

KAROL JÓZEF WOJTYŁA

Born to Life
May 18, 1920

Ordained to the Priesthood
November 1, 1946

Named Auxiliary Bishop
of Kraków
July 4, 1958

Consecrated
September 28, 1958

Named Archbishop
of Kraków
January 13, 1964

Elevated to the
College of Cardinals
June 26, 1967

Elected to the Pontificate
October 16, 1978

Began his ministry as
the universal Pastor of the
Roman Catholic Church
October 22, 1978

Born to Eternal Life
April 2, 2005



JOHN PAUL II

1920 – 2005

Bishop of Rome
Vicar of Jesus Christ
Successor of Peter
Servant of the Servants of God



Tribute to Pope John Paul II

On Friday the Catholic Church buried our beloved Pope John Paul II. He will live, not only in our hearts and memories, but also in the history of the church for centuries to come. He was certainly among the greatest world leaders of the second half of the 20th century. In my own opinion, history will honor him for many things, but the following achievements really stand out.

His travels and personality. The Holy Father's smile and charisma, his magnetic personality, his ability to engage and connect with people, were all new things when he became pope. Through his travels and personal style, JP II has brought millions of Catholics and non-Catholics to a greater awareness and appreciation for the gospel and the church. If God himself needed a public relations and advertising manager in this world, he chose well. The worldwide influence and popularity of JP II cannot be overestimated. He was a star.

His encyclical letters. The Holy Father's encyclicals (major teaching letters) have been magnificent, profound, and controversial. To Americans who think in political terms, they have been both conservative and liberal. Unfortunately because of their length, they are not widely read. History will focus on these important encyclicals: Three encyclicals on social justice, then The Gospel of Life (on abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty), and The Church and the Eucharist.

His geo-political influence during the 80's. It is true that Ronald Reagan and JP II were extremely influential in bringing down Soviet communism and the Berlin Wall. It all began with the pope's support of the Solidarity labor movement in Poland. This alone could justify Providence's choice of Karol Wojtyla in 1978. How much the world has changed geopolitically with John Paul's influence!

His openness and high regard for Jews and non-Christians.

JP II has often reminded us that the Jews are our elder brothers, and that we Christians, Jews and Muslims are all children of Abraham. He told us that God's covenant with the Jews has never been revoked and never will be. He has apologized for any Christian complicity in the Holocaust. He also entered a mosque and praised the faith of Islam, particularly their devotion to the one true God, their morality, and their esteem for the 10 commandments.

May he rest in eternal peace!

Father Eichenberger

-Written for the St. Francis Borgia parish bulletin, April 10, 2005.