

# *We Give Thanks...*



*“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” — Matthew 16:18*

*26 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration  
in Thanksgiving for  
26 Years of Service of Our Holy Father  
Pope John Paul II*

## FIRST HOUR

# Pope John Paul II's First Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1978 — October 15, 1979**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's first year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the Bahamas, Poland, Ireland, and the United States. He issued his first encyclical letter — *Redemptor hominis* — "On Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man." He appointed 14 new Cardinals, and in a series of Wednesday General Audiences, he began his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with reflections on the Original Unity of Man and Woman.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Dignity of Man is Found in Christ**

*From the encyclical* On Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man: The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly — and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being — he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must 'appropriate' and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he 'gained so great a Redeemer,' and if God gave his only Son 'in order that man should not perish but have eternal life.'

## SECOND HOUR

# Pope John Paul II's Second Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1979 — October 15, 1980**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's second year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Turkey, Zaire, the Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ghana, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, France, and Brazil. He issued the Pastoral Exhortation — *Catechesi Tradendae* — "On Catechesis in Our Time," and continued his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with further reflections on the Original Unity of Man and Woman and meditations on the theme, Blessed are the Pure of Heart.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Holy Spirit — A Teacher Within**

*From the pastoral exhortation* On Catechesis in Our Time The gaze of my heart turns to Him who is the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work — the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit. In describing the mission that this Spirit would have in the Church, Christ used the significant words: 'He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.' And He added: 'When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth... He will declare to you the things that are to come.'

The Spirit is thus promised to the Church and to each Christian as a teacher within, who, in the secret of the conscience and the heart, makes one understand what one has heard but was not capable of grasping: 'Even now the Holy Spirit teaches the faithful,' said St. Augustine in this regard, 'in accordance with each one's spiritual capacity. And he sets their hearts aflame with greater desire according as each one progresses in the charity that makes him love what he already knows and desire what he has yet to know.'

## THIRD HOUR

# Pope John Paul II's Third Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1980 — October 15, 1981**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's third year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to West Germany, Pakistan, the Philippines, Guam, Japan, and Anchorage, Alaska. He survived an attempt on his life, and forgave his would-be assassin. He made an act of entrustment of the Church and World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He became the first Pope to meet with Rome's Chief Rabbi. He issued the encyclical letters — *Dives in misericordia* — "On the Mercy of God," and — *Laborem exercens* — "On Human Work," and he continued his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with further meditations on the theme, Blessed are the Pure of Heart, and reflections on St. Paul's teaching on the human body.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Mercy Reveals the Perfection of Justice**

*From the encyclical letter* On the Mercy of God Christ, precisely as the crucified one, is the Word that does not pass away, and He is the one who stands at the door and knocks at the heart of every man, without restricting his freedom, but instead seeking to draw from this very

freedom love, which is not only an act of solidarity with the suffering Son of man, but also a kind of 'mercy' shown by each one of us to the Son of the eternal Father. In the whole of this messianic program of Christ, in the whole revelation of mercy through the cross, could man's dignity be more highly respected and ennobled, for, in obtaining mercy, He is in a sense the one who at the same time 'shows mercy'?

Do not the words of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,' constitute, in a certain sense, a synthesis of the whole of the Good News, of the whole of the 'wonderful exchange' contained therein? This exchange is a law of the very plan of salvation, a law which is simple, strong and at the same time 'easy.' Demonstrating from the very start what the "human heart" is capable of ('to be merciful'), do not these words from the Sermon on the Mount reveal in the same perspective the deep mystery of God: that inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in which love, containing justice, sets in motion mercy, which in its turn reveals the perfection of justice?

#### FOURTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Fourth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1981 — October 15, 1982**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's fourth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Nigeria, Benin, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Poland, Great Britain, Argentina, Brazil, and Switzerland. He canonized Fr. Maximilian Kolbe, and made an act of consecration and entrustment of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He issued the pastoral exhortation — *Familiaris Consortio* — "On the Role of the Family in the Modern World," and continued his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with reflections on the Resurrection of the Body, Virginity for the Sake of the Kingdom, and the Sacramentality of Marriage.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Man and Woman: Cooperators in the Love of God the Creator**

*From the encyclical* On the Role of the Family in the Modern World:

With the creation of man and woman in His own image and likeness, God crowns and brings to perfection the work of His hands: He calls them to a special sharing in His love and in His power as Creator and Father, through their free and responsible cooperation in transmitting the gift of human life: 'God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"

Thus the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator — that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person. Fecundity is the fruit and the sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the full reciprocal self-giving of the spouses: 'While not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of the family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and the Savior, who through them will enlarge and enrich His own family day by day.'

However, the fruitfulness of conjugal love is not restricted solely to the procreation of children, even understood in its specifically human dimension: it is enlarged and enriched by all those fruits of moral, spiritual and supernatural life which the father and mother are called to hand on to their children, and through the children to the Church and to the world.

#### FIFTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Fifth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1982 — October 15, 1983**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's fifth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Spain, Portugal, Central America, Poland, Lourdes, and Austria. He announced the Holy Year of Redemption from Lent 1983 to Easter 1984 on the occasion of the 1950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Redemption. He appointed 18 new Cardinals, and continued his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with further reflections on the Sacramentality of Marriage.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Religious Men and Women — Signs of God's Redemption**

*From his letter to the bishops of the United States:*

By their very vocation, religious are intimately linked to the Redemption. In their consecration to Jesus Christ, they are a sign of the Redemption that He accomplished. In the sacramental economy of the Church, they are instruments for bringing this Redemption to the People of God. They do so by the vitality that radiates from the lives they live in union with Jesus, who continues to repeat to all His disciples: 'I am the vine, you are the branches' (Jn 15:5)...

The Church presents the Year of the Redemption to all the People of God as a call to holiness, a call to renewal and a call to penance and conversion, because 'there is no spiritual renewal that does not pass through penance and conver-

conversion.’ But this call is linked in a particular way with the life and mission of religious.

Thus the Jubilee Year has a special value for religious; it affects them in a special way; it makes special demands on their love, reminding them how much they are loved by the Redeemer and by His Church. Especially relevant to religious are these words... ‘The specific grace of the Year of the Redemption is therefore a renewed discovery of the love of God.’

In this regard, as pastors of the Church, we must proclaim over and over again that the vocation to religious life that God gives is linked to His personal love for each and every religious... If all the faithful have a right – as they do – to the treasures of grace that a call to renewal in love offers, then the religious have a special title to that right.

