



**Santo Subito:**  
**A youth group session on Pope John Paul II**

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Pope John Paul II will be canonised on April 27, 2014, alongside Pope John XXIII. When John Paul II died in 2005, the crowds who were gathered at St Peter’s Square in the Vatican cried out “Santo Subito”, meaning “A saint now!” His canonisation seven years later – one of the fastest in history – is a time of great celebration for the Church, but not just because it recognises John Paul II as a great leader of the Church or a significant historical figure of the twentieth century. The canonisation of Pope John Paul II affirms that he remains a witness to Christ as part of the communion of saints and that he continues to pray for us from heaven.

This resource provides some ideas for a youth group session on John Paul II which you can use to celebrate his canonisation, and introduce young people to the life of this saint and the gifts he gave to the church.

## Outline

This resource provides ideas for a brief **talk** introducing Pope John Paul II and his life. This will be followed by time for **reflection** on some of the key themes which define John Paul II and his pontificate:

- A man of mercy
- A man of Mary
- A man of the saints
- A man of life

You might choose to break into small groups so that the young people participating in the session can choose which theme they would like to reflect on. Alternatively, choose one theme that everyone can reflect on together, with a different theme chosen across four sessions.

Accompanying each theme is a suggestion for **prayer**. If you have divided into small groups, you may wish to invite everyone back to share what they have discussed with the whole group, and choose one of the prayer suggestions to conclude. Otherwise, conclude the session in small groups, with each group praying the prayers linked to their reflection theme.

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# Part 1: Pope John Paul II talk notes

Here are some suggestions for leading a brief talk on Pope John Paul II, which introduces his life and gives context to his teachings as Pope.

On April 27 we celebrate the canonisation of Pope John Paul II. John Paul II was a great leader of the church and someone deeply involved in the history of the twentieth century, but his canonisation means that he remains important for us today as an example of holiness and as someone who continues to pray for us in heaven! Pope Francis describes him as “the great missionary of the church, a man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere.”

## Early life

- Pope John Paul II was born in Wadowice, Poland in 1920 and named Karol Wojtyla
- The youngest child of Emilia and Karol Wojtyla. His mother died when he was eight. His elder brother died suddenly when Karol was 12, leaving Karol and his father alone together.
- Karol and his father were very close. They lived in a single-room apartment behind their parish church and would go on pilgrimages together.
- Young Karol was studious and well-liked. He loved playing soccer, skiing, hiking with his father, writing poetry and acting.

## A son of Poland

- Pope John Paul II reflected that as a young person he was “completely absorbed by a passion for literature, especially dramatic literature, and for the theatre.” He seriously considered pursuing a life on the stage.
- The Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, and closed the university in Krakow where young Karol was studying. He began working in a quarry to avoid imprisonment.
- Wadowice was a town where Jews lived alongside Christians. One of Karol’s best childhood friends was Jerzy Kluger, a Jew. They were separated by World War II but later reunited when Karol became a bishop.

- In defiance of Nazism, which was suppressing expressions of Polish culture, Karol and his friends established an underground theatre which performed Polish plays in secret.

## A young priest

- At the age of 20, Karol’s father died, leaving him without any living members of his family. Pope John Paul II later reflected that “At twenty, I had already lost all the people I loved”.
- Even though priests were being persecuted by the Nazis, Karol entered the underground seminary in 1942, two years after his father’s death. He worked at a factory during the day, and studied theology in secret at night.
- Karol almost lost his life in the war – once he was hit by a German truck, but Nazi officers gave him first aid and sent him to a hospital. This was so unusual that Karol believed it to confirm his vocation to be a priest. Another time he hid in a basement and escaped to the Archbishop’s Palace while Nazis rounded up over 8,000 young men in Krakow.
- After the war ended, Karol was ordained in the private chapel of the Archbishop of Krakow, at the age of 26.
- As a young priest, Father Karol worked in parishes and universities. He frequently led hikes for students, who gave him the nickname “Uncle”.

“I am often asked, especially by young people, why I became a priest... I must begin by saying that it is impossible to explain entirely. For it remains a mystery, even to myself. How does one explain the ways of God? Yet, I know that, at a certain point in my life, I became convinced that Christ was saying to me what he had said to thousands before me: ‘Come, follow me!’

“There was a clear sense that what I heard in my heart was no human voice, nor was it just an idea of my own. Christ was calling me to serve him as a priest. And you can probably tell that I am deeply grateful to God for my vocation to the priesthood. Nothing means more to me or gives me greater joy than to celebrate Mass each day and to serve God’s people in the Church. That has been true ever since the day of my ordination as a priest. Nothing has ever changed this, not even becoming Pope.”

Pope John Paul II to young people in Los Angeles, 1987



### **Bishop and Pope**

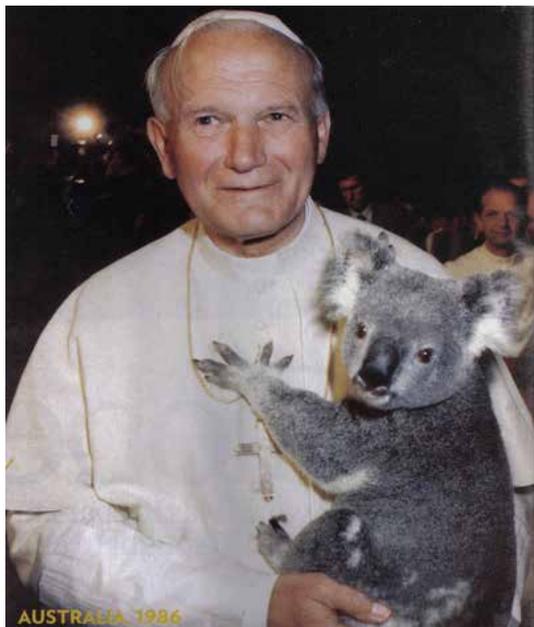
- Father Karol became a bishop at 38. He was appointed Archbishop of Krakow in 1964, when Poland was under an atheistic communist government.
- Bishop Wojtyla was elected pope at age 58, in 1978. He was the youngest pope in 132 years, and the first non-Italian pope in more than 500 years. He chose the name John Paul to honour John Paul I who died suddenly after a pontificate of 33 days.
- John Paul II survived an assassination attempt in 1981 when a Turkish gunman shot him at St Peter's Basilica in Rome. Two years later, he met with the gunman in his prison cell and forgave him.
- He helped end communism in eastern Europe, especially supporting and encouraging the Polish people to maintain their faith and continue to struggle for freedom.
- Pope John Paul II died in 2005 after a long illness with Parkinson's disease. His final words were "Let me go to the house of the Father".

### **Gifts to the church**

- There is so much Pope John Paul II gave to the church during his long papacy! John Paul II wrote more than any other pope did, canonised more saints than any other pope, and travelled more than any other pope.
- One of John Paul II's most lasting gifts to the church is World Youth Day. He invited the youth of the world to meet him at the first World Youth Day in Rome in 1984. Millions of young people have attended World Youth Days since.
- John Paul II's writings include 14 encyclicals, 14 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions and 41 apostolic letters
- His teachings are a lasting legacy – the church will continue to reflect and learn from his writings and homilies for decades to come.

