

WORDS OF CONDOLENCE
BY ADAM CARDINAL MAIDA
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My Brothers and Sisters:

This day, our whole human family has lost a father. We Catholics have proudly called him “Holy Father” since October 16, 1978, when he was elected Vicar of Christ and Vicar of St. Peter. He has indeed fulfilled his role of being a loving father to any and all who listened to his words or followed his example.

Today, our Church and world have lost one of the great giants of history. A world leader for over a quarter-century, who, by the consistency of his own fidelity to Christ and the Gospel of Life, was able to bring about an end to Communism and a renewal of the Church.

Pope John Paul II was not only a father to us, but also a brother in the faith. Like Jesus Himself, he showed us how to be fully human; he appreciated every aspect of the human journey with all of its joys and sorrows. As a poet and author, a philosopher and theologian, he sought to make the connection between faith and culture. In his more than one hundred pastoral journeys throughout the world, he expressed his complete solidarity with the human condition as it is lived out in every continent, in circumstances of poverty or affluence. While he spoke almost every possible language of the world, ultimately, he spoke the one language of the human heart and left behind a great witness of having forgiven his would-be assassin.

As a teacher and preacher, he used his voice and energy to proclaim the Gospel in every land and wrote 14 Encyclicals, 13 Apostolic Exhortations, 11 Apostolic Constitutions, and 42 Apostolic Letters. The theme of his teaching followed the words and example of the Gospel; he focused on the dignity of the human person as recipient of the Good News, but also as subject or active participant in proclaiming the same message of hope.

He called all of us to holiness and gave a personal witness and testimony by his fidelity to prayer, especially his deep love of the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. During his pontificate, there were an extraordinary number of beatifications and canonizations—together, almost 2,000. He truly lived his motto, “Totus tuus”—that is, he gave himself completely into

the loving hands of his God in communion with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and now he is completely in the Lord's hands, at rest from all of his labors.

The Church and the world mourn his loss. For months and years people will be talking about his legacy and trying to evaluate it and give him his rightful place as Pope John Paul the Great. But in the end, I think Pope John Paul II would simply want us to remember him as the Lord's humble servant, our father and brother. Now he joins the holy ones of the communion of saints and will continue to be with us in a new way as we gather at the Lord's altar day after day, until that day we are all reunited in the Lord's presence forever.

Your brother in the Lord,
†Adam Cardinal Maida