#### **SIXTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II’s Sixth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1983 — October 15, 1984**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father’s sixth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Korea, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Thailand, Switzerland, Canada, Spain, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. He repeated his act of entrustment and consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He declared a Jubilee of Families and published the *Charter of Rights of the Family*. He met with Ali Agca, the Turk who made an attempt on his life in 1981. He issued the apostolic letter — *Salvifici doloris* — “On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering,” and continued his presentation of the *Theology of the Body* with further reflections on the Sacramentality of Marriage and commentary on the encyclical *Humanae vitae*.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **To Suffer Means to Become Open to the Working of the Saving Powers of God**

*From the apostolic letter* On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering:

The Resurrection became, first of all, the manifestation of glory, which corresponds to Christ’s being lifted up through the Cross. If, in fact, the Cross was to human eyes Christ’s *emptying of himself*, at the same time it was in the eyes of God *his being lifted up*.

On the Cross, Christ attained and fully accomplished his mission: by fulfilling the will of the Father, he at the same time fully realized himself. In weakness he manifested his *power*, and in humiliation he manifested all *his messianic*

*greatness*. Are not all the words he uttered during his agony on Golgotha a proof of this greatness, and especially his words concerning the perpetrators of his crucifixion: ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do’?

To those who share in Christ’s sufferings these words present themselves with the power of a supreme example. Suffering is also an invitation to manifest the moral greatness of man, his *spiritual maturity*. Proof of this has been given, down through the generations, by the martyrs and confessors of Christ, faithful to the words: ‘And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.’

Christ’s Resurrection has revealed ‘the glory of the future age’ and, at the same time, has confirmed “the boast of the Cross:” the *glory that is hidden in the very suffering of Christ* and which has been and is often mirrored in human suffering, as an expression of man’s spiritual greatness. This glory must be acknowledged not only in the martyrs for the faith but in many others also who, at times, even without belief in Christ, suffer and give their lives for the truth and for a just cause. In the sufferings of all of these people the great dignity of man is strikingly confirmed....

Those who share in Christ’s sufferings have before their eyes the Paschal Mystery of the Cross and Resurrection, in which Christ descends, in a first phase, to the ultimate limits of human weakness and impotence: indeed, he dies nailed to the Cross. But if at the same time in this *weakness* there is accomplished his *lifting up*, confirmed by the power of the Resurrection, then this means that the weaknesses of all human sufferings are capable of being infused with the same power of God manifested in Christ’s Cross.

In such a concept, *to suffer* means to become particularly *susceptible*, particularly *open to the working of the salvific powers of God*, offered to humanity in Christ. In him God has confirmed his desire to act especially through suffering, which is man’s weakness and emptying of self, and he wishes to make his power known precisely in this weakness and emptying of self. This also explains the exhortation in the First Letter of Peter: ‘Yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God.’

#### **SEVENTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II’s Seventh Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1984 — October 15, 1985**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father’s seventh year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, Togo, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, the Republic of Central Africa, Zaire,

Kenya, Morocco, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. He appointed 28 new Cardinals. He issued the apostolic letter — *Dilecti Amici* — addressed to the youth of the world, and invited the youth of the world to Rome. He also issued the apostolic exhortation — *Reconciliatio and Poenitentia* — “On Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today.”

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Future of Humanity is Decided Along the Paths of Love**

*From his apostolic letter to the youth of the world:*

And so I do not cease to pray to Christ and to the Mother of Fair Love for the love that is born in young hearts. Many times in my life it has been my task to accompany in a sense more closely this love of young people. Thanks to this experience I have come to understand just how essential the matter that we are dealing with here is, how important and how great it is. I think that to a large extent the future of humanity is decided along the paths of this love, initially youthful love, which you and she, you and he discover along the paths of your youth. This can be called a great adventure, but it is also a great task.

Today, the principles of Christian morality concerning marriage are in many circles being presented in a distorted way. Attempts are being made to impose on environments and even entire societies a model that calls itself ‘progressive’ and ‘modern.’

It then goes unnoticed that this model transforms a human being and perhaps especially a woman from a subject into an object (an object of specific manipulation), and the whole great content of love is reduced to ‘pleasure,’ which, even though it involved both parties, would still be selfish in its essence. Finally the child, who is the fruit and the fresh incarnation of the love between the two, becomes ever more ‘an annoying addition.’

The materialistic and consumeristic civilization is penetrating this whole wonderful complex of conjugal and paternal and maternal love, and stripping it of that profoundly human content which from the beginning was also permeated by a divine mark and reflection.

Dear young friends! Do not allow this treasure to be taken away from you! Do not inscribe in the plan of your life a deformed, impoverished and falsified content: love ‘rejoices in the truth.’ Seek out this truth where it is really to be found! If necessary, be resolved to go against the current of popular opinion and propaganda slogans! Do not be afraid of the love that places clear demands on people. These demands – as you find them in the constant teaching of the Church – are precisely capable of making your love a true love.

### **EIGHTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II’s Eighth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1985 — October 15, 1986**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father’s eighth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to India, Colombia, St. Lucia, and France. He also issued the encyclical letter — *Dominum et vivificantem* — “On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World.”

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Holy Spirit Breathes Prayer in the Heart of Man**

*From the encyclical* On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World:

The breath of the divine life, the Holy Spirit, in its simplest and most common manner, expresses itself and makes itself felt in prayer. It is a beautiful and salutary thought that, wherever people are praying in the world, there the Holy Spirit is, the living breath of prayer.

It is a beautiful and salutary thought to recognize that, if prayer is offered throughout the world, in the past, in the present and in the future, equally widespread is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, who ‘breathes’ prayer in the heart of man in all the endless range of the most varied situations and conditions, sometimes favorable and sometimes unfavorable to the spiritual and religious life...

Prayer is also the revelation of that abyss which is the heart of man: a depth which comes from God and which only God can fill, precisely with the Holy Spirit...

The Holy Spirit is the gift that comes into man’s heart together with prayer. In prayer he manifests himself first of all and above all as the gift that ‘helps us in our weakness.’ This is the magnificent thought developed by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans, when he writes: ‘For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.’

Therefore, the Holy Spirit not only enables us to pray, but guides us ‘from within’ in prayer: he is present in our prayer and gives it a divine dimension. Thus ‘he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.’

Prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit becomes the ever more mature expression of the new man, who by means of this prayer participates in the divine life.

Our difficult age has a special need of prayer... The Church perseveres in prayer with Mary... the Church, united with the Virgin Mother, prays unceasingly as the Bride

united with the Virgin Mother, prays unceasingly as the Bride to her divine Spouse... 'The Spirit and the bride say to the Lord Jesus Christ: Come!'