Today, we will be spending some time in groups exploring some of John Paul II's messages...

## Part 2: Reflections on Pope John Paul II



Following the talk on Pope John Paul II's life, you can now explore some of the key themes of his pontificate, and the particular devotions and teachings he gave to the church. Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to explore one theme per week, or divide your group into smaller groups and allocate a different theme to each group. If you choose the second option, you can invite each small group to share what they have learnt with the rest of the group following the time of reflection.

### 1. A man of mercy

*"The Message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me... which I took with me to the See of Peter and which in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate."*

—Pope John Paul II at the Shrine of Divine Mercy, 1997

Possible props:

- Copies of Divine Mercy Sunday homily by Pope John Paul II – see Appendix 1

- Divine Mercy image
- Rosary beads for Divine Mercy chaplet
- Divine Mercy chaplet booklets

#### **Have a leader summarise the following introduction:**

Pope John Paul II often spoke of God's mercy, choosing the mercy of God as the topic for his second encyclical (letter to the whole church), titled *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy). John Paul II was strongly influenced by the devotion to Divine Mercy, which was revealed through St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who received visits from Jesus between 1931 and her death in 1938.

You might recognise the image of divine mercy which depicts Jesus with red and white rays coming from his heart. These rays represent the blood and water of Jesus which was shed to save souls. The image was painted based on St. Faustina's visions. The message of divine mercy encourages us to ask for God's mercy, trust in His mercy towards us, and to show mercy by being an instrument of mercy towards others.

Pope John Paul II canonised St. Faustina in April 2000 (she was the first saint of the new millennium), and established the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday in 2001. Divine Mercy Sunday falls on the first Sunday after Easter, and we are especially asked to ask for God's mercy towards us on this day, on behalf of ourselves and the whole world.

In his own life, Pope John Paul II exemplified mercy, praying constantly for peace. He reached out to other faiths, most especially Jews. With the help of his childhood friend Jerzy Kluger, John Paul II prayed at sites of significance to Jews, including Auschwitz and the Western Wall in Jerusalem, and was the first Pope to visit a synagogue. In the Jubilee year 2000, John Paul II asked for forgiveness for the sins of the church through history: "We humbly ask for forgiveness for the part that each of us with his or her behaviours has played in such evils thus contributing to disrupting the face of the church. At the same time, as we confess our sins let us forgive the faults committed by others towards us."

**What we talked about will have to remain a secret between him and me. I spoke to him as a brother whom I have pardoned and who has my complete trust.**

**John Paul II, 1983, after meeting with Mehmet Agca, the man who attempted to assassinate him.**

In 1983, Pope John Paul II visited Mehmet Agca, the man who attempted to assassinate him. In a prison cell in Rome, they spoke together, and Pope John Paul II forgave him in a living example of mercy.

**"O inconceivable and unfathomable  
Mercy of God,  
Who can worthily adore you and  
sing your praises?  
O greatest attribute of God Almighty,  
You are the sweet hope of sinners"**  
Diary of St. Faustina, 951.



Pope John Paul II died on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday in 2005. His final message to the church was written by him shortly before his death, and was read at the Vatican on Divine Mercy Sunday:

“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 reveals 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. Amen.”

### Reflection

*You will now reflect on excerpts from the Divine Mercy Sunday homily delivered by Pope John Paul II in 2001. (See appendix 1). You may like to have a leader read out the excerpts, or invite different young people to read them aloud. Have a copy for each young person so they can follow along.*

### Reflection questions

What does mercy mean? Where do we find examples of mercy in the Gospels?  
Why do you think Pope John Paul II emphasised the mercy of Jesus during his pontificate?  
What examples of mercy from Pope John Paul II’s life most challenge you or inspire you?  
What are some of the challenges of receiving and showing mercy in your life?  
How can we grow in mercy?

### Prayer – Divine Mercy Chaplet

Conclude the session by praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The Divine Mercy Chaplet is based on the revelations of Jesus to St. Faustina, and is often prayed at 3pm and as a novena in the lead up to Divine Mercy Sunday.

You can pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet using rosary beads. A guide can be downloaded at [www.divinemercury.com.au/devotionalprayers.htm](http://www.divinemercury.com.au/devotionalprayers.htm), or contact the AOY for booklets which may be borrowed.

There is also a sung version of the Divine Mercy chaplet by Fr. Robert Galea available for purchase. Sheet music is available for free download at [www.frrobgalea.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/divinemercurychaplet.pdf](http://www.frrobgalea.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/divinemercurychaplet.pdf)



## 2. A man of Mary

*“Totus tuus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt. Accipio te in mea omnia. Praebe mihi cor tuum, Maria.”*

*“I belong entirely to you, and all that I have is yours. I take you for my all. O Mary, give me your heart”*

– Prayer of consecration to Mary by Louis de Montford

Possible props:

- Copies of Pope John Paul II’s message for the 18th World Youth Day– see Appendix 2
- Icon of Our Lady
- Rosary beads
- Rosary booklets

### Have a leader summarise the following introduction:

Pope John Paul II had a life-long love of our Lady. As a child he would journey on pilgrimages with his father to the Shrine of our Lady of Czestochowa, a much-loved Polish icon of Mary. But it was during the Nazi occupation of Poland that his devotion to Mary intensified. He read the classic spiritual text “Consecration to Mary” by St Louis de Montford, and became profoundly aware of Mary’s presence in his life – he later described this as a “decisive turning point” in his life.

When he became a bishop, Pope John Paul II selected the phrase “Totus Tuus”, from the prayer of consecration to our Lady by St Louis de Montford, as his personal motto. As pope he reflected that “I have experienced the loving and forceful presence of the Mother of our Lord. Mary accompanies me every day in the fulfilment of my mission as successor of Peter.”

Pope John Paul II believed Mary’s intercession protected him at key moments of his life: once when he was hit by a truck during the war, and again when he was shot as pope in 1981. He believed that Mary saved his life by guiding the bullet which hit him and he left this bullet at the Shrine of at Fatima in thanksgiving. This bullet was later placed into the crown of the statue of Our Lady at Fatima.

Pope John Paul II encouraged the church to continue to seek Our Lady’s intercession, and wrote an apostolic letter called *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* to all Catholics to help them understand more about the power of the rosary. He wrote: “To pray the Rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and his Mother”. In this letter, he introduced a new set of “mysteries” to the rosary. These Luminous mysteries reflect on the life of Jesus during his public ministry. Pope John Paul II knew that love of Mary always leads to Jesus. On reflecting about the motto which guided him as bishop and pope he wrote:

“True devotion to the Mother of God is ... profoundly rooted in the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption”

### Reflection

We’ll now reflect on some excerpts from a World Youth Day message from Pope John Paul II about Mary. You may like to have a leader read out the excerpts, or invite different young people to read them aloud. Have a copy for each young person so they can follow along.

