and the other apostles constituted, by the will of the Lord, a unique Apostolic College, in the same way the Successor of Peter and the bishops, successors of the apostles, must be very closely united among themselves, as the Council confirmed forcefully (cf. “Lumen Gentium,” No. 22).

This collegial communion, though in the diversity of roles and functions of the Roman Pontiff and of the bishops, is at the service of the Church and of unity in the faith, from which depends in notable measure the efficacy of the evangelizing action in the contemporary world. Therefore, I wish to continue on this path on which my venerated Predecessors advanced, concerned only to proclaim to the whole world the living presence of Christ.

3. I have before me, in particular, the testimony of Pope John Paul II. He has left a more courageous, free and young Church. A Church that, according to his teaching and example, looks with serenity to the past and has no fear of the future. She was led into the new millennium with the Great Jubilee, carrying in her hands the Gospel, applied to the present world through the authoritative rereading of the Second Vatican Council. Pope John Paul II indicated the Council precisely as a “compass” with which to orient oneself in the vast ocean of the third millennium (cf. apostolic letter “Novo Millennio Ineunte,” Nos. 57-58). In his spiritual testament he noted: “I am convinced that the new generations will still be able to draw for a long time from the riches that this council of the 20th century has lavished on us” (17.III.2000).

Edited for publication. The complete letter can be found online through the Vatican’s website at www.vatican.va.

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THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.



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