#### **NINTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II's Ninth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1986 — October 15, 1987**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's ninth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Bangladesh, Singapore, the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Seychelles, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Germany, Poland, the United States, and Canada. He presided over the solemn opening of the Marian Year, convened the first World Day of Prayer for Peace, and invited the youth of the world to the first international World Youth Day in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He published the instruction — *Domun vitae* — on respect for human life in its origin and on the dignity of procreation, and issued the encyclical letter — *Redemptoris Mater* — "On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Mary Leads Us to the Unsearchable Riches of Christ**

*From the encyclical* On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church:

Entrusting himself to Mary in a filial manner, the Christian, like the Apostle John, 'welcomes' the Mother of Christ 'into his own home' and brings her into everything that makes up his inner life... This filial relationship, this self-entrusting of a child to its mother, not only has its beginning in Christ but can also be said to be definitively directed towards him.

Mary can be said to continue to say to each individual the words which she spoke at Cana in Galilee: 'Do whatever he tells you.' For he, Christ, is [the one] whom the Father has given to the world, so that man 'should not perish but have eternal life' (Jn. 3:16). The Virgin of Nazareth became the first 'witness' of this saving love of the Father, and she also wishes to remain its humble handmaid always and everywhere. For every Christian, for every human being, Mary is the one who first 'believed,' and precisely with her faith as Spouse and Mother she wishes to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as her children. And it is well known that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the 'unsearchable riches of Christ' (Eph. 3:8). And to the same degree they recognize more and more clearly the dignity of man in all its fullness and the definitive meaning of his vocation, for 'Christ...fully reveals man to man himself.'

This Marian dimension of Christian life takes on special importance in relation to women and their status. In fact, femininity has a unique relationship with the Mother of the Redeemer... the figure of Mary of Nazareth sheds light on womanhood as such by the very fact that God, in the sublime event of the Incarnation of his Son, entrusted himself to the ministry, the free and active ministry of a woman.

It can thus be said that women, by looking to Mary, find in her the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement. In the light of Mary, the Church sees in the face of women the reflection of a beauty which mirrors the loftiest sentiments of which the human heart is capable: the self-offering totality of love; the strength that is capable of bearing the greatest sorrows; limitless fidelity and tireless devotion to work; the ability to combine penetrating intuition with words of support and encouragement.

#### **TENTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II's Tenth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1987 — October 15, 1988**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's tenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Austria, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland. He appointed 24 new Cardinals, issued the encyclical letter — *Sollicitudo rei socialis* — on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Populorum Progressio*, and wrote the apostolic letter — *Mulieris dignitatem* — "On the Dignity and Vocation of Women."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **God Entrusts Humanity to Women in a Special Way**

*From the apostolic letter* On the Dignity and Vocation of Women:

A woman's dignity is closely connected with the love which she receives by the very reason of her femininity; it is likewise connected *with the love which she gives in return...* *Woman can only find herself by giving love to others...*

The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness that *God entrusts the human being to her in a special way*. Of course, God entrusts every human being to each and every other human being. But this entrusting concerns women in a special way – precisely by reason of their femininity – and this in a particular way determines their vocation...

*A woman is strong because of her awareness of this entrusting, strong because of the fact that God 'entrusts the human*

being to her,' always and in every way, even in the situations of social discrimination in which she may find herself. This awareness and this fundamental vocation speak to women of the dignity which they receive from God himself, and this makes them 'strong' and strengthens their vocation.

Thus the 'perfect woman' (*Prov* 31:10) becomes an irreplaceable support and source of spiritual strength for other people, who perceive the great energies of her spirit... In our own time, the successes of science and technology make it possible to attain material well-being to a degree hitherto unknown. While this favors some, it pushes others to the edges of society. In this way, unilateral progress can also lead to a gradual *loss of sensitivity for man, that is, for what is essentially human.*

In this sense, our time in particular *awaits the manifestation* of that 'genius' which belongs to women, and which can ensure sensitivity for human beings in every circumstance: because they are human! – and because 'the greatest of these is love' (1 *Cor* 13:13).

#### ELEVENTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Eleventh Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1988 — October 15, 1989**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's eleventh year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to France, Madagascar, La Reunion, Zambia, Malawi, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Korea, Indonesia, and Mauritius. He invited the youth of the world to Santiago de Compostela, Spain for the second international World Youth Day, and issued the apostolic exhortations — *Christifideles Laici* — "On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World," and — *Redemptoris Custos* — "On the Person and Mission of St. Joseph in the Life of Christians and of the Church."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Allow Christ to Speak to the Person in You — Only He Has the Words of Eternal Life**

*From the apostolic exhortation* On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World:

To all people of today I once again repeat the impassioned cry with which I began my pastoral ministry: *Do not be afraid! Open, in deed, open wide the doors to Christ!*

Open to his saving power the confines of states, and systems political and economic, as well as the vast fields of culture, civilization, and development. Do not be afraid!

Christ knows 'what is inside a person.' Only he knows! Today too often people do not know what they carry inside, in the deepest recesses of their soul, in their heart. Too often people are uncertain about a sense of life on earth. Invaded by doubts they are led into despair. Therefore – with humility and trust I beg and implore you – allow Christ to speak to the person in you. Only he has the words of life, yes, eternal life.

Opening wide the doors to Christ, accepting him into humanity itself poses absolutely no threat to persons, indeed it is the only road to take to arrive at the total truth and the exalted value of the human individual.

#### TWELFTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Twelfth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1989 — October 15, 1990**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's twelfth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Curacao, Malta, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and the Ivory Coast. He also became — in the wake of the revolutions that toppled Communist regimes in Eastern Europe — the first Pontiff to welcome at the Vatican the head of the Soviet government.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Fire of God's Love**

*From the Holy Father's August 1st General Audience:*

The Old Testament speaks several times of the 'fire from heaven' which burnt the oblations presented by men. 'The fire on the altar is to be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest shall put firewood on it. On this he shall lay out the holocaust and burn the fat of the peace offerings' (Lev 6:5). Now we know that the ancient holocausts prefigured the sacrifice of the cross, the perfect holocaust. 'By analogy one can say that the Holy Spirit is the 'fire from heaven' which works in the depth of the mystery of the cross. Proceeding from the Father, he directs the Son's sacrifice toward the Father, bringing it into the divine reality of the trinitarian communion'...