See appendix 2 for excerpts.

**“Then I understood that I could not exclude the Lord’s Mother from my life without neglecting the will of God.”**

**John Paul II, 2000, reflecting on first reading the Consecration of Mary by St Louis de Montford during the Nazi occupation.**

### Reflection questions

How was Mary involved in the life of Jesus?

How is Mary involved in our lives today?

What can we learn from Pope John Paul II’s love of our Lady?

How can we grow in our love for Mary?

### Prayer – Rosary

Conclude the session by praying the Luminous Mysteries of the rosary using rosary beads. A guide to the rosary can be downloaded from [www.cam.org.au/lifemarriagefamily/Family/Family-Prayer-and-Growing-in-Faith](http://www.cam.org.au/lifemarriagefamily/Family/Family-Prayer-and-Growing-in-Faith) or the AOY have a set of ten booklets which may be borrowed.

### 3. A man of the saints

*Young people of every continent do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! Be contemplative, love prayer; be coherent with your faith and generous in the service of your brothers and sisters, be active members of the Church and builders of peace...The Lord wants you to be intrepid apostles of his Gospel and builders of a new humanity.*

—John Paul II 's World Youth Day message, 2000

Possible props:

- Copies of Pope John Paul II's World Youth Day message in 2002— see Appendix 3

#### **Have a leader summarise the following introduction:**

During Pope John Paul II's pontificate, he canonised more saints than all the previous popes combined! He canonised a total of 473 new saints, and beatified 1315 men and women.

Pope John Paul II believed the examples of the saints are an important reminder to all people that the call to holiness is universal. Almost half of the people he canonised are lay people, including married men and women and single people who were not priests, or religious brothers and sisters. Many of the saints he canonised were alive in the 20th century, making them especially relatable to young people today.

#### International World Youth Days

1986 Rome, Italy

1987 Buenos Aires, Argentina

1989 Santiago de Compostela, Spain

1991 Czestochowa, Poland

1993 Denver, USA

1995 Manila, Philippines

1997 Paris, France

2000 Rome, Italy

2002 Toronto, Canada

2005 Cologne, Germany

2008 Sydney, Australia

2011 Madrid, Spain

2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2016 Krakow, Poland

Pope John Paul II was convinced that all are called to be saints – and he especially wanted to encourage young people to become more holy. One of the most significant ways he did this was by establishing World Youth Day. The first World Youth Day took place in Rome in 1985 as a gathering of young people with the pope. World Youth Day is now celebrated every year on Palm Sunday in local dioceses, and an international World Youth Day is hosted every two or three years in different cities around the world.

At World Youth Day, young people experience pilgrimage and encounter the universal church. There are moments of prayer, catechises, the sacraments and celebration of different cultural expressions of faith.

At each World Youth Day, a number of saint patrons are chosen. Pope John Paul II said "The saints offer us precious insights which enable us to understand more easily the intuition of faith, thanks to the special enlightenment which some of them have received from the Holy Spirit, or even through their personal experience of those terrible states of trial..."

When Pope John Paul II is canonised himself on April 27, he will be named patron saint of World Youth Days. Pope Francis told young people that "In the communion of saints [Pope John Paul II] will continue to be a father and friend to all of you."

*Dear young people, the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelization: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity. Many have gone before us along this path of Gospel heroism, and I urge you to turn often to them to pray for their intercession.*

Pope John Paul II's message to young people for the 20th World Youth Day.

#### **Reflection**

We'll now reflect on some excerpts from a World Youth Day message from Pope John Paul II in 2002. You may like to have a leader read out the excerpts, or invite different young people to read them aloud. Have a copy for each young person so they can follow along. See appendix 3 for excerpts.

Alternatively, you may wish to play the following recorded speech which Pope John Paul II delivered to young people at St Louis Stadium in Missouri, USA, in 1999.

[www.reapteam.org/pope-speech-one](http://www.reapteam.org/pope-speech-one)

[www.reapteam.org/pope-speech-two](http://www.reapteam.org/pope-speech-two)

The text of each speech is available at <http://archstl.org/archives/page/kiel-center-youth-rally>

## Reflection questions

Why do you think Pope John Paul II canonised so many saints during his papacy?

Who are your favourite saints?

Is sainthood possible for a young person today?

How are we called to live like saints?

## Prayer – Litany of the Saints

The litany of the Saints invokes the prayers of different saints. A traditional Litany of the Saints is provided in Appendix 4. You may choose to add some of the patrons of your youth group, as well as the 20th century saints canonised or beatified by Pope John Paul II including:

*Blessed Jacinta Marto* (1910–1920) and *Blessed Francisco Marto* (1908–1919): A sister and brother who, with their cousin Lucia, witnessed the apparitions of our Lady at Fatima.

*Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati* (1901–1925) (top right): A young Italian Catholic lay man who was dedicated to prayer, social action and charity.

*Blessed Miguel Pro* (1891–1927): A Mexican Jesuit priest who was martyred during the oppression of Catholics in Mexico.

*Saint Faustina Kowalska* (1905–1938): A Polish nun, mystic and visionary who received the message of Divine Mercy.

*Saint Maximilian Kolbe* (1894–1941): A Polish priest who volunteered to die in place of another man at Auschwitz.

*Blessed Peter To Rot* (1912–1945): A Papua New Guinean husband, father and lay catechist who was martyred during the Second World War.

*Saint Josephine Bakhita* (c.1869–1947): A Sudanese former slave who entered religious life.

*Saint Gianna Beretta Molla* (1922–1962): An Italian doctor, wife and mother who died as a result of medical complications from protecting the life of her fourth unborn child.