In the Letter to the Hebrews we again read that Christ, 'Son though he was, learned obedience from what he suffered' (5:8). And on entering the world he said to the Father: 'Behold I come to do your will' (Heb 10:9). In the sacrifice of the cross this obedience of his is realized fully: 'If sin caused suffering, now the pain of God in Christ crucified acquires through the Holy Spirit its full human expression...

But at the same time, from the depth of this suffering...the Spirit draws a new measure of the gift made to man and to creation from the beginning. In the depth of the mystery of the cross love is at work, that love which brings man back again to share in the life that is in God himself.'

Thus in humanity's relationships with God 'we have a great high priest who is able to sympathize with our weakness because he has been tested in every way, yet without sin' (Heb 4:15). In this new mystery of Christ's priestly mediation before the Father, there is the decisive inter-vention of the eternal Spirit who is the fire of infinite love.

#### THIRTEENTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Thirteenth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1990 — October 15, 1991**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's thirteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Portugal, Poland, Hungary, and Brazil. He appointed 22 new Cardinals, and invited the youth of the world to Czestochowa, Poland for the third international World Youth Day. He also issued the encyclical letters — *Redemptoris missio* — "On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate," and — *Centesimus annus* — "On the 100th Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **God is Preparing a Great Springtime for Christianity**

*From the encyclical* On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate:

If we look at today's world, we are struck by many negative factors that can lead to pessimism. But this feeling is unjustified: we have faith in God our Father and Lord, in his goodness and mercy. As the third millennium of the redemption draws near, God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity, and we can already see its first signs.

In fact, both in the non-Christian world and in the traditionally Christian world, people are gradually drawing closer to gospel ideals and values, a development which the Church seeks to encourage.

Today in fact there is a new consensus among peoples about these values: the rejection of violence and war; respect for the human person and for human rights; the desire for freedom, justice and brotherhood; the surmounting of different forms of racism and nationalism; the affirmation of the dignity and role of women.

Christian hope sustains us in committing ourselves fully to the new evangelization and to the worldwide mission, and leads us to pray as Jesus taught us: 'Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' (Mt 6:10)...

We must increase our apostolic zeal to pass on to others the light and joy of the faith... We cannot be content when we consider the millions of our brothers sisters, who like us have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but who live in ignorance of the love of God. For each believer, as for the entire Church, the missionary task must remain foremost, for it concerns the eternal destiny of humanity and corresponds to God's mysterious and merciful plan.

#### FOURTEENTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Fourteenth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1991 — October 15, 1992**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's fourteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, and the Dominican Republic. He also issued the apostolic exhortation — *Pastoresdabo vobis* — "On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The Priest is a Living and Transparent Image of Christ**

*From the apostolic exhortation* On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day:

The priest finds the full truth of his identity in being a derivation, a specific participation in and continuation of Christ himself, the one high priest of the new and eternal covenant. The priest is a living and transparent image of Christ...

Therefore, priests are called to prolong the presence of Christ, the one high priest, embodying his way of life and making him visible in the midst of the flock entrusted to their care.

We find this clearly and precisely stated in the first letter of Peter: 'I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory' (1 Pt. 5:1-4).

In the Church and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ — the head and shepherd — authoritatively proclaiming his word, repeating his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation — particularly in baptism, penance and the Eucharist, showing his loving concern to the point of a total gift of self for the flock,

for the flock, which they gather into unity and lead to the Father through Christ and in the Spirit.

In a word, priests exist and act in order to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to build up the Church in the name and person of Christ the head and shepherd.

#### FIFTEENTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Fifteenth Year as Holy Father

October 16, 1992 — October 15, 1993

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's fifteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Benin, Uganda, the Sudan, Albania, Spain, Jamaica, Mexico, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the United States. He invited the youth of the world to Denver for the fourth international World Youth Day. He issued the encyclical letter — *Veritatis splendor* — "The Splendor of Truth," regarding certain fundamental questions on the Church's moral teaching, and he officially presented the new Catechism of the Catholic Church.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **It is You Who Must Go Out in the Byroads**

*From the Holy Father's homily at World Youth Day:*

Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places like the first apostles, who preached Christ and the good news of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). It is the time to preach it from the rooftops (Mt. 10:27).

Do not be afraid to break out of comfortable and routine modes of living in order to take up the challenge of making Christ known in the modern 'metropolis.' It is you who must 'go out into the byroads' (Mt. 22:9) and invite everyone you meet to the banquet which God has prepared for his people.

The Gospel must not be kept hidden because of fear or indifference. It was never meant to be hidden away in private. It has to be put on a stand so that people may see its light and give praise to our heavenly Father (Mt. 5:15-16)

Jesus went in search of the men and women of his time. He engaged them in an open and truthful dialogue, whatever their condition. As the Good Samaritan of the human family, he came close to people to heal them of their sins and of the wounds which life inflicts, and to bring them back to the Father's house.

Young people of World Youth Day, the Church asks you to go, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to those who are near and those who are far away. Share with them the freedom

you have found in Christ. People thirst for genuine inner freedom. They yearn for the Life which Christ came to give in abundance.

The world at the approach of a new millennium, for which the whole Church is preparing, is like a field ready for the harvest. *Christ needs laborers ready to work in his vineyard.* May you, the Catholic young people of the world, not fail him. In your hands, carry the Cross of Christ. On your lips, the words of Life. In your hearts, the saving grace of the Lord.

#### SIXTEENTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's Sixteenth Year as Holy Father

October 16, 1993 — October 15, 1994

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's sixteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in a visit to Croatia. He celebrated Mass for the unveiling of the restored frescoes of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, and he opened the Year of the Family. He issued a *Letter to Families* and an apostolic Letter — *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* — "On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Do not be afraid of the risks! God's strength is always far more powerful than your difficulties!**

*From the Holy Father's Letter to Families:*

Dear families, you too should be fearless, ever ready to give witness to the hope that is in you (*1 Pet* 3:15), since the Good Shepherd has put that hope in your hearts through the Gospel. You should be ready to follow Christ towards the pastures of life, which he himself has prepared through the Paschal Mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

*Do not be afraid* of the risks! God's strength is always far more powerful than your difficulties! Immeasurably greater than the evil at work in the world is the power of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, which the Fathers of the Church rightly called a 'second Baptism.'

Much more influential than the corruption present in the world is the divine power of the *Sacrament of Confirmation*, which brings Baptism to its maturity. And incomparably greater than all is the power of the Eucharist.

The *Eucharist* is truly a wondrous sacrament. In it Christ has given us himself as food and drink, as a source of saving power. He has left himself to us that we might have life and have it in abundance (*Jn* 10:10): the life which is in him and which he has shared with us by the gift of the Spirit in rising from the dead on the third day.

The life that comes from Christ is a life for us. *It is for you, dear husbands and wives, parents and families!* Did Jesus not

institute the Eucharist in a family-like setting during the Last Supper?

When you meet for meals and are together in harmony, *Christ is close to you*. And he is Emmanuel, God with us, in an even greater way whenever you approach the table of the Eucharist.

It can happen, as it did at Emmaus, that he is recognized only in 'the breaking of the bread' (Lk 24:35). It may well be that he is knocking at the door for a long time, waiting for it to be opened so that he can enter and eat with us (Rev 3:20).

The Last Supper and the words he spoke there contain all the power and wisdom of the sacrifice of the Cross. No other power and wisdom exist by which we can be saved and through which we can help to save others. There is no other power and no other wisdom by which you, parents, can educate both your children and yourselves.

The *educational power of the Eucharist* has been proved down the generations and centuries.

Everywhere the Good Shepherd is with us. Even as he was at Cana in Galilee, *the Bridegroom in the midst of the bride and groom* as they entrusted themselves to each other for their whole life, so the Good Shepherd is also with us today as the reason for our hope, the source of strength for our hearts, the wellspring of ever new enthusiasm and the sign of the triumph of the 'civilization of love.'

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, continues to say to us: *Do not be afraid. I am with you*. 'I am with you always, to the close of the age' (Mt 28:20). What is the source of this strength? What is the reason for our certainty that you are with us, even though they put you to death, O Son of God, and you died like any other human being?

What is the reason for this certainty? The Evangelist says: 'He loved them to the end' (Jn 13:1). Thus do you love us, you who are the First and the Last, the Living One; you who died and are alive for evermore (Rev 1:17-18).

## **SEVENTEENTH HOUR**

### **Pope John Paul II's Seventeenth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1994 — October 15, 1995**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's seventeenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Papua New Guinea, Australia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Slovakia, Cameroon, South Africa, Kenya, and the United States. He appointed 30 new Cardinals, and invited the youth of the world to Manila for the fifth international

World Youth Day. He wrote a *Letter to Children* in the Year of the Family and a *Letter to Women*. He issued the apostolic letter — *Tertio millennio adveniente* — to Bishops, Clergy and Lay Faithful in preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000. He published the book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, and the encyclical letters — *Evangelium vitae* — "On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life," and — *Ut unum sint* — "On Commitment to Ecumenism."

*Let us meditate on...*

**"The life was made manifest, and we saw it" (1 Jn 1:2):  
with our gaze fixed on Christ, the Word of life**

*From the encyclical* On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life:

Faced with the countless grave threats to life present in the modern world, one could feel overwhelmed by sheer powerlessness: good can never be powerful enough to triumph over evil! At such times the People of God, and this includes every believer, is called to profess with humility and courage its faith in Jesus Christ, 'the Word of life' (1 Jn 1:1).

The Gospel of life is not simply a reflection, however new and profound, on human life. Nor is it merely a commandment aimed at raising awareness and bringing about significant changes in society. Still less is it an illusory promise of a better future.

The Gospel of life is something concrete and personal, for it consists in the proclamation of the very person of Jesus. Jesus... spoke of himself to Martha, the sister of Lazarus: 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die' (Jn 11:25-26). Jesus is the Son who from all eternity receives life from the Father (cf. Jn 5:26), and who has come among men to make them sharers in this gift: 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10).

Through the words, the actions and the very person of Jesus, man is given the possibility of 'knowing' the complete truth concerning the value of human life. From this 'source' he receives, in particular, the capacity to 'accomplish' this truth perfectly (Jn 3:21), that is, to accept and fulfill completely the responsibility of loving and serving, of defending and promoting human life.

## **EIGHTEENTH HOUR**

### **Pope John Paul II's Eighteenth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1995 — October 15, 1996**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's eighteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful

in visits to Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Tunisia, Slovenia, Germany, Hungary, and France. He issued the Apostolic Constitution of John Paul II — *Universi Dominici gregis* — “On the Vacancy of the Apostolic See and the Election of the Roman Pontiff,” and the apostolic exhortation — *Vita consecrata* — “On the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World.”

*Let us meditate on...*

### **An Impassioned Love of Jesus Christ is a Powerful Attraction**

*From the apostolic exhortation On the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World:*

To you, young people, I say: if you hear the Lord’s call, do not reject it! Dare to become part of the great movements of holiness which renowned saints have launched in their following of Christ. Cultivate the ideals proper to your age, but readily accept God’s plan for you if he invites you to seek holiness in the consecrated life. Admire all God’s works in the world, but be ready to fix your eyes on the things destined never to pass away...

I address you, Christian families. Parents, give thanks to the Lord if he has called one of your children to the consecrated life. It is to be considered a great honor – as it always has been – that the Lord should look upon a family and choose to invite one of its members to set out on the path of the evangelical counsels! Cherish the desire to give the Lord one of your children so that God’s love can spread in the world. What fruit of conjugal love could be more beautiful than this?...

To all the men and women who are willing to listen to my voice, I wish to address an invitation to seek the paths which lead to the living and true God, including the path marked out by the consecrated life. Consecrated persons bear witness to the fact that ‘whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man.’ How many consecrated men and women have bent down, and continue to bend down, as Good Samaritans, over the countless wounds of the brothers and sisters whom they meet on their way!

Look at these people seized by Christ, who show that in self-mastery, sustained by grace and God’s love, lies the remedy for the craving to possess, to seek pleasure, to dominate. Do not forget the charisms which have shaped remarkable ‘seekers of God’ and benefactors of humanity, who have provided sure paths for those who seek God with a sincere heart. Consider the great number of saints who have flourished in this way of life; consider the good done to the world, in the past and in the present, by those who have devoted themselves to God!

Does not this world of ours need joyful witnesses and prophets of the beneficent power of God’s love? Does it not also need men and women who, by their lives and their work, are able to sow seeds of peace and fraternity?

But it is above all to you, consecrated women and men, ...I appeal with trust: live to the full your dedication to God, so that this world may never be without a ray of divine beauty to lighten the path of human existence....

An impassioned love of Jesus Christ is a powerful attraction for those other young people whom Christ in his goodness is calling to follow him closely and forever. Our contemporaries want to see in consecrated persons the joy which comes from being with the Lord...