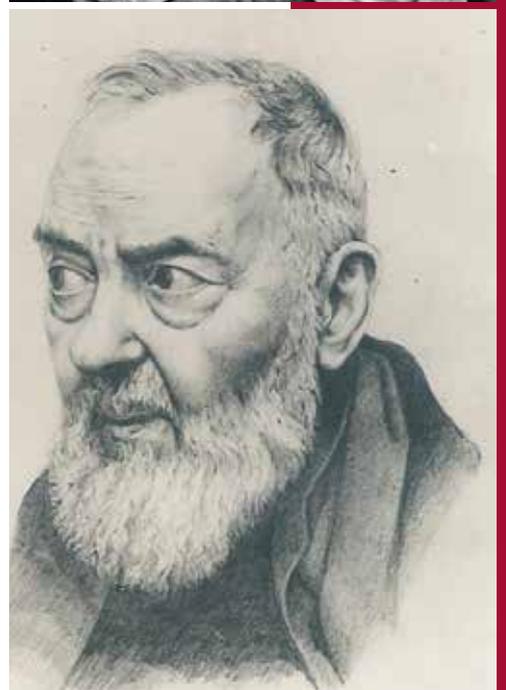
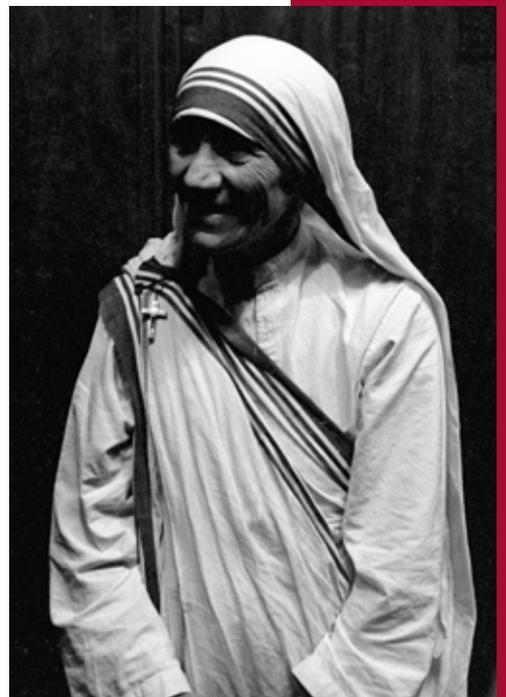
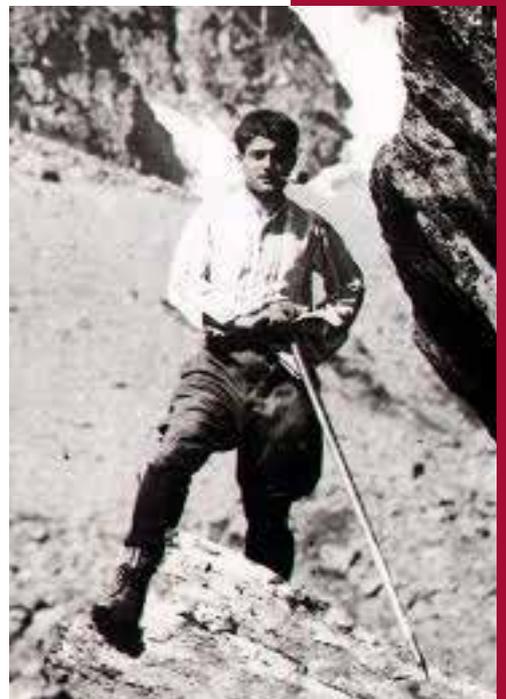
*Saint George Preca* (1180–1962): A Maltese priest who founded the Society of Christian Doctrine to promote holiness in lay life.

*Padre Pio* (1887–1968) (bottom right): A Italian Capuchin priest and mystic.

*Saint Jose Maria Escriva* (1902–1975): A Spanish priest who founded the Opus Dei movement which teaches that ordinary life can become a way of holiness.

*Blessed Mother Teresa* (1910–1997) (middle right): An Albanian-born nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity and dedicated her life to serving the poor in India.

There is also a sung version of the Litany of the Saints by Matt Maher available for purchase on his “The End and the Beginning” CD.



## 4. A man of life

*Every human life is willed by our heavenly Father and is a part of his loving plan.*

– John Paul II at the ceremony of the Anointing of the Sick, 1982

Possible props:

- Copies of Pope John Paul II's Homily at the Eucharistic Celebration for Young People, New York, 7 October, 1995 – see Appendix 5

### **Have a leader summarise the following introduction:**

Under the Polish occupation by the Nazis and the later communist government, Pope John Paul II lived through two regimes which degraded human life and limited human freedom. A key concern for his priesthood and ministry was deepening the understanding of all people about what it is to be human, and to protect all human life.

One way he did this was by examining the human person as revealed in the human body and the relationships between men and women. As a young priest, Father Wojtyla was interested in supporting young Catholics discerning marriage. He continued this theme in his weekly reflections as pope, in a series which eventually came to be known as Theology of the Body.

Theology of the Body explores how the human body reflects our humanity and expresses who we are called to be. It explores how love is oriented towards marriage and the family, and reaches its ultimate expression in self-giving.

Pope John Paul II defended life through his whole pontificate. In 1995 he wrote the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life) in which he defended the unborn, the sick, disabled, and the elderly. He also established the World Day of the Sick, which takes place on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. He assured sick people that “Your sufferings, accepted and borne with unshakable faith, when joined to those of Christ take on extraordinary value for the life of the Church and the good of humanity.”

As Pope John Paul II aged, he became sick with Parkinson's disease. In his illness, he continued to affirm the value of life. In his 1999 letter to the elderly he encouraged them to “live with serenity” the years God has given them, and concluded with a prayer:

*“Grant, O Lord of Life, that we may... savour every season of our lives as a gift filled with promise for the future... Grant that we may lovingly accept your will, and place ourselves each day in your merciful hands.*

Up until his own death, Pope John Paul II remained a witness to life wherever it is vulnerable, and was united with those who are suffering.

*Never tire of firmly speaking out in defence of life from its conception and do not be deterred from the commitment to defend the dignity of every human person with courageous determination. Christ is with you: be not afraid!*

John Paul II, 2001

### **Reflection**

We'll now reflect on a homily given by Pope John Paul II at the Eucharistic Celebration for Young People, in 1995. You may like to have a leader read out the excerpts, or invite different young people to read them aloud. Have a copy for each young person so they can follow along. See appendix 5 for excerpts.

### **Questions for reflection**

In what ways does our contemporary culture degrade human life? In what ways does it affirm life?

Why is human life worth defending?

How can young people be witnesses to life as Pope John Paul II calls us to be?

### **Prayer – Prayer for the dignity of life**

This prayer was written by Pope John Paul II:

*Dignity of life*

*O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life: Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy. Grant that all who believe in your son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time. Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives, and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.*

Pope John Paul II

from the Gospel of Life, given in Rome on 25 March 1995, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

# Resources

## Apps

eVotions – Bl. John Paul II App by Little i App, available from iTunes. A free app which features photos and videos of John Paul II, a novena, and prayers.

## Books

The AOY Youth Ministry Library has a number of resources related to Pope John Paul II and his teaching including:

- *My dear young friends: Pope John Paul II speaks to young people on life, love and courage*
- *Theology of the Body for Beginners* – Christopher West
- *Men, Women and the Mystery of Love: Practical Insights from John Paul II's Love and Responsibility* – Edward Sri

Other recommended titles include:

- *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* – Pope John Paul II
- *Memory and Identity* – Pope John Paul II
- *Witness to Hope: The biography of Pope John Paul II* – George Wiegel

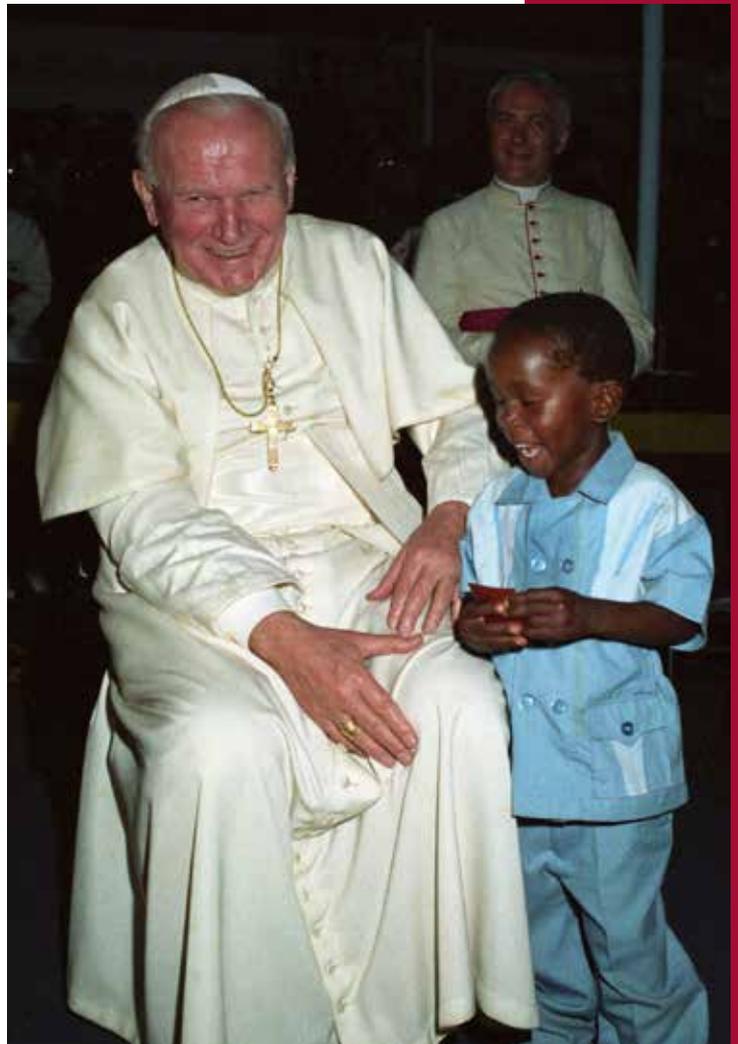
## Film

- *Karol: A man who became Pope* (2005). A dramatisation of the life of Pope John Paul II from his youth up to his election as Pope.
- *Pope John Paul II* (2005). A television miniseries dramatising the life of Pope John Paul II from his youth in Poland to his death.

## YouTube

There are many short clips of historic moments from Pope John Paul II's life available on YouTube. Recommended clips include:

- *Pope John Paul II – Reflections* – Xt3dotcom
- *Seven key points that made John Paul II "The Great Pope"* – RomeReports
- *Thank you John Paul II* – Salt and Light



*The AOY's Llewly Berchy was blessed by Pope John Paul II in 1986*

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Reflecting on Pope John Paul II's message of Divine Mercy

Divine Mercy Sunday Homily by Pope John Paul II, 22 April 2001

2. "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endures for ever!" (Ps 117: 1).

... This miracle of mercy has radically changed humanity's destiny. It is a miracle in which is unfolded the fullness of the love of the Father who, for our redemption, does not even draw back before the sacrifice of his Only-begotten Son.

In the humiliated and suffering Christ, believers and non-believers can admire a surprising solidarity, which binds him to our human condition beyond all imaginable measure. The Cross, even after the Resurrection of the Son of God, "speaks and never ceases to speak of God the Father, who is absolutely faithful to his eternal love for man.... Believing in this love means believing in mercy (Dives in misericordia, n. 7).

Let us thank the Lord for His love, which is stronger than death and sin. It is revealed and put into practice as mercy in our daily lives, and prompts every person in turn to have "mercy" towards the Crucified One. Is not loving God and loving one's neighbour and even one's "enemies," after Jesus' example, the programme of life of every baptized person and of the whole Church?

3. With these sentiments we are celebrating the Second Sunday of Easter, which since last year, the year of the Great Jubilee, is also called "Divine Mercy Sunday." ... Jesus said to Sr. Faustina one day: "Humanity will never find peace until it turns with trust to Divine Mercy" (Diary, p. 132). Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity at the dawn of the third millennium.

4. The Gospel, which has just been proclaimed, helps us to grasp the full sense and value of this gift. The Evangelist John makes us share in the emotion felt by the Apostles in their meeting with Christ after His Resurrection. Our attention focuses on the gesture of the Master, who transmits to the fearful, astounded disciples the mission of being ministers of divine Mercy. He shows them His hands and His side, which bear the marks of the Passion, and tells them: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20: 21). Immediately afterwards "he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20: 22-23). Jesus entrusted to them the gift of "forgiving sins," a gift that flows from the wounds in His hands, His feet, and especially from His pierced side. From there a wave of mercy is poured out over all humanity.

Let us relive this moment with great spiritual intensity. Today the Lord also shows us His glorious wounds and His heart, an inexhaustible source of light and truth, of love and forgiveness.

5. The Heart of Christ! His "Sacred Heart" has given men everything: redemption, salvation, sanctification. St. Faustina Kowalska saw coming from this Heart that was overflowing with generous love, two rays of light which illuminated the world. "The two rays," according to what Jesus himself told her, "represent the blood and the water" (Diary, p. 132). The blood recalls the sacrifice of Golgotha and the mystery of the Eucharist; the water, according to the rich symbolism of the Evangelist John, makes us think of Baptism and the Gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 3: 5; 4: 14).

Through the mystery of this wounded heart, the restorative tide of God's merciful love continues to spread over the men and women of our time. Here alone can those who long for true and lasting happiness find its secret.

6. "Jesus, I trust in you." This prayer, dear to so many of the devout, clearly expresses the attitude with which we too would like to abandon ourselves trustfully in your hands, O Lord, our only Saviour.

You are burning with the desire to be loved and those in tune with the sentiments of Your heart learn how to build the new civilization of love. A simple act of abandonment is enough to overcome the barriers of darkness and sorrow, of doubt and desperation. The rays of Your divine mercy restore hope, in a special way, to those who feel overwhelmed by the burden of sin.

Mary, Mother of Mercy, help us always to have this trust in your Son, our Redeemer. Help us too, St. Faustina, whom we remember today with special affection. Fixing our weak gaze on the divine Saviour's face, we would like to repeat with you: "Jesus, I trust in you." Now and for ever. Amen.

## Appendix 2: Reflecting on Pope John Paul II's love of Mary

Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 18th World Youth Day, 13 April 2003

My dear young people!

1. It always gives me great joy to address a special message to you on the occasion of World Youth Day...For the 18th World Youth Day that will be celebrated in dioceses all over the world, I have chosen a theme related to the Year of the Rosary: "Behold, your mother!" (Jn 19,27). Before his death, Jesus entrusted to the apostle John what was most precious to him: his Mother, Mary. These are the final words of the Redeemer, and therefore they take on a solemn nature and could be regarded as his spiritual testimony.