You have the task of once more inviting the men and women of our time to lift their eyes, not to let themselves be overwhelmed by everyday things, to let themselves be captivated by the fascination of God and of his Son’s Gospel.

Do not forget that you, in a very special way, can and must say that you not only belong to Christ but that ‘you have become Christ’!

### **NINETEENTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II’s Nineteenth Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1996 — October 15, 1997**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father’s nineteenth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Lebanon, Poland, France, and Brazil. He published the book *Gift and Mystery – On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination*, invited the youth of the world to Paris for the sixth international World Youth Day, and devoted a series of General Audience talks to a discussion of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Mary is the Way Which Leads to Christ**

*From the Holy Father’s catachesis on the Blessed Virgin Mary:* We now consider the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Although the Gospels say little about Jesus’ childhood and youth, this must have been a time of special closeness between Mother and Son as they sought each day to do God’s will. As Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace (Lk 2:52), Mary understood better the meaning of her own motherhood.

Her quiet life during the ‘hidden years’ at Nazareth is an example to many other mothers and to all who strive to grow in faith, hope and love. Our lives too are ‘hid with Christ in God’ (Col 3:3), and Mary shows us how a life which seems humble and ordinary in the eyes of the world can advance God’s plan of salvation by radiating the love and peace of Jesus Christ...

We now consider the wedding feast at Cana, when Jesus

We now consider the wedding feast at Cana, when Jesus performed his first miracle, turning water into wine. Saint John's account emphasizes Mary's concern for the bride and bridegroom and her complete confidence in her Son. Mary precedes the disciples in faith, for, as the Gospel tells us, it was only after Jesus had performed the miracle that his disciples believed in him (Jn 2:11).

Mary's faith does not falter, even when Jesus seems to refuse her request, saying that his hour has not yet come (Jn 2:4). But Mary immediately commands the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you.' These words reveal Mary's great faith, the power of her prayer and her cooperation in the saving mission of her Son. They invite Christians in every age to trust the Lord fully and to submit obediently to his will, confident that his words will be fulfilled: 'Ask, and it will be given you' (Mt 7:7; Lk 11:9)...

In Saint John's Gospel we read that when Jesus, from the Cross, "saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!'" (Jn 19:26-27). With these words Jesus establishes a new relationship of love between the Blessed Virgin Mary and all his disciples.

By entrusting the Beloved Disciple to Mary's care, the Lord gave her a new mission as the Mother of all the redeemed. This is another sign of the great love which led Jesus to offer his life for our salvation. Standing at the foot of her Son's Cross, Mary is revealed as the New Eve, the 'Woman' who cooperates with him in bringing new life to the world through the outpouring of divine grace. May all the Lord's disciples come to appreciate more fully the mystery of Mary's universal motherhood, acknowledging her as their own spiritual Mother and placing their complete trust in her maternal love... Mary is the way which leads to Christ.

## TWENTIETH HOUR

# Pope John Paul II's Twentieth Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1997 — October 15, 1998**

We give thanks to Our Lord for our Holy Father's twentieth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Cuba, Nigeria, Austria, and Croatia. He appointed 20 new Cardinals, and canonized Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) – a martyr for the Faith. He issued the apostolic letters — *Divini amoris scientia* — proclaiming St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face a Doctor of the Universal Church, and — *Dies Domini* — "On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy." He also issued the encyclical letter — *Fides et ratio* — "On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason."

*Let us meditate on...*

## **Look More Deeply at Man — Freedom is Found in the Truth**

*From the encyclical On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason:*

I ask *everyone* to look more deeply at man, whom Christ has saved in the mystery of his love, and at the human being's unceasing search for truth and meaning.

Different philosophical systems have lured people into believing that they are their own absolute master, able to decide their own destiny and future in complete autonomy, trusting only in themselves and their own powers...

This can never be the grandeur of the human being, who can find fulfillment only in choosing to enter the truth, to make a home under the shade of Wisdom and dwell there. Only within this horizon of truth will people understand their freedom in its fullness and their call to know and love God as the supreme realization of their true self.

I turn in the end to the woman whom the prayer of the Church invokes as *Seat of Wisdom*... For between the vocation of the Blessed Virgin and the vocation of true philosophy there is a deep harmony.

Just as the Virgin was called to offer herself entirely as human being and as woman that God's Word might take flesh and come among us, so too philosophy is called to offer its rational and critical resources that theology, as the understanding of faith, may be fruitful and creative.

And just as in giving her assent to Gabriel's word, Mary lost nothing of her true humanity and freedom, so too when philosophy heeds the summons of the Gospel's truth its autonomy is in no way impaired. Indeed, it is then that philosophy sees all its enquiries rise to their highest expression.

This was a truth which the holy monks of Christian antiquity understood well when they called Mary 'the table at which faith sits in thought.' In her they saw a lucid image of true philosophy and they were convinced of the need to *philosophari in Maria*.

## TWENTY-FIRST HOUR

# Pope John Paul II's 21st Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 1998 — October 15, 1999**

We give thanks to Our Lord for our Holy Father's twenty-first year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Mexico, the United States, Romania, Poland, and Slovenia. He issued the apostolic exhortation — *Ecclesia in America* — "On the Church in America," and the apostolic

letter — *Spes Aedificandi* — proclaiming St. Bridget of Sweden, Saint Catherine of Siena, and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Co-Patronesses of Europe. He also wrote the *Letter to Artists*, the *Letter Concerning Pilgrimage to the Places Linked with the History of Salvation*, and the *Letter to the Elderly*.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Beauty Will Save the World**

*From the Holy Father's Letter to Artists:*

Dear artists, you well know that there are many impulses which, either from within or from without, can inspire your talent. Every genuine inspiration, however, contains some tremor of that 'breath' with which the Creator Spirit suffused the work of creation from the very beginning.

Overseeing the mysterious laws governing the universe, the divine breath of the Creator Spirit reaches out to human genius and stirs its creative power. He touches it with a kind of inner illumination which brings together the sense of the good and the beautiful, and he awakens energies of mind and heart which enable it to conceive an idea and give it form in a work of art.

It is right then to speak...of 'moments of grace,' because the human being is able to experience in some way the Absolute who is utterly beyond...

My hope for all of you who are artists is that you will have an especially intense experience of creative inspiration. May the beauty which you pass on to generations still to come be such that it will stir them to wonder!

Faced with the sacredness of life and of the human person, and before the marvels of the universe, wonder is the only appropriate attitude. From this wonder there can come that enthusiasm... People of today and tomorrow need this enthusiasm if they are to meet and master the crucial challenges which stand before us.