2. The angel Gabriel's words in Nazareth: "Hail, full of grace" (Lk 1,28) also cast light on the scene at Calvary. The Annunciation comes at the beginning, the Cross signals the fulfilment. At the Annunciation, Mary gives human nature to the Son of God within her womb; at the foot of the Cross, she welcomes the whole of humanity within her heart in the person of John. She was Mother of God from the first moments of the Incarnation, and she became the Mother of humanity during the final moments of the life of her Son Jesus on earth. She, who was without sin, on Calvary "experienced" within her own being the suffering of sin that her Son had taken upon himself to save humankind. At the foot of the Cross on which was dying the One whom she had conceived at the moment of her "yes" at the Annunciation, Mary received, as it were, a "second annunciation": "Woman, behold, your son!" (Jn 19,26).

The Son upon the Cross can pour out his suffering into his Mother's heart. Every child who suffers experiences that need. You too, my dear young people, are faced with suffering: loneliness, failures and disappointments in your personal lives; difficulties in inserting yourselves in the adult world and in professional life: the separations and losses in your families; the violence of war and the death of the innocent. Know, however, that in difficult times, which everyone experiences, you are not alone: like John at the foot of the Cross, Jesus also gives his Mother to you so that she will comfort you with her tenderness.

3. It says in the Gospel that "from that hour the disciple took her to his own home (Jn 19,27). This statement, the subject of many commentaries since early Christian times, does not simply point out the place where John lived. Beyond the material aspect, it evokes the spiritual dimension of this welcome and of the new bond established between Mary and John.

My dear young people, you are more or less the same age as John and you have the same desire to be with Jesus. Today, it is you whom Jesus expressly asks to receive Mary "into your home" and to welcome her "as one of yours"; to learn from her the one who "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2,19) that inner disposition to listen and the attitude of humility and generosity that singled her out as God's first collaborator in the work of salvation. She will discharge her ministry as a mother and train you and mould you until Christ is fully formed in you (cf. Rosarium Virginis Mariae, n. 15).

4. This is why I now wish to repeat the motto of my episcopal and pontifical service: "Totus tuus". Throughout my life I have experienced the loving and forceful presence of the Mother of Our Lord. Mary accompanies me every day in the fulfilment of my mission as Successor of Peter.

Mary is Mother of divine grace, because she is the Mother of the Author of grace. Entrust yourselves to her with complete confidence! You will be radiant with the beauty of Christ. Open up to the breath of the Spirit, and you will become courageous apostles, capable of spreading the fire of charity and the light of truth all around you. In Mary's school, you will discover the specific commitment that Christ expects of you, and you will learn to put Christ first in your lives, and to direct your thoughts and actions to him.

Dear young people, you know that Christianity is not an opinion nor does it consist of empty words. Christianity is Christ! It is a Person, a Living Person! To meet Jesus, to love him and make him loved: this is the Christian vocation. Mary was given to you to help you enter into a more authentic and more personal relationship with Jesus. Through her example, Mary teaches you to gaze on him with love, for He has loved us first. Through her intercession, she forms in you a disciple's heart able to listen to her Son, who reveals the face of his Father and the true dignity of the human person.

5. On 16 October 2002 I proclaimed the "Year of the Rosary", and I invited all the children of the Church to make of this ancient Marian prayer a simple and profound exercise in contemplation of the face of Christ. To recite the Rosary means to learn to gaze on Jesus with his Mother's eyes, and to love Jesus with his Mother's heart. Today, my dear young people, I am also, in spirit, handing you the Rosary beads. Through prayer and meditation on the mysteries, Mary leads you safely towards her Son! Do not be ashamed to recite the Rosary alone, while you walk along the streets to school, to the university or to work, or as you commute by public transport. Adopt the habit of reciting it among yourselves, in your groups, movements and associations. Do not hesitate to suggest that it be recited at home by your parents and brothers and sisters, because it rekindles and strengthens the bonds between family members. This prayer will help you to be strong in your faith, constant in charity, joyful and persevering in hope...

6. My dear young people, only Jesus knows what is in your hearts and your deepest desires. Only He, who has loved you to the end (cf. Jn 13,1), can fulfil your aspirations. His are words of eternal life, words that give meaning to life. No one apart from Christ can give you true happiness. By following the example of Mary, you should know how to give Him your unconditional "yes". There is no place in your lives for selfishness or laziness. Now more than ever it is crucial that you be "watchers of the dawn", the lookouts who announce the light of dawn and the new springtime of the Gospel of which the buds can already be seen. Humanity is in urgent need of the witness of free and courageous young people who dare to go against the tide and proclaim with vigour and enthusiasm their personal faith in God, Lord and Saviour.

You are also aware, my dear friends, that this mission is not easy. It becomes absolutely impossible if one counts only on oneself. But "what is impossible with men is possible for God" (Lk 18,27; 1,37).

True disciples of Christ are conscious of their own weakness. For this reason they put all their trust in the grace of God and they accept it with undivided hearts, convinced that without Him they can do nothing (cf. Jn 15,5). What characterises them and distinguishes them from others is not their talents or natural gifts. It is their firm determination to proceed as followers of Jesus. May you be imitators of them as they were of Christ! "May the eyes of your heart be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might" (Eph 1,18-19).

7. ...As I entrust you to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, I accompany you with a special Apostolic Blessing, sign of my trust and demonstration of my affection for you all.

### Appendix 3: Reflecting on Pope John Paul II's call to sainthood

Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 17th World Youth Day, Toronto, 18-28 July 2002

"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14)

Dear Young People!

1. I have vivid memories of the wonderful moments we shared in Rome during the Jubilee of the Year 2000, when you came on pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In long silent lines you passed through the Holy Door and prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation; then the Evening Vigil and Morning Mass at Tor Vergata were moments of intense spirituality and a deep experience of the Church; with renewed faith, you went home to undertake the mission I entrusted to you: to become, at the dawn of the new millennium, fearless witnesses to the Gospel...

2. "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14): this is the theme I have chosen for the next World Youth Day. The images of salt and light used by Jesus are rich in meaning and complement each other. In ancient times, salt and light were seen as essential elements of life.

"You are the salt of the earth...". One of the main functions of salt is to season food, to give it taste and flavour. This image reminds us that, through Baptism, our whole being has been profoundly changed, because it has been "seasoned" with the new life which comes from Christ (cf. Rom 6:4). The salt which keeps our Christian identity intact even in a very secularized world is the grace of Baptism. Through Baptism we are re-born. We begin to live in Christ and become capable of responding to his call to "offer [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1). Writing to the Christians of Rome, Saint Paul urges them to show clearly that their way of living and thinking was different from that of their contemporaries: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Rom 12:2).