Thanks to this enthusiasm, humanity, every time it loses its way, will be able to lift itself up and set out again on the right path. In this sense it has been said with profound insight that 'beauty will save the world.'

Beauty is a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence. It is an invitation to savor life and to dream of the future. That is why the beauty of created things can never fully satisfy. It stirs that hidden nostalgia for God which a lover of beauty...

Artists of the world, may your many different paths all lead to that infinite Ocean of beauty where wonder becomes awe, exhilaration, unspeakable joy... 'From chaos there rises the world of the spirit.' These words of Adam Mickiewicz, written at a time of great hardship for his Polish homeland, prompt my hope for you: may your art help to affirm that true beauty which, as a glimmer of the Spirit of God, will transfigure matter, opening the human soul to the sense of the eternal.

### **TWENTY-SECOND HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II's 22nd Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 1999 — October 15, 2000**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's twenty-second year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to India, Georgia, Egypt —where he visited Mount Sinai — the Holy Land, and Fatima in Portugal. He inaugurated the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 with the Opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. He proclaimed the Jubilee of Bishops, with whom he repeated the Act of Entrustment to Mary, Most Holy, before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. He canonized Blessed Maria Faustina Kowalska, issued the apostolic exhortation — *Ecclesia in Asia* — "On the Church in Asia," and wrote the *Message for the Jubilee in Prisons*. He invited the youth of the world to Rome for the unforgettable seventh international World Youth Day.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Christ Never Tires of Encouraging Each Person Along the Path to Salvation**

*From the Holy Father's Message for the Jubilee in Prisons:*

I first wish to express the hope that the Risen Lord, who entered the Upper Room through closed doors, will enter all the prisons of the world and find a welcome in the hearts of those within, bringing peace and serenity to everyone.

In this Jubilee, the Church celebrates in a special way the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Two thousand years have passed since the Son of God was made man and came to dwell among us.

Today as then, the salvation brought by Christ is continually being offered to us, that it may bear abundant fruits of goodness in keeping with the plan of God who wishes to save all his children, especially those who have gone away from him and are looking for the way back.

The Good Shepherd is always going in search of the lost sheep, and when he finds them he puts them on his shoulders and brings them back to the flock. Christ is in search of every human being, whatever the situation!

This is because Jesus wants to save each one. And with a salvation which is offered, not imposed. What Christ is looking for is trusting acceptance, an attitude which opens the mind to generous decisions aimed at rectifying the evil done and fostering what is good.

Sometimes this involves a long journey, but always a stimulating one, for it is a journey not made alone, but in the company of Christ himself and with his support. Jesus is a

is a patient traveling companion, who respects the seasons and rhythms of the human heart. He never tires of encouraging each person along the path to salvation...

Those in prison look back with regret or remorse to the days when they were free, and they experience their time now as a burden which never seems to pass. In this difficult situation, a strong experience of faith can greatly help in finding the inner balance which every human being needs... time belongs to God.

Even time in prison does not escape God's dominion... those who are in detention must not live as if their time in prison had been taken from them completely: even time in prison is God's time. As such it needs to be lived to the full; it is a time which needs to be offered to God as an occasion of truth, humility, expiation and even faith. The Jubilee serves to remind us that not only does time belong to God, but that the moments in which we succeed in 'restoring' all things in Christ become for us 'a time of the Lord's favor.'

#### TWENTY-THIRD HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's 23rd Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 2000 — October 15, 2001**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's twenty-third year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Greece, Syria, Malta, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Armenia. He appointed 42 new Cardinals, held his 1,000<sup>th</sup> General Audience of his pontificate, and closed the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, marking the end of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. He issued the apostolic letters — *E sancti Thomae Mori* — proclaiming St. Thomas More as Patron of Statesmen and Politicians, and — *Novo Millennio Ineunte* — "On the Coming of the Third Millennium."

*Let us meditate on...*

### **"Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations"**

*From the apostolic letter* On the Coming of the Third Millennium:

Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work...

Now, the Christ whom we have contemplated and loved bids us to set out once more on our journey: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Mt 28:19). The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians: we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope 'which does not disappoint' (Rom 5:5).

At the beginning of this new century, our steps must quicken as we travel the highways of the world. Many are the paths on which each one of us and each of our Churches must travel, but there is no distance between those who are united in the same communion, the communion which is daily nourished at the table of the Eucharistic Bread and the Word of Life.

Every Sunday, the Risen Christ asks us to meet him as it were once more in the Upper Room where, on the evening of 'the first day of the week' (Jn 20:19) he appeared to his disciples in order to 'breathe' on them his life-giving Spirit and launch them on the great adventure of proclaiming the Gospel.

On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom... I entrusted the Third Millennium. During this year I have often invoked her as the 'Star of the New Evangelization.' Now I point to Mary once again as the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps.

Once more, echoing the words of Jesus himself and giving voice to the filial affection of the whole Church, I say to her: 'Woman, behold your children' (Jn 19:26).

#### TWENTY-FOURTH HOUR

## Pope John Paul II's 24th Year as Holy Father

**October 16, 2001 — October 15, 2002**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's twenty-fourth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Guatemala, Mexico, Poland, and Canada. He proclaimed the first beatification of a married couple — Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi and Maria Corsini — and he canonized Blessed Pio de Pietrelcina and Blessed Jose Maria Escrivá de Balaguer. In the wake of the September 11th attacks and the war in Afghanistan, he convened a Day of Fasting for Peace and a Day of Prayer for Peace in the World at Assisi. He issued the apostolic exhortation — *Ecclesia in Oceania* — "On the Church in Oceania," and the apostolic letter — *Misericordia Dei* — "The Mercy of God," on certain aspects of the sacrament of penance. He invited the youth of the world to Toronto, Canada for the eighth international World Youth Day.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **The World Needs You to Be the Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World**

*From the Holy Father's homily at World Youth Day:*

Jesus offers one thing, and the 'spirit of the world' offers another... The 'spirit of the world' offers many false illusions and parodies of happiness. There is perhaps no darkness deeper than the darkness that enters young people's souls when false prophets extinguish in them the light of faith and hope and love. The greatest deception, and the deepest source of unhappiness, is the illusion of finding life by excluding God, of finding freedom by excluding moral truths and personal responsibility.

The Lord is calling you to choose between these two voices competing for your souls... Why have you come together from all parts of the world? To say in your hearts: 'Lord, to whom shall we go?' Who has the words of eternal life? 'You have the words of eternal life' (Jn 6:68). Jesus – the intimate friend of every young person – has the words of life.