For a long time, salt was also used to preserve food. As the salt of the earth, you are called to preserve the faith which you have received and to pass it on intact to others. Your generation is being challenged in a special way to keep safe the deposit of faith (cf. 2 Th 2:15; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14). Discover your Christian roots, learn about the Church's history, deepen your knowledge of the spiritual heritage which has been passed on to you, follow in the footsteps of the witnesses and teachers who have gone before you! Only by staying faithful to God's commandments, to the Covenant which Christ sealed with his blood poured out on the Cross, will you be the apostles and witnesses of the new millennium.

It is the nature of human beings, and especially youth, to seek the Absolute, the meaning and fullness of life. Dear young people, do not be content with anything less than the highest ideals! Do not let yourselves be dispirited by those who are disillusioned with life and have grown deaf to the deepest and most authentic desires of their heart. You are right to be disappointed with hollow entertainment and passing fads, and with aiming at too little in life. If you have an ardent desire for the Lord you will steer clear of the mediocrity and conformism so widespread in our society.

3. "You are the light of the world...". For those who first heard Jesus, as for us, the symbol of light evokes the desire for truth and the thirst for the fullness of knowledge which are imprinted deep within every human being.

When the light fades or vanishes altogether, we no longer see things as they really are. In the heart of the night we can feel frightened and insecure, and we impatiently await the coming of the light of dawn. Dear young people, it is up to you to be the watchmen of the morning (cf. Is 21:11-12) who announce the coming of the sun who is the Risen Christ!

The light which Jesus speaks of in the Gospel is the light of faith, God's free gift, which enlightens the heart and clarifies the mind. "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). That is why the words of Jesus explaining his identity and his mission are so important: "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

Our personal encounter with Christ bathes life in new light, sets us on the right path, and sends us out to be his witnesses. This new way of looking at the world and at people, which comes to us from him, leads us more deeply into the mystery of faith, which is not just a collection of theoretical assertions to be accepted and approved by the mind, but an experience to be had, a truth to be lived, the salt and light of all reality (cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, 88).

In this secularized age, when many of our contemporaries think and act as if God did not exist or are attracted to irrational forms of religion, it is you, dear young people, who must show that faith is a personal decision which involves your whole life. Let the Gospel be the measure and guide of life's decisions and plans! Then you will be missionaries in all that you do and say, and wherever you work and live you will be signs of God's love, credible witnesses to the loving presence of Jesus Christ. Never forget: "No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a bushel" (Mt 5:15)!

Just as salt gives flavour to food and light illumines the darkness, so too holiness gives full meaning to life and makes it reflect God's glory. How many saints, especially young saints, can we count in the Church's history! In their love for God their heroic virtues shone before the world, and so they became models of life which the Church has held up for imitation by all. Let us remember only a few of them: Agnes of Rome, Andrew of Phú Yên, Pedro Calungsod, Josephine Bakhita, Thérèse of Lisieux, Pier Giorgio Frassati, Marcel Callo, Francisco Castelló Aleu or again Kateri Tekakwitha, the young Iroquois called "the Lily of the Mohawks". Through the intercession of this great host of witnesses, may God make you too, dear young people, the saints of the third millennium!

4. ...Yes, now is the time for mission! In your Dioceses and parishes, in your movements, associations and communities, Christ is calling you. The Church welcomes you and wishes to be your home and your school of communion and prayer. Study the Word of God and let it enlighten your minds and hearts. Draw strength from the sacramental grace of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Visit the Lord in that "heart to heart" contact that is Eucharistic Adoration. Day after day, you will receive new energy to help you to bring comfort to the suffering and peace to the world. Many people are wounded by life: they are excluded from economic progress, and are without a home, a family, a job; there are people who are lost in a world of false illusions, or have abandoned all hope. By contemplating the light radiant on the face of the Risen Christ, you will learn to live as "children of the light and children of the day" (1 Th 5:5), and in this way you will show that "the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true" (Eph 5:9).

5. ...My blessing goes with you. And to Mary Mother of the Church I entrust each one of you, your vocation and your mission.





St. Dominic,  
St. Francis,  
All you holy Priests and Levites,  
All you holy Monks and Hermits,

St. Mary Magdalene,  
St. Agatha,  
St. Lucy,  
St. Agnes,  
St. Cecilia,  
St. Anastasia,  
St. Catherine,  
St. Clare,  
All you holy Virgins and Widows,  
All you holy Saints of God,

Lord, be merciful,  
From all evil,  
From all sin,  
From your wrath,  
From a sudden and unprovided death,  
From the snares of the devil,  
From anger, hatred, and all ill-will,  
From the spirit of uncleanness,  
From lightning and tempest,  
From the scourge of earthquake,  
From plague, famine, and war,  
From everlasting death,

By the mystery of your holy Incarnation,  
By your Coming,  
By your Birth,  
By your Baptism and holy fasting,  
By your Cross and Passion,  
By your Death and Burial,  
By your holy Resurrection,  
By your wonderful Ascension,  
By the coming of the Holy Spirit,  
On the day of judgment,

Be merciful to us sinners,  
That you will spare us,  
That you will pardon us,  
That it may please you to bring us to true penance,  
Guide and protect your holy Church,  
Preserve in holy religion the Pope, and all those in holy Orders,  
Humble the enemies of holy Church,  
Give peace and unity to the whole Christian people,  
Bring back to the unity of the Church all those who are  
straying, and bring all unbelievers to the light of the Gospel,  
Strengthen and preserve us in your holy service,  
Raise our minds to desire the things of heaven,  
Reward all our benefactors with eternal blessings,  
Deliver our souls from eternal damnation, and the souls  
of our brethren, relatives, and benefactors,  
Give and preserve the fruits of the earth,  
Grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed,  
That it may please You to hear and heed us,  
Jesus, Son of the Living God,

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.

pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.

Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.

Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.  
Lord, save your people.

Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Spare us, O Lord!  
Graciously hear us, O Lord!  
Have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us,  
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, graciously hear us  
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.

## Appendix 5: Reflecting on Pope John Paul II's defence of life

Homily of His Holiness Pope John Paul II at the Eucharistic Celebration for Young People, New York, 7 October 1995  
"Come Holy Spirit..."!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, my friends in Christ,

1. Today's liturgy is full of references to the Holy Spirit. Even as we pray for the Spirit to come among us, he is already here. He is here in so many of you. He is here above all in the action of the Mass, the most sacred rite of our Faith. You are here, I trust, not out of simple curiosity to see the Pope, but because of the Mass, because the Holy Spirit is leading us all to Christ!

...This is New York! The great New York! This is Central Park. The beautiful surroundings of Central Park invite us to reflect on a more sublime beauty: the beauty of every human being, made in the image and likeness of God (Cf. Gen. 1: 26), and the beauty that is God living in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. At Denver we meditated on this new life: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10: 10)...

2. The Spirit of God who, we are told in the Book of Genesis, breathed upon the waters at the very beginning of creation (Cf. Gen. 1: 2), is the same Spirit of life who was breathed into man, so that "man became a living being" (Ibid. 2: 7). This is what makes us different from every other creature. In our bodies we are a mere speck in the vast created universe, but by virtue of our souls we transcend the whole material world. I invite you to reflect on what makes each one of you truly marvellous and unique. Only a human being like you can think and speak and share your thoughts in different languages with other human beings all over the world, and through that language express the beauty of art and poetry and music and literature and the theatre, and so many other uniquely human accomplishments.