The world you are inheriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's love. *It needs witnesses to that love. The world needs salt. It needs you - to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.*

*Salt is used to preserve and keep.* As apostles for the Third Millennium, your task is to preserve and keep alive the awareness of the presence of our Savior Jesus Christ, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the memorial of his saving death and glorious resurrection. You must keep alive the memory of the words of life which he spoke, the marvelous works of mercy and goodness which he performed. You must constantly remind the world of the 'power of the Gospel to save' (Rom 1:16)!

*Salt seasons and improves the flavor of food.* Following Jesus, you have to change and improve the 'taste' of human history. With your faith, hope and love, with your intelligence, courage and perseverance, you have to humanize the world we live in... 'loose the bonds of injustice... share your bread with the hungry... remove the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil... Then your light shall rise in the darkness' (Is 58,6-10).

Even a tiny flame lifts the heavy lid of night. How much more light will you make, all together, if you bond as one in the communion of the Church! *If you love Jesus, love the Church!* ...the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations.

Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young. You are our hope, the young are our hope.

Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it! *We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.*

### **TWENTY-FIFTH HOUR**

## **Pope John Paul II's 25th Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 2002 — October 15, 2003**

*We give thanks to Our Lord* for our Holy Father's twenty-fifth year of service as Pope. In that year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Spain, Croatia, and most recently Slovakia. He declared the 25th Year of his Pontificate the Year of the Rosary, he issued the apostolic letter — *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* — "On the Most Holy Rosary," and he presented us the gift of the Mysteries of Light. He published *Roman Triptych – Meditations*, a book of poems, the encyclical letter — *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* — "The Church of the Eucharist," and he appointed 31 Cardinals.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **Confidently Take Up the Rosary Once Again**

*From the apostolic letter On the Most Holy Rosary:*

Against the background of the words *Ave Maria* the principal events of the life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, and they put us in living communion with Jesus through – we might say – the heart of his Mother.

At the same time our heart can embrace in the decades of the Rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind. Our personal concerns and those of our neighbor, especially those who are closest to us, who are dearest to us. Thus the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life...

The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side as she is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is 'fully formed' in us (Gal 4:19). This role of Mary, totally grounded in that of Christ and radically subordinated to it, 'in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power.'

This is the luminous principle... which I have so powerfully experienced in my own life and have made the basis of my episcopal motto: *Totus Tuus* — totally yours.

The motto is of course inspired by the teaching of Saint Louis de Montfort, who explained in the following words

Mary's role in the process of our configuration to Christ: "Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ."

Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. '... Never as in the Rosary do the life of Jesus and that of Mary appear so deeply joined. Mary lives only in Christ and for Christ!

Dear brothers and sisters! A prayer so easy and yet so rich truly deserves to be rediscovered by the Christian community... I look to all of you, brothers and sisters of every state of life, to you, Christian families, to you, the sick and elderly, and to you, young people: *confidently take up the Rosary once again*. Rediscover the Rosary in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the Liturgy, and in the context of your daily lives. May this appeal of mine not go unheard!

I willingly make my own the touching words with which [Blessed Bartolo Longo] concluded his well-known *Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary*:

'O Blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which unites us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of Hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in the hour of death: yours our final kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips will be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompeii, O dearest Mother, O Refuge of Sinners, O Sovereign Consoler of the Afflicted. May you be everywhere blessed, today and always, on earth and in heaven.'

## **TWENTY-SIXTH HOUR**

# **Pope John Paul II's 26th Year as Holy Father**

**October 16, 2003 — October 15, 2004**

We give thanks to Our Lord for our Holy Father's twenty-sixth year of service as Pope. In this past year, he inspired the faithful in visits to Switzerland, Lourdes, France, and Loreto, Italy. He beatified Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and he issued the apostolic exhortation — *Pastores gregis* — "On the Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World," and the apostolic letter — *Mane nobiscum Domine* — declaring that this coming year shall be celebrated as the Year of the Eucharist.

*Let us meditate on...*

### **"Stay with us, Lord, because it is almost evening"**

From the apostolic letter *On the Year of the Eucharist* "Stay with us, Lord, for it is almost evening" (cf. Lk 24:29). This was the insistent invitation that the two disciples journeying to Emmaus on the evening of the day of the resur-

rection addressed to the Wayfarer who had accompanied them on their journey. Weighed down with sadness, they never imagined that this stranger was none other than their Master, risen from the dead. Yet they felt their hearts burning within them (cf. v. 32) as he spoke to them and "explained" the Scriptures. The light of the Word unlocked the hardness of their hearts and "opened their eyes" (cf. v. 31). Amid the shadows of the passing day and the darkness that clouded their spirit, the Wayfarer brought a ray of light which rekindled their hope and led their hearts to yearn for the fullness of light. "Stay with us", they pleaded. And he agreed....

The image of the disciples on the way to Emmaus can serve as a fitting guide for a Year when the Church will be particularly engaged in living out the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Amid our questions and difficulties, and even our bitter disappointments, the divine Wayfarer continues to walk at our side, opening to us the Scriptures and leading us to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of God. When we meet him fully, we will pass from the light of the Word to the light streaming from the "Bread of life", the supreme fulfillment of his promise to "be with us always, to the end of the age" (cf. Mt 28:20)....

It is significant that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, duly prepared by our Lord's words, recognized him at table through the simple gesture of the "breaking of bread". When minds are enlightened and hearts are enkindled, signs begin to "speak". The Eucharist unfolds in a dynamic context of signs containing a rich and luminous message. Through these signs the mystery in some way opens up before the eyes of the believer.

As I emphasized in my Encyclical *Church of the Eucharist*, it is important that no dimension of this sacrament should be neglected. We are constantly tempted to reduce the Eucharist to our own dimensions, while in reality *it is we who must open ourselves up to the dimensions of the Mystery...*

At each Holy Mass we are called to measure ourselves against the ideal of communion which the Acts of the Apostles paints as a model for the Church in every age. It is the Church gathered around the Apostles, called by the word of God, capable of sharing in spiritual goods but in material goods as well (cf. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). In this Year of the Eucharist the Lord invites us to draw as closely as possible to this ideal....

The two disciples of Emmaus, upon recognizing the Lord, "set out immediately" (cf. Lk 24:33), in order to report what they had seen and heard. Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking of his body and blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The encounter with Christ, constantly intensified and deepened in the Eucharist, issues in the Church and in every Christian an *urgent summons to testimony and evangelization...*

The Eucharist not only provides the interior strength needed for this mission, but is also —in some sense—*its plan*.