And most important of all, only God's precious human beings are capable of loving. Love makes us seek what is good; love makes us better persons. It is love that prompts men and women to marry and form a family, to have children. It is love that prompts others to embrace the religious life or become priests. Love makes you reach out to others in need, whoever they are, wherever they are. Every genuine human love is a reflection of the Love that is God himself, to the point where the First Letter of Saint John says: "The man without love has known nothing of God; for God is love" (1Jn. 4: 8).

3. Today is the Feast of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The readings of the Mass introduce us to the first three Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, three fundamental moments of salvation history, three stages along the way of the Holy Spirit's creative passage through human history: the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Birth of Jesus. In the first reading, Saint Paul writes to the Galatians: "But when the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman" (Gal. 4: 4). In these few words Saint Paul tells us what Saint Luke describes at greater length in the Gospel: the visit of the Archangel Gabriel to a virgin named Mary, in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. He invites her to become the Mother of the Redeemer. The Gospel tells us not only that Mary was surprised and confused by the words of the angel, but that she was afraid. Yes, Mary was afraid, just as we are often afraid! And the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary. For you have found favour with God" (Lk. 1: 30). It is the power of the Most High that will come upon you, and by the power of the Holy Spirit you will become the Mother of the Son of God (Cf. ibid. 1: 35-37).

If the creative power of God is at work at the moment of conception of every human being, in the Annunciation the Spirit accomplished something incomparably greater. In the womb of the Virgin Mary the Spirit created a man, to be born nine months later in Bethlehem, who, from the first moment of his conception, was the Eternal Son of the Father, the Word through whom all things visible and invisible were made (Cf. Jn. 1: 3) – Eternal Wisdom, the Archetype of everything that exists in creation.

4. When Mary realized who it was that was calling her, all fear was banished and she replied: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" (Lk. 1: 38). And at that instant, she became the Mother of the Son of God. This is the extraordinary truth that we meditate on in the first Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation.

All this happened so that, as Saint Paul says, we might be redeemed and might receive adoption as God's sons and daughters (Cf. Gal. 4: 5). In Christ, the Holy Spirit makes us God's beloved children. The Incarnation of the Son of God happened once, and is unrepeatable. Divine adoption goes on all the time, through the Church, the Body of Christ, and particularly through the Sacraments, through Baptism, Penance, the Eucharist, and of course the Sacrament of Pentecost that we call Confirmation. And then Saint Paul writes something very striking: the proof that we are God's children is that he "has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, which cries out 'Abba!' ('Father!')" (Gal. 4: 6). Abba! Father! This is our prayer every time we say the Our Father. But we have to say it in the Spirit, with a clear awareness that in Christ "we are no longer slaves but children, and therefore heirs with Christ to his kingdom" (Cf. ibid. 4: 7). This new condition of ours as Christians, that is, our transformation

through grace and our sharing in divine life itself, will reach its fulfilment in eternity. Then we shall share the happiness with which God himself is happy, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Do you see how important it is to invoke the Holy Spirit and to allow him to work in us? We must remember that the Holy Spirit can do great things for us! And the Holy Spirit does great things for us every day.

6. Like Mary, you must not be afraid to allow the Holy Spirit to help you become intimate friends of Christ. Like Mary, you must put aside any fear, in order to take Christ to the world in whatever you do – in marriage, as single people in the world, as students, as workers, as professional people. Christ wants to go to many places in the world, and to enter many hearts, through you. Just as Mary visited Elizabeth, so you too are called to “visit” the needs of the poor, the hungry, the homeless, those who are alone or ill; for example those suffering from AIDS. You are called to stand up for life! To respect and defend the mystery of life always and everywhere, including the lives of unborn babies, giving real help and encouragement to mothers in difficult situations. You are called to work and pray against abortion, against violence of all kinds, including the violence done against women’s and children’s dignity through pornography. Stand up for the life of the aged and the handicapped, against attempts to promote assisted-suicide and euthanasia! Stand up for marriage and family life! Stand up for purity! Resist the pressures and temptations of a world that too often tries to ignore a most fundamental truth: that every life is a gift from God our Creator, and that we must give an account to God of how we use it either for good or evil.

7. There is yet another stage of the Holy Spirit’s passage through history which we should meditate on: the third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the birth of the Son of God, announced by Angels to the Shepherds. “You have nothing to fear... This day in David’s City a saviour has been born to you... in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes” (Ibid. 2: 10-12). Saint Luke tells us that the Shepherds said to one another: “Let us go over and see this Child”(Cf. ibid. 2: 15). And they went and found the Child with Mary and Joseph. That is what we too must do! We must go to this Child, this Man, the Son of God, at whatever inconvenience, at whatever risk to ourselves, because to know and love him will truly change our lives.

I remember a song I used to sing in Poland as a young man, a song which I still sing as Pope, which tells about the birth of the Saviour. On Christmas night, in every church and chapel, this song would ring out, repeating in a musical way the story told in the Gospel. It says: “In the silence of the night, a voice is heard: ‘Get up, shepherds, God is born for you! Hurry to Bethlehem to meet the Lord’ “. The same story is told in the beautiful hymn, “Silent Night”, which everyone knows. That is a hymn which moves us deeply by reminding us that Jesus, the Son of God, was born of Mary, born to make us holy and to make us adopted sons and daughters of God. It is a hymn to the creative power of the Holy Spirit. It is a song to help us not to be afraid.

8. If I speak of Christmas, it is because in less than five years we shall reach the end of the Second Millennium, two thousand years since the birth of Christ on that first Christmas night in Bethlehem. We must allow the Holy Spirit to prepare us for this important event, which is another significant stage of his passage through history and of our pilgrimage of faith.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful!

Enkindle in them the fire of your love!

Amen.

## Appendix 6: Pope John Paul II’s pontificate by numbers

- Number of overseas trips: 104
- Number of trips inside Italy: 146
- Number of cities visited: 876
- Number of foreign countries visited: 129
- Number of speeches given on the road: 3,288
- Time on the road: 822 days
- Percentage of the papacy spent traveling: 18.65 percent
- Miles travelled: 773,520
- Miles travelled expressed in number of times around the world:31.19
- Number of people beatified: 1,345
- Number of saints made: 483
- Number of heads of state and prime ministers met in audiences:803
- Number of general audiences: 1,160
- Number of pilgrims met in audiences: 17,642,800
- Number of cardinals named: 232
- Number of encyclicals: 14
- Languages spoken (fluently!): 14

Source [www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Catholic/2005/04/The-Papal-Achievements-Of-Pope-John-Paul-II.aspx](http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Catholic/2005/04/The-Papal-Achievements-Of-Pope-John-Paul-II.aspx